



COOPERATION FOR SOCIAL AND CIVIC COMPETENCES'
INNOVATIVE EDUCATION

Pathways

How to build educational activities

for young people that are truly grounded

in their social and civic lives



Funded by the European Union

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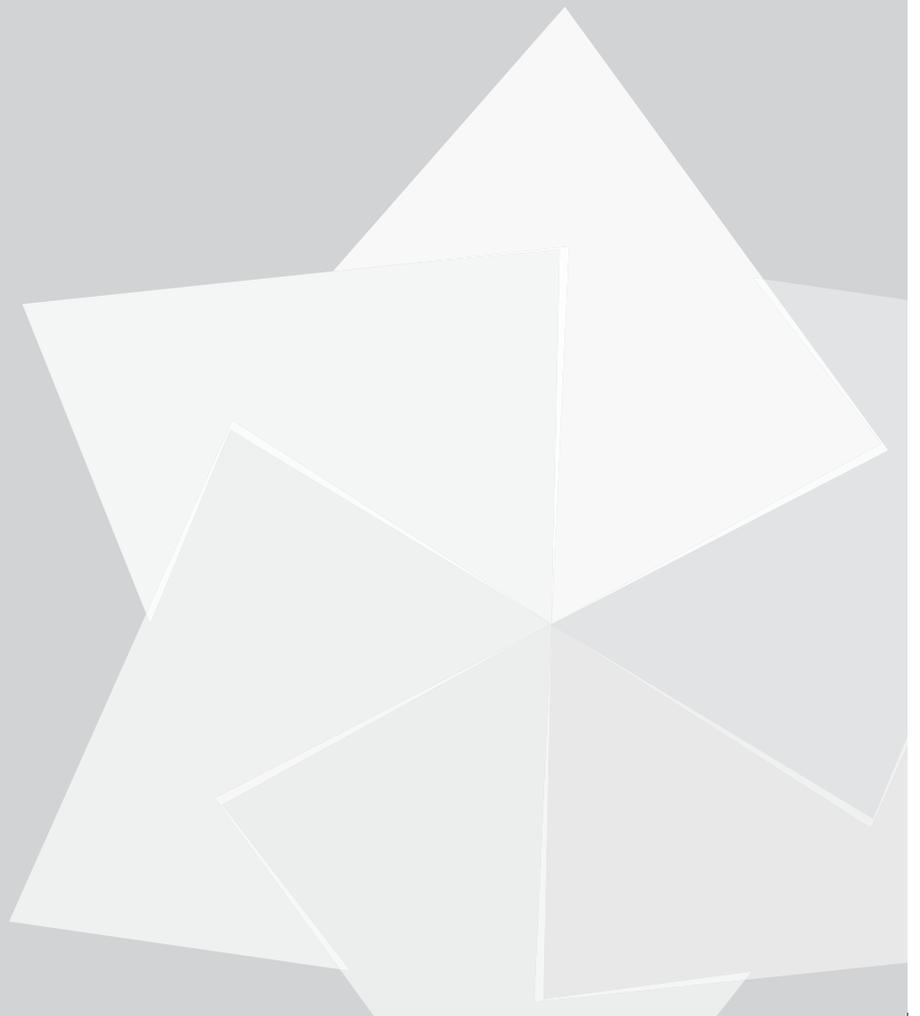
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more!*



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Erasmus+ is the EU Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. Education, training, youth and sport can make a major contribution to help tackle socio-economic changes, the key challenges that Europe will be facing until the end of the decade, and to support the implementation of the European policy agenda for growth, jobs, equity and social inclusion. In the time frame 2014-2020 the program will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad.

Key Action 1

Learning mobilities of individuals

Key Action 1 aims to encourage the mobility of students, staff, volunteers, youth workers, and young people. Organisations can arrange to send or receive students and staff to or from participating countries, as well as organise teaching, training, learning and volunteering activities.

Key Action 2

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Key Action 2 is designed to develop the education, training, and youth sectors through five main activities:

- ▶ Strategic partnerships to support innovation in the sector as well as joint initiatives to promote cooperation, peer-learning, and the sharing of experience.
- ▶ Knowledge Alliances to foster innovation in and through higher education together with businesses, and beyond, contributing to new approaches to teaching and learning, entrepreneurship in education, and the modernisation of higher education systems in Europe.

- ▶ Sector Skills Alliances to tackle the skills gap and ensure a better alignment of vocational education and training with labour market needs. There are opportunities to modernise VET, exchange knowledge and best practices, encourage working abroad, and increase the recognition of qualifications.
- ▶ Capacity-building projects in the field of higher education to support the modernisation, accessibility, and internationalisation of higher education in Partner Countries.
- ▶ Capacity-building projects in the field of youth to support the development of youth work, non-formal learning, and volunteer work, as well as promote non-formal learning opportunities with Partner Countries.

Key Action 3

Support for policy reform

Key Action 3 aims to increase the participation of young people in democratic life, especially in discussions with policy makers, as well as developing knowledge in the fields of education, training, and youth.



Find out more: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/>

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1: Intro duction



Chapter 1: Introduction

Hello! Feeling particularly socially and civically competent today? Don't worry, no-one does. But all is not yet lost.

This publication is the result of a three year project (two of which we spent meeting regularly, researching and testing methods), involving youth and youth-workers from Lithuania, Poland and the Czech Republic.

We set out on this journey because we, the partner organisations, felt that we lacked good methods and approaches that would include young people, who we struggled to reach so far, in our activities. We really wanted to support and engage young people in local community activities, in active civic and democratic participation such as volunteering and membership in NGOs and youth councils.

Our hope was that we could provide youth educators with knowledge and methodologies that could enable them to reach more young people and create really meaningful learning experiences with and for them. Simply put, our intention was to provide a good framework to develop just the right activity for the right target group and the right environment.

Why social and civic competences?

All over the EU (and particularly in East-Central Europe) the level of empowerment and participation of young people is shockingly low. In order to foster active citizenship, it's essential to develop social and civic competences. The EU has even defined them as part of the key competences necessary for personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and employability in a knowledge society (It's true! Check out this document "2006/962/EC"). It's also really important to professionalise those who work with young people in non-formal education to develop these competences.

Citizenship and Participation in Lithuania, Poland and the Czech Republic

According to a study by Eurostat in 2011, the proportion of young people (aged 15–24) who had taken part in non-formal learning activities in the four weeks preceding the survey in the EU-27 was 9 %. In Poland, the participation rate was below 2 %, in Lithuania – 7.5 % and in Czech Republic – 10.2 % (to compare – in Denmark the rate was the highest – 34.4 %).

Non-formal education in this context meant extracurricular education and recreational activities that often focus on the local community, active civic and democratic participation of young people, or the prevention of social exclusion (EU Youth report 2012). On average, one in four young Europeans was involved in voluntary activities in 2011 (PL – around 15 %, CZ – 22 %, LT – nearly 30 %) – op. cit. When engaged in volunteering, approximately half of young individuals chose to contribute to the improvement of their local community. On average, the proportion of young people (aged 15–30) that have participated in the activities of a local organisation aimed at improving one’s local community and/or local environment is 11% (PL 9 %, LT 12 %, CZ 8 %), in the activities of various other organisations is only 8%, and in a political organisation or a political party it is 5 %.

The Flash Eurobarometer ‘Youth on the Move’ confirms the preference of young people for being active in non-governmental and local associations rather than in political parties (as being easier and more effective). Moreover as in the case of non-institutional forms of participation, young people seem to prefer interaction via the Internet and its services to traditional kinds of political participation. The potential offered by this form of civic involvement for mobilising the interest and commitment of young people should be, in the view of the European Commission, fully acknowledged and supported (Draft 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (EU Youth Strategy 2010–2018)).

The partnership

All three partner organisations organise and run educational activities with young people, using non-formal education. We had worked together on other projects previously and knew we could count on each other to be committed to this project. We’re all really different, but we also share common traits: being non-profit organisations working with young people on an everyday basis and promoting the empowerment, participation and active citizenship of young people in natural ways. By working together, we could help each other to improve our approaches to working with young people, particularly those that we have not been able to reach yet, and who are not in school, employment or training.

So we set out together to explore how we might better tailor our educational initiatives to the needs of young people, especially in these days, when the world of youth education is more and more dynamic and the internet plays a big role in their life.

The project's implementation

In late autumn 2015 we started this challenging process. In our project we foresaw 5 main steps to developing our final result, which you hold in your hands right now:

- ▷ Researching what methods are already out there in the world, targeted at developing social and civic competences.
- ▷ Elaboration of a framework and methodology that can help us to create our own methods and activities.
- ▷ Testing the methods we created and gathering feedback.
- ▷ Collectively writing this publication, “Pathways”, so that we can share it others.
- ▷ Disseminating and sharing it as far and wide as possible for the benefit of as many people working with youth as possible.

This is quite a standard structure of a lot of projects. But this is not a publication written by a bunch of really experienced youth trainers and non-formal education experts. Our group was a wild mixture of young people, some as young as 16, students with a little bit of experience in non-formal education, but also seasoned youth-work professionals. And we literally created this publication and everything that's in it together.

In these two years we provided space and time for 30 people interested in youth social and civic activation and youth education to work together. We met three times for about a week each, showing each other how we approach non-formal education in different ways, the results of our research. We tested methods that we had found in our research and we created new ones together, using the Learning Continuum through the Activity Development Canvas.

The content

This publication has chapters, as books do, and if you're reading this you're almost done with the first one! Good job!

The 2nd chapter is all about the WHAT. If we want to support young people in developing social and civic competences, we need to have some idea of what those actually are. This chapter was written collectively by all the participants together, a very exciting, challenging, but ultimately rewarding process.

In the 3rd chapter, we share with you some of the methods that we found during our research. We particularly picked methods to share with you in that chapter that we tested and really loved. We've been either participating in them ourselves or we experimented with them during some of our meetings. Even though we didn't invent them from scratch, we don't think they're very widely known and so we wanted to put them on a stage to share with the world.

The 4th chapter is all about Non-Formal Education and the Learning Continuum. It's a bit theoretical, but really nice and important. Here we basically lay out the foundation for our creative work and introduce the tool that we created to develop participant centric and contextual activities.

After that, naturally, we will show you what we've done with all that we learned and the activity-development-methodology that we created is in chapter 5. There you'll see descriptions of a wide diversity of activities that we created in order to work with young people towards developing social and civic competences.

Towards the end, we then spend some time in chapter 6 on the topic of recognition and validation of the learning that happens in non-formal education. This is a super complex topic, but it's very important, particularly when you work with young people that have some distance from traditional formal education institutions and mainstream non-formal education organisations. How do you show that, and show what someone has learned, so that they can be recognised for their effort and increased competence? We have some ideas.

At this point, you have probably only one question left: Who are these cool organisations that put so much care and work into this book that you hold in your hands? Well, lucky you! We'll tell you in chapter 7.

We hope this publication will improve your understanding of social and civic competences and will inspire volunteers, youth educators, youth workers and other practitioners to develop their own activities which will be attractive for the young people they work with and will empower them to take an active part in social and civic life.

Enjoy!

2: #@?!


Chapter 2: #@?! Civic and social competences #@?!

“Civic competences”, “social competences” – it sounds very fancy, doesn’t it? These big terms can be interpreted in many ways. And they are confusing enough to mean whatever you want them to mean.

Is being unquestionably patriotic a civic competence? Why not? Or is it rather a civic competence to hold your community to the highest standards and criticise it passionately? Is the ability to easily talk with people a social competence? Or is it rather a sign that you’re an extrovert?

We’ve been thinking a lot about what these terms ‘Civic Competences’ and ‘Social Competences’ mean to us. We’ve explored theories and materials from big and small institutions, scientific studies and anecdotes from our lives. We even asked the internet what it thinks. Here is our take – it makes sense to us. We hope it makes sense to you, too.

As human beings we have a deep need for communities. We are ‘social animals’ (and we’re far from being the only ones – think about dolphins, monkeys, wolves... or even sheep as well). Being surrounded by other members of our species gives us feeling of security and peace. We needed people around us to stay alive in prehistoric times, with all those wild animals and whatnot around. There are no sabre-toothed tigers to eat us anymore, but the deep need for community, for identification with others and a common and shared purpose is still strong in us.

We reflect ourselves in comparison to others. That doesn’t mean that we only shape our identity based on what others think of us (that would be sad), but we look for examples on how to be in our environment – first from our parents and siblings and later our friends and classmates. And we also take the reactions of others as feedback to help us figure out who to be and what paths to take as we develop our sense of self. Being isolated from others for most people isn’t a great feeling. In fact, isolation is actually a real form of torture. Paradoxically, living in big and diverse communities isn’t a rainbow coloured cocktail of happiness and harmony either.

We need Social Competences to be comfortable and balanced in our community. Civic Competences help us to understand how this community works and how we can develop it further according to our needs and with respect to the needs of others.

It is through active participation in society and through the belief of every single member of the community that they can actually change what is important for that community that we can progress. But this attitude doesn't come from itself. It needs an enabling environment that allows young people to shape their lives and have repeated experiences that their actions have an impact. And it needs the drive and passion of actually wanting to work for positive change in their environments. For a democracy to be effective and work well, it needs active citizens who care about both: themselves and those they are close to, as well as the whole system.

Here are some concrete examples of what we mean when we talk about these competences.

Social

- ▷ Cooperation with others;
- ▷ Empathy;
- ▷ Communication;
- ▷ Reaching compromise;
- ▷ Synergy of people's activities
- ▷ Etc.

Civic

- ▷ Active participation;
- ▷ Being interested in solving problems of the civic society;
- ▷ Involvement in local community;
- ▷ Knowing how your political and economic system works;
- ▷ Etc.

By living in a particular society or community, each person creates their own value system, which helps them to navigate their lives. It is created by everything that we learn and know, by the experiences that we've had since early childhood, by the behaviours we're observing in those that surround us, especially parents and family, friends, teachers, authorities... Our values and the values of our community cause us to form our attitudes. Our value system is constantly changing and evolving as we have new experiences or gain new knowledge.

We develop skills that enable us to operate meaningfully in our community. None of these aspects, values, attitudes, knowledge or skills are independent. They are inter-dependent. A change or shift in one may lead to changes in others. If we want to be free, cool and happy, we need to work constantly on balancing of all these aspects of ourselves and to boost thus our personal, social and civic competences.

Let's explore some of these Social and Civic Competences in more detail. We felt that particularly communication, empathy, active participation and involvement in our communities are fundamentally important when it comes to civic and social competences.



Communication

"You cannot not communicate" Paul Watzlawick

It's simple, but it's true: Living in a community involves constant communication. We talk, write, listen, see and read every waking moment of our existence. Being a competent communicator is more than just being a great writer or a passionate public speaker.

Being a great communicator also means that you're able to understand yourself, that crazy inner dialogue in your head. It means that you can also understand that someone else might have a similarly confusing dialogue in their head and that you have some idea what those different voices might be saying. That's why you are able to get what they mean, not just what they say. Being a great communicator means that you find ways that make it easy for others to hear you and that you are aware of all the different ways that you communicate: your body, your voice, your face and your words. You understand how different environments influence how you might perceive others and how they might perceive you – be that on a public bus, on the internet or in a cafe.

You can map communication competences along a path of becoming more and more competent, starting from basic communication skills to the highest level: deep empathy. This can often be related to someone's age, but there are many exceptions. Just imagine some strange uncle that just cannot understand what veganism is or a 5 year old who can describe the meaning of friendship better than anyone you've ever heard.

At a basic level we are able to talk **about** general facts: weather, sports, what we can see, touch, smell etc.

At the next level we might be able to speak about what these facts **mean** for us. We analyse the facts and make conclusions, which we are able to use for planning our future.

Being further developed in our communications skills, we might be able to combine what we know and see from the outside with what we **feel**.

We analyse the relevance of our feelings and emotions for making decisions and for understanding the world around us.

And finally, as highly competent communicators, we can **feel the emotions of others** and include that understanding into how we communicate with the world surrounding us. At that stage, we're able to feel empathy for others – a core ingredient for peaceful and thriving communities.

The master level then includes **abstract thinking**. Naming abstract concepts, working with them, constructing them and de-constructing. Describing them to others so that they can imagine them as we see them. To understand each other on this complex level can be very hard, especially when the opposite emotions of the speakers come in.



Empathy

Empathy is like ‘walking in someone else’s shoes’. Just without the shoes and without the walking. Empathy is the capacity to understand another person’s experience from their perspective and to accept it as their truth (even if you disagree with it).

Being the social animals that we are, it is crucially important for us to be listened to, heard, cared for and understood. Taking care of someone else and understanding their thoughts, actions and feelings is one of our inborn qualities. We could call it a “helping gene”. This, by the way, goes beyond our species. There are therapeutic methods involving dolphins, dogs and horses. Particularly for those for whom interaction with other humans can easily be overwhelming, being cared for by and caring for an animal can have significant healing power, as the need for understanding and being understood is so fundamental in us. And it is a lot easier to be empathetic for others, when we feel safe, strong and confident with who we are. Some people might even go as far as calling it a prerequisite.

Empathy gets easily confused with sympathy. Empathy is not about being sorry for someone or giving advice and showing how things are not quite so bad.

Empathy is about connection, about accepting someone's perception of themselves and their world as true and then sharing in their pain or joy or confusion.

It is not easy to be empathetic. Stress and obscurity around unknowns can make it really hard to see and accept someone else's perspective or feelings as we are so busy keeping ourselves steady and rooted. The more distant someone is to your



Brené Brown on
Empathy

community, the harder it is to have empathy. Feeling someone else's world is much easier if they share our own world; if they share our values and attitudes. To have empathy with someone who has different values, who seemingly lives in a different universe requires a great amount of energy, calmness, psychological security and, as cheesy as it may sound, love for the other's humanity.

Active Participation and Involvement

Participating and involving yourself in your community means so many things. Yes, it is the voting and taking part in demonstrations, making or initiating change proactively. But it goes deeper than that. It is the willingness to identify and solve problems, issues, and challenges. It's being interested in your society and community and a belief in yourself that you can make a difference. It is caring about your environment and having the ability to decide for yourself what you want to do to shape it. It is being interested in what is happening and telling others about what is happening. Not just the things that concern you directly, but also those that concern others. It is the ability to identify social problems and to address them publicly. To find common interest and optimal solutions for you and the community as a whole. It is your conscious participation in the democratic process, because of your understanding of how democracy functions. At the core it is the feeling of being a part of your community and an acceptance of the responsibility that comes with it.

So why do we think that it's so important to participate actively in your community? If you are not going to elections or not involved in initiatives to shape your neighbourhood, you let other people make decisions that directly impact your life. As our societies become 'older', it becomes harder for young people to be entrusted with responsibilities. We, as young people, are not going to be invited to the table just like that.

There are too many people already there, who've been there a long time already. If we want to shape our environment and be a part of the decisions that impact us, we have to pro-actively show up, stand up and demand to be heard. What makes this even more challenging, participating in democratic processes is also not as attractive as some competing ways to spend our time. You can get a more direct positive experience by being active only in your social life (e.g. hanging out with your friends, doing sports, visiting the cinema, etc.). Engaging in the processes that shape our world, whether it's by showing up to city council meetings, engaging with an NGO, or organising a neighbourhood initiative is exhausting, often frustrating and sometimes even boring. But it is also extremely exciting and rewarding, and necessary.

In Poland, there is currently a wave of activation among young people. In a time of polarisation, a small group of young people are becoming more active. However, a much bigger group is separating itself even more from society. They say that they don't agree with any of the political parties and will not vote for programs that don't fit with their ideas for life. Their protest is 'silent'. Many of the current challenges in Polish politics are abstract: rule of law, democracy, free press, etc. Young people are required (or at least the public discourse tells them) to be very mobile, flexible and business-oriented. But why should you care for your community if you know that you may need to leave it soon in pursuit of a better job elsewhere?

Topics that directly influence young people's lives bring more of them onto the streets, such as women's rights.

On the other hand all over Poland there are a lot of youth actions and initiatives which have extraordinary influence on local communities and young people themselves. The actions are implemented mostly on local and regional level. The initiatives are implemented by informal groups, youth non-governmental organisations, schools, youth councils, etc.

For our publication's purpose we would like to mention those which we could observe and support because they were in the Centrum Sektor 3 (in Wrocław, Poland).

The first one was a regular, weekly action over two years. It was implemented by two groups of students from the local secondary school (14-15 years old). The youngsters who were involved in the voluntary service life in their school decided to run computer classes for seniors (people over 65 years old). They were the initiators and leaders of the classes. They prepared the topics and structure of the activities. Always motivated, smiling, patient and very well-prepared they helped to solve and explain any IT issues which were problematic for their participants.

The second one was a youth initiative project involving youngsters and seniors in different activities such as: discussion, manual art, dancing, trips, etc.

The idea and execution came from two local volunteers (university students) who could see the need for activities for seniors and the existing generation gap which should be worked out. They created space for mutual sharing of skills, ideas, points of view and ways of spending time together. The results of the action were integration, learning from each other and overcoming the way of thinking that participants could act only in the same age/generation groups.

It's not unusual that people blame their surroundings (starting with other people and ending with the governmental institutions) for the failure which they face in their daily lives. Lithuanian youth are not an exception – discontent with the situation and distrust in the possible changes are some of the foundations for the indifference and passiveness in political and social life. Furthermore, the involvement of the Lithuanian youth often depends on the area where they live.

On the one hand, the possibility to express yourself through a youth organisation or initiative is higher in the bigger cities than in the small, less-inhabited regions. On the other hand, there are still a lot of passive young people because they do not know how or where to start. And sometimes the educational offers simply can't foster civic and social competences as they should and that does not fully depend on the area where the young people live. However, there are initiatives that involve youth all over Lithuania and connect them for the same aim – awareness of the social and political situation in Lithuania.

The heavy increase in the number of youth organisations and initiatives in Lithuania shows the interest among young people in Lithuania in involvement in economic, political and social life for the past few years. A great example could be an initiative by young people in Lithuania which is called "Gyvenimas per brangus" ("Life is too expensive"). This is an informal social movement declining social guarantees. The movement's main organising body is the Assembly, where all have equal rights to speak, and decisions are made by consensus. Open to all, it is summarised in the following rules: 1. No party interests. 2. No hatred and conspiracy theories. 3. No stable commanders or leaders. All important decisions are negotiated together. 4. No instruction, life, youth worship, millennium vision and so on.

When young people start their own initiatives, others want to join them because they feel more like a community and it's not set by older people. These kind of activities are like a snowball effect and year after year it's getting better.

During our work we found out that there are many young people with interest in public matters in the Czech Republic, but still the majority of young people are passive and not participating.

The topic is now getting more attention in the media thanks to an engaged young activist (Jakub Čech, 16 years old (in 2017)).

He asked his local authorities and various offices questions about problematic decisions and they refused to answer him because of his age. This got some media attention. He then brought these issues to a higher office, which stated that there is no legal basis for refusals based on age.

We think that young activists can serve as an example for other young people. They show that by being active you can make a change and achieve some recognition for your actions.

Civic and Social Competences are, of course, much more and much bigger than just Communication, Empathy and Participation, but for us, these were topics that moved us a lot throughout our project.

A completely different perspective to look at this is to break up and mix around these two competences into four different areas: Values, Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills. The Council of Europe recently came up with a great model on Competences for a democratic culture, combining the ideas of tons



of different models and actually arriving at a distinction of Values, Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills. We think it's pretty neat. Check it out here: <https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07>

When we were thinking about what to put into these quadrants, we came up with the definitions below. Compare it to the CoE model.

What's missing in ours? What's missing in theirs?

Values

- ▷ Human dignity
- ▷ Democracy
- ▷ Equality
- ▷ Fairness

Knowledge

- ▷ Knowledge and understanding of languages and communication
- ▷ Knowledge and understanding of political systems, society rules and our environment

Attitudes

- ▷ Respect and tolerance
- ▷ Responsibility
- ▷ Openness
- ▷ Positive beliefs about ourselves and about the society

Skills

- ▷ Empathy and ability to listen and observe and understand
- ▷ Analytical and critical thinking skills
- ▷ Co-operation and communication skills
- ▷ Can react to things, be flexible and adapt yourself to new (constantly changing) situations
- ▷ Skills to learn and study effectively

So this is what we learned about Civic and Social Competences. No society, no community, no togetherness is possible without them. But how do you acquire them, particularly when you grow up in an environment that doesn't teach you that you're valuable and your opinions and contributions to your community are appreciated? We looked around a lot for methods that can help young people develop these civic and social competences. We collected them on this website <http://findthethod.eu> in an app, which you can get here <http://findthethod.eu/app>, but we would like to highlight some in this publication. We hope you find them as useful and interesting as we did.

3: All that we found



Chapter 3: All that we found

Before we met for the first time, each group researched some great methods we could explore and see how well they could help us and other young people to develop Civic and Social Competences. We experimented with them and would like to introduce you to the ones we thought were the most innovative and interesting. We also picked activities that, even though we did not invent them, are not necessarily written down somewhere else and we wanted them to be accessible to more people. Enjoy!

This is our pond!

In a nutshell, what is this method about?

“This is our pond” is a role play game, which combines field work and discussion. The scenario is that there is a pond in the village and the community has to decide on its future in a referendum following a discussion between three parties with different opinions. Each party has to go to the field and collect data, which supports their opinion.

Thanks to the fieldwork element of this method we can use an actually existing local problem during its course. It does not need be the pond, it could also be a park, forest, old house on the square, etc. The participants will thus get more familiar with their own city and local issues.

Which Social and Civic Competences does this method develop?

The main aim is to develop competence of collecting and building results using analytical and critical thinking and based on various input data. Of course the competences of teamwork (or managing the team), presentation of one’s own opinion and creation of a common conclusion among different opinion groups will be strengthened during this activity as well.

The participants will directly see that even though the same input data is used, their final results can be completely different, thanks to the fact that the filtration and processing is influenced by one's own opinion; this could lead to a wrong conclusion in the end. Participants should also learn or at least reflect on analytical and more objective approaches to interesting negotiation processes. The participants will become familiar with public decision making process and steps which should come before presenting their opinion on the local level (collection of documents, research, work with inputs, presentation of the results, etc.).

How much time does this method need?

Be sure to reserve 6-8 hours of your time, if you want to successfully go through this method.

What group is this method best for (size, age, etc.)?

It is great for groups of teenagers (ca. 13–18 years) and young adults (ca. 17–26 years), but also very useful for youth workers and teachers. The ideal group size is 15–20 people.

What materials should be organised? What space is best for this method?

You should prepare enough pencils and papers for everybody; cameras or voice recorders could be also be of use, as well as literature (atlas of plants, key for determining water animals, books on history of the place, etc.) to get more background information about the place; for further research and presentation of the results you will need computers/laptops and a projector.

This method deals with real life places or buildings, so you need the “field” (like surroundings of a pond or a lake, a city) for the fieldwork and a seminar room for further work (research, data processing, etc.) and presentations.

What step-by-step instructions does the facilitator need to follow to do this right?

At the beginning, explain the context to the participants:

The pond close to your city might not exist anymore in a short time. The land was bought by a businessman, who wants to build a new shopping centre there. Inhabitants of the city are divided into three groups, each having a different opinion – supporters of the shopping centre, opponents of the shopping centre, experts.

Fieldwork (around the pond/lake), 3–5 hours

We describe the main topic: The pond is going to be dried out, filled up by debris and in its place a new shopping centre will be built. On one hand the number of working opportunities will rise, on the other hand the city will lose a recreational area. There is no “right” solution.

Then we split up the participants into three groups:

- ▶ **Supporters of the shopping centre** – they see the economic benefit of the investment; the positive impact of the pond for the life in the city is none in their view and they do everything for the approval of building of the shopping centre.
- ▶ **Opponents of the shopping centre** – according to them, the economic impact of the investment will be none, on the other hand the city would lose an important recreational area; it may even cause a disruption in functioning of the ecosystem. They are willing to do everything to ensure that the construction does not start, even lie down in the way of the bulldozers.
- ▶ **Experts** – a group of scientists living in the city; for them, science always has to be objective and unbiased. They look at the problem from the view of data and its objective evaluation. What is the real biological and social value of the pond and what is the real benefit of the planned shopping centre? The experts have no emotionally based opinion on the situation of their own.

In the field each group’s task is to collect data, which supports their position. They can use a public opinion poll among local inhabitants or their statements. They also take the whole pond into consideration using the optics of their opinion (pond’s fauna and flora, its usability for recreational purposes, accessibility from the city centre, etc.).

They can also use publicly available sources about the specific location. Here it's good to give the group as little instructions as possible and let them use their creativity. The outcomes can have the form of statistics, texts, photos, videos, etc.

At the end of this phase every group is expected to have complete data, which they then use for the creation of a presentation defending their opinion.

Data processing (seminar room), 2–3 hours

The participants process the data, which they collected in the field: they prepare graphs, select photographs, edit videos and create presentations.

When finished, every group has results generated from the data and a presentation ready to defend their opinion.

Closure (seminar room), 1.5 hours

We give each group 15 minutes for their presentation, which is based on data they gathered in the field. Questions from the other opinion parties follow. In the end all groups should come to a common conclusion, weighing up all individual statements, which support the individual options. Different methods can be used for this and we should select one which is suitable for us, as well as our group. This could be a panel discussion, voting or consensus building methods.

Debriefing (seminar room), 0.5 hours

In the reflection following the exercise, reflect on what happened and what might be learnt from that. You could use some of these questions:

- ▶ How do you feel now that the exercise is over? How did you feel during the exercise?
- ▶ Which part was the hardest for you, when did you or your team struggle?
- ▶ Did you have a strategy, when you were gathering data? What was it? Did it work? Why didn't you form a strategy?
- ▶ What did you think of the other two teams? Do you think you came up with a fair solution that works for everyone?
- ▶ How, do you think, are these decisions typically made? Did we simulate reality, or were we totally wrong?
- ▶ What can we learn from this experience? What do you take from it?

Backpack journalism

In a nutshell, what is this method about?

Backpack journalism is based on the individual, who is editor, publisher and photographer in one person. So basically you carry the whole editorial office in your backpack. Everything is built on the idea that you write about life around you without thinking about the number of readers. The articles describe the world through the author's own experience, and they are often the part of the action (unlike the classical editor). The topics of the articles are not based on research or press releases; you just pack and go out, speak to someone you've never met; there are a lot of topics around you.

The participants of this activity will go to the city centre to write a "backpack" article about the life story of an inhabitant. They will be facing a difficult mission alone and how they deal with this challenge will depend solely on them.

Which Social and Civic Competences does this method develop?

Participants will discover the border of their comfort zone, as well as their own reaction after they cross this border. They will have to talk to strangers, filter data and be creative, so the competences of communication, data processing, moderating are developed. The stories of the city's inhabitants are really often inspiring and motivating for civic engagement.

How much time does this method need?

Be sure to reserve 4–6 hours.

What group is this method best for (size, age, etc.)?

It's great for teenagers (ca. 13 – 18 years), young adults (ca. 17 – 26 years), youth workers, and teachers. This method is suitable for any size of group.

What materials should be organised? What space is best for this method?

You will need notebook, pencil, also a smartphone would be great, and maybe a camera and voice-recorder would be nice to use.

What step-by-step instructions does the facilitator need to follow to do this right?

The output of this activity will be an article with some photos about the life story of one inhabitant of the city.



Motivational introduction (0.3 hours)

Participants are acquainted with the basic ideas of Backpack journalism. There are a lot of descriptions on the internet, which can be used for this purpose (for example https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backpack_journalism)

Collecting the stories (2.5–4 hours)

The method is based on the individual person, so the participants will go alone to the city centre, look for a suitable topic, talk with inhabitants and write the article. The outcome of this phase should be the final article and it depends on our preference, whether we need the article in electronic form for future use.

Sharing (1–2 hours)

The participants share their adventures and experiences gained during the process of looking for the topics and discuss individual human life stories. In these stories we are trying to find a moral and inspiration for the whole group. We moderate the discussion and try to identify the moment, when the individual participants had to leave their comfort zone and how they reacted to that, how they chose the person to talk to, etc.

You could ask questions such as:

- ▶ How did you decide what you want to write about?

- ▷ What were the reactions of the people in the city, when you asked them to write an article about their life story?
- ▷ Which was your biggest surprise during this exercise?
- ▷ What was your biggest challenge and how did you deal with it?
- ▷ Were some parts of the story inspiring for your life/work? Could you see in the story some consequences for the situation of the society in these days? Could you see in the story an inspiration for solving an actual difficulty in your life/your work/society?
- ▷ Did you learn anything about yourself during this exercise?

The written articles can then be put together into a brochure for all participants or be shared publicly.

Social Kitchen

In a nutshell, what is this method about?

The method is about involving the local community in common actions, arranging for them (and with them) a space to meet each other, spend time together, exchange opinions, discuss things. To create the spark for interactions among people we ask them to cook some food at home and bring it for a group meeting. During the meeting participants share the food and – in an informal atmosphere – discuss the topics important for them as a community (ex: about the events which can be planned and implemented in the local area and using local resources; why we throw out so many food; how to live healthy).

Which Social and Civic Competences does this method develop?

The Social Kitchen is mostly about creativity and teamwork. In some aspects there is space for development of empathy and sensitivity as well.

How much time does this method need?

To implement this method you need 2–3 hours. But also you cannot forget to keep around 2 weeks for preparation (such as: creation of FB event; promotion in social media; food preparation).

What group is this method best for (size, age, etc.)?

The method can be addressed to any age group. But taking into consideration the main objective – integration of local community – you can try to involve representatives of different age groups living in the same area.

The size limit of the group can be flexible – you can implement the method with 10 or 40 people. But the recommendation is to work with a group of 20–30. This group size can be easily moderated by one person.

What materials should be organised?

For preparation and implementation of the method you need to involve a person/persons who will take care of moderation during the meeting (it is good to involve one moderator for each 6 participants). Also you have to prepare the rules of participation, arrange the meeting place (suitable for the group size and weather conditions), tables and chairs for the participants, plastic utensils and cutlery, waste bags, paper towels, FB event and posters, camera, flipcharts papers, markers.

What space is best for this method?

For this method you need a space adequate for the group size and weather conditions, which has access to a kitchen (or at least a place where participants can heat food which they prepared) and running water. Also it's important to find somewhere which doesn't cost a lot (or ideally which is free :D). The recommendation can be to ask in the local school, community club, seniors club, etc.

What step-by-step instructions does the facilitator need to follow to do this right?

Find moderators for the activity, whose role is to keep the group on the track for the main aim of the meeting, motivate the group to come with the ideas, discuss, draw conclusions and find out the best solution within the topic of the meeting. The moderators are responsible of keep an eye on the smooth discussion and interaction among participants (ex. discussion – no arguing; solution – no criticising the ideas).

Promotion should start at least two weeks before the meeting. It should be run online (FB event) and through posters and flyers (leave them in public places in the local community – shops, library). Do not forget to write what the meeting is about. You have to come up with clear rules of participation and preparation of the food (e.g. how and when to register; what kind of food to prepare). You should have a form for the participant info about what kind of food they would like to cook, or you can ask participants to cook something under the topic of seasonal veggies, a specific country's cuisine, etc.

Then there comes the part of implementation. Start the meeting not later than 15 minutes after the planned time. Welcome everybody, highlight the aim of the meeting. Then introduce and implement the plan of the meeting starting from a short introduction to the main topic which is connected to the chosen need of the local community and the plan of work/discussion. The group work is focused on generating ideas under the chosen topic in the atmosphere of enjoying the food which participants cooked.

Invite participants to eat – give them some time to talk together and meet each other. Then invite them to common group work, in teams of 5–6 persons.

Each team has one assigned moderator. Here the role of moderator is to make sure people follow the plan and introduce the rules of common work (participants cannot judge any idea – just write all of them down; they need creative/crazy ideas – it's easier to reject ideas than come up with some; each participants should say as many ideas as possible; work with the ideas of others and develop them). All ideas should be written on the paper. This part finishes when participants don't have any more ideas.

Afterwards, invite all participants to choose one, ask them to present their ideas. Then sum up the group work with some questions to the groups – e.g. was it difficult/easy to work in a group? What kind of challenges/easiness did you have? How many ideas did you have? How difficult/easy was to choose only one idea? How easy/difficult was work under the assigned rules? What can we do/what we need to put our ideas into practice?

After this part invite participants one more time to come together. Thanks to the food, the atmosphere is not so official and gives participants space for interaction.

Town for youth

In a nutshell, what is this method about?

The main goal of this activity is to find a strong voice of youth in the local decision-making process and strategical planning by creating spaces for young people's ideas. It mobilises various young people, schools and city hall. From a bottom-up approach you bring the youth agenda to the city hall and the town can then reflect on the real needs of its young people.

Which Social and Civic Competences does this method develop?

The method is mainly focused on developing self-expression, communication and presentation skills. Young people should be confident, able to push their opinions and not be scared to share their ideas. They are also learning to reflect on their wishes and needs in a critical and realistic manner, taking the responsibility for their opinions on public matters and communicating with (political) authority. On various stages, various competences can be reached and built upon.

How much time does this method need?

This is a pretty long-term activity. You need to arrange at least two meetings and give your participants time to discuss their ideas. Recommended time for each meeting is 2–3 hours but you also need some weeks for preparation and organisation. Beforehand, involving the city hall could be also challenging and time consuming.

What group is this method best for (size, age, etc.)?

For this method it is important that as many young people from your town as possible participate as you wish to prioritise needs of young people in the whole town. Try to involve many young people in your town, focus especially on elementary and high schools. The schools can take part and take responsibility for first stages of the process as well.

What materials should be organised?

You need papers, pens, flip-charts and markers (more facilitation stuff when necessary).

What space is best for this method?

The ideal space for this activity is a room with capacity for about 50 – 60 people (if you manage to attract a huuuuuge number of young people, be smart and get a bigger room, a sound system and some more co-facilitators).

If you attract schools in the city for the initiative, the activity can happen on their premises in the first stage. The second stage (meeting) is more likely to be organised in some interesting place in the city – public hall, historical room in the city hall, theatre or similar.

What step-by-step instructions does the organiser need to follow to do this right?

This activity consists of several meetings and the sequence is important.

First, you need to convince your city hall, either the mayor or someone else who is responsible for youth or strategic planning in your town (it could also be organised on a regional level with several towns included, but that needs lots of organisation).

The city hall can help you to attract and commit schools in the town, and it makes it more serious. It would be great if the city hall could describe the whole process and initiative on the official website of the town. It also helps you to have clear map in mind of what is going on in the city.

To get the schools' commitment you need to inform them about the process and find a contact person, ideally the director or principal. The city mayor or official can also organise a meeting for the school directors or teachers where you can explain the initiative properly to them and get responsible persons to commit to their tasks. Or you can write an informational e-mail to all the schools (secondary schools, high schools, universities) in your town. Tell them that you are looking for various problems or challenges that young people face in your town and you want to collect as many ideas as possible. The schools can organise their own

meetings with young people, or you could suggest other ways how to collect the ideas. You could also prepare a questionnaire that you distribute to the schools, or the school councils or other student and pupil groups can help you. You need to think about the “good and willing people” and structures that can support you in your town. It’s important that it’s easy and ‘natural’ for the students to gather these issues and problems. You can also organise the first meetings within each school by yourself with your friends.

From each school you should first have written inputs of what young people from those schools consider as important in your town, what they would like to change or what they wish would happen in the city.

After collecting the first inputs from schools you can organise your bigger meeting. Set a time for the meeting and invite youth representatives of those schools and discuss the ideas they have collected from their classmates. It is good to have some good facilitator or moderator for the event, and to think about the methods used for boosting and balancing the discussion among participating young people. An experienced facilitator can help you to plan and run such a meeting.

During the meeting participants should set out all their ideas in one document, split them into categories (e. g. education, transport, sport and free time, public health). Ask the youth representatives to take this “wish list” back to their schools and discuss it with their fellow pupils and get their input again (or they can just publish it in school newspapers and inform others, and offer the possibility for them to contribute with their thoughts as well). It’s important that students also know the ideas from the others and they can add some more. Otherwise, even if they are not active yet, they might later complain that the project is not about the ideas of the youth in the city but only those participating.

After the feedback round in schools, set another meeting with the school representatives and open it for all other interested young people in the city. This also means creating the event and inviting more young people and local decision makers, who are in a position to do something about these problems (categories of issues). Find a nice place for the meeting and appoint a moderator and facilitators for each category.

Now it’s finally time for the deep thematic discussions. The moderator presents all the ideas and the young people discuss what is most important for them, where they can get more information about it, who are the right people in the city administration to talk to. In short – their issues and a strategy for how to tackle them.

When the young people have a clear idea about their demands and who are the right people to direct them to, organise another meeting between the youth and the local politicians and decision makers. During this meeting, the young people should present their requests and have an open discussion with the decision maker. The goal is to have a clear idea what it is possible to change, and how and when this can be done so that they can work together to improve their town as a community.

The city hall should take the proposal seriously, and the wider public should be informed about it in the town newspaper, TV, radio etc. The outcomes could be also included in the strategical documents of the city. It very much depends on the communication and commitment of the city hall from the beginning of the process.

After the final meeting you should again send e-mails to schools, to thank them for their cooperation, write an article for the local newspapers and spread the results – just try to publicise it as much as possible!

After this, you and the interested young people and school representatives can attend the regular city council meetings and hold the city hall accountable for how the city is doing what young people asked for. It's clear that it will take time, and it's good to ask how the project is going. Become active young citizens! :-) ...if you see that the city hall is not fulfilling what was promised, you can stand in the next local election with the same claims.

LARP Village

In a nutshell, what is this method about?:

In a Live Action Role Play (LARP) a group plays out a scenario. But they don't get a script. Rather, each person or team of people get background information on their history and who they are and based on that they have to improvise how to react to different situations. In this case, we experimented with a LARP that covers the topics of nationalism and history. It is a classroom format role-play where the group of students are divided into four different families in the Village. Every family has a set of values and very strong opinions described in the list of rules presented to all participants. They also have an attitude to each other based on historical events during the last 100 years. The aim of game and each family is conflict-solving with the help of voting. The symbolic meaning of the village, families and conflicts reflects real-world events and conflicts, and the educational impact is to focus and to help participants understand how human decision-making works in a long-term conflict.

Which Social and Civic Competences does this method develop?

The activity corresponds to real life situations, where young people can understand the importance of taking part in civic and public actions, such as voting, as well as reflect on the impact of personal decisions and what motivates us, believing in our own power, leadership, and being an important part of the community. It also helps to improve communication skills such as public speaking and self-confidence. The goal of the game is also to create a situation for a more in depth understanding of the mechanisms and feelings involved in human decision-making during conflicts.

Central questions raised by this game are:

- ▷ What role does history have in present-day conflicts?
- ▷ What drives nationalism and how is it justified by those involved?
- ▷ What might a long-term conflict solution look like in a situation where history plays a strong role?

In the LARP you can just use your imagination by creating your own character where the story could be changed at any time in the acting process. This game also helps to improve the abilities of improvisation, collaboration and personal expression.

How much time does this method need?

Be ready to spend 2–4 hours.

What group is this method best for (size, age, etc.)?

How big the group should be depends on game master (GM). We recommend having the group no bigger than 30 people to avoid difficulties of leading the process. And also, there should be no less than 10 participants.

The game is best for 15-year-olds and older, but can be run with younger people, depending on their experience with similar activities. It would be great if the players were able not only to read and follow the instructions but also to discuss and reflect to the situations presented in script.

What materials should be organised? What space is best for this method?

For the LARP village scenario it would be enough to have a big classroom where your group can move and act freely. The activity could be moved outside also, but not in a public place, so players don't lose attention.

The materials you will need for this game are scissors, pens, pencils, paper.

Handouts about families and conflict description/rules should be prepared by the GM. It would be cool if you could provide costumes, or at least some details which can help participants to feel more free in creating their characters.

What step-by-step instructions does the facilitator need to follow to do this right?



This particular LARP was created by Pedagogiskt Centrum (Pedagogical and Didactical Centre, Sweden). You can find many more specific descriptions for someLARPs created by youth organisations at these websites:

▷ <http://imaginaryrealms.org/>



▷ <http://larpfactorybookproject.blogspot.it/p/welcome.html>

The game is a metaphor for real-world events, but none of the events of the game can be directly translated to any particular event or type of events. Instead, the game is designed to create certain motivations and behaviours among the participants.

The game has three phases. First, you will introduce the participants to the theme. Then, you run the game itself. Last, you lead the post-game debriefing. All phases should be included, but if you absolutely must skip or change any part, the theme introduction is the least vital.

The purpose of the first phase – theme introduction – is to introduce the participants to the topic of the game, and prepare them for the main section. You can choose not to introduce the theme, but that might impair the participants' chances of making good observations during the game, and lose focus on the goal. You can begin by telling the participants what the game is about. For example: This is a role play about history and nationalism. You may also start with a short exercise where you ask the participants if they can give you examples of real world conflicts or wars. Gather 4–6 examples from the group. But don't discuss the conflict – the aim of this exercise is to help the participants remember facts they already know. Continue with introducing them to the fictional world of the village. The role play is about a village with four families that have a past/history, which makes their relationship pretty complicated. This is a remote village, and even though there is a law, the village typically resolves conflicts by voting. Whichever solution gets the most votes, all four families in the village have to obey. Each family has one vote. Some advice for running the game: make sure you've read the instructions and keep a copy of the plan close at hand for support, in case you forget the next step.

Try to keep moving around the game area all the time and listen in to what is happening. Through close observation during this phase, you will be able to help the participants remember the events of the game in the post-game discussion. You do not have to be worried if not all of the participants are ‘active’ during the course of the game. Even though some participants don’t speak or interact with others, they may still observe and reflect on the events of the game.

Let’s start the game by creating four groups (families). Try to make each group roughly the same size. (If any group is larger than the others, make this group the Collins or Daniels family.) You can form the groups in any way you like, choosing the colour card, giving numbers, etc.

Then tell them that groups will now get one family each to play. For example:

“I will now give you some information about the family you have to play. Make sure you read through the text and ask me if there’s anything you don’t understand. Make sure everyone in the group understands the text. When everyone has read it, I will ask each family to introduce themselves to the village.”

Share out the hand-outs about the families and give the participants some minutes to read through the text. Try to move around quietly and ask each group if everything is clear about the text. When everyone’s ready, tell that you will now have presentations of the families by giving explanation that the presentations aren’t something that has happened in the game world. They don’t have to talk to each other as they would if they were playing their families during the game – they can be more honest and so on. According to how much time you decided to dedicate for this game, you can fix the exact time for each part, for example, 5 min to prepare the presentation, 10 min for presentations, or you can just follow the situation and the needs of participants, and fix your own timing. Make sure each family gets equal time for these presentations, and that they manage to get the important facts in the presentation – remind them by asking questions otherwise.

Always start with Anderson, and then Borowic, Collins and Daniels. “Anderson family, can you tell us a little about yourselves?” It is important you’ve read the texts about the families before the game. In this way you can help the players to present their family by asking questions, if you find out they missed important facts. “How do you feel about the way some of the other families accuse you of having cheated Daniels and Borowic?”

After presentation, explain that now it is the time to move on the first conflict. Before handing out the conflict, read the text so that all can hear you. Explain that they are now going to read the solutions and talk to the other families to decide how they're going to vote. Inform them that they have 8–10 minutes to discuss the conflict, after this they have to vote. (If you want and have the time, allow them more time to discuss, but for non-role players 8–10 minutes is usually enough) For example: Please read about the conflict and discuss in your families which solution would be best for you. Pay attention and keep in mind that the other families will do same, and might disagree with you. Whenever you want to, you can visit the other families and try to convince them to vote in your favour. You have ten minutes, and when the time is up, you will have to reach a consensus within your family on how to vote. When you are ready, send one representative of your family to the middle of the room. When all four representatives have gathered, voting is done by showing the same number of fingers that corresponds to what solution you're voting for. If you want to vote for solution 1, show one finger. Number two, show two fingers. Everyone votes at the same time, to avoid strategic voting.

At this moment, it could be good to ask the group if they have any questions. Clarify any questions the participants have, then read the first conflict and hand out one copy of Conflict 1 to each family.

When the time to reach a consensus within their family is up, they send one member to the middle of the room. When all the representatives have gathered, start the voting process by counting down from three to zero. Voting result works like this: The solution that gets most votes is valid. If there is a tie between two solutions, the conflict is unresolved.

EXAMPLE BOX:

- ▷ Resolved conflict:
 - ▷ Alternative I: 1 vote
 - ▷ Alternative II: 1 vote
 - ▷ Alternative III: 2 votes – Winner
- ▷ Resolved conflict:
 - ▷ Alternative I: 0 vote
 - ▷ Alternative II: 1 vote
 - ▷ Alternative III: 3 votes – Winner

- ▷ Unresolved conflict:
 - ▷ Alternative I: 2 votes
 - ▷ Alternative II: 2 votes
 - ▷ Alternative III: 0 votes

After you finish voting on Conflict 1, continue repeating the procedure with Conflicts 2 and 3.

When you finish voting on all three conflicts, inform participants that the role play is over, and you will move on to reflection phase and discuss the events of the role play.

And now it is the time for discussion of the solutions they chose, and reflection. The purpose of the post-game discussion is to facilitate this process for the participants. During the discussion, the participants will have the option to come up with new, and better, solutions to the conflicts. This is a way of making the participants reflect on what would be a good and sustainable conflict resolution, and it can be a good strategy to discuss this further in relation to real world conflicts.

Begin the final phase by asking the participants to gather in a circle. No matter if they are standing or sitting. The main thing is to have everyone on the same level so that no one stands out. You are also in the circle and start the round by asking each person to say something about the game, anything they can think of right now. Remember, it doesn't have to be perfect or very elaborate and they can be honest. Don't reply or explain what they felt or experienced, the significant thing is just let them say what they have in their minds at the moment without analysing or judging opinions.

After the round is finished, it is the time to ask every family what it was like to play the Andersons, Borowic etc. If you think that supportive questions will help them, you can ask some.

The very important moment is to discuss the conflict solutions. You already know (from the instructions) the purpose of having quite bad solutions available during the game (boost conflicts, making hard choices). It's very important now that all participants get the option to talk about what they think would have been a good solution to the village problems – especially the last conflict. You can give the example that in the game, the solutions available to you were limited to the three options. Let's think: if you had had the opportunity to come up with your own solution, what would it be?

When you finish this talk try to find out if participants can find in this game any similarities to real-world conflicts. Try your best not to steer the reflection-discussion in any particular direction (the players will notice if you do) but help them elaborate their line of reasoning and argumentation.

And finally if you still have time, you can ask participants if they have any other thoughts about this role-play and help them to elaborate their thoughts.

Don't be surprised if your participants are able to give you advice or ideas of how to improve this game. It happens very often, students especially are able to give feedback for how to make the game/role play more 'fun'. It is really valuable feedback for you as facilitator and educator, so you should listen and consider their input. Keep in mind that the main objective of the LARP village is to help youngsters get a deeper understanding of how history and nationalism play a role in conflicts, and not just to play a 'fun game'. Of course to have fun is good but try your best to combine it with the main aim.

Handouts to print. "Families and conflicts"

ANDERSON

Your family have always been industrious and wise money spenders. You own the tools factory, which employs a lot of people in the village.

Your family moved here one hundred years ago. At that time, the village consisted solely of farmers and people here had a hard time getting by – many were poor. You offered to buy the land, and pay – at the time – a very reasonable sum for it. Both Borowic and Daniels picked up on the offer, but the Collins family decided they'd rather keep their land and remain poor.

Borowic used the money wisely and started a bank and a local food store.

It turned out that buying the land was a good investment, because a few years later the value of the land had increased tremendously. You managed to sell most of it to the forest industry, earning up to ten times the sum you had originally paid. Daniels wanted to cancel the selling and have their share of the profit. Of course, you said that wasn't possible – they had already agreed to sell the land, after all.

With the money earned from selling the land, you built the tools factory and could offer employment to the Daniels family.

Important values to your family are:

- ▷ *Good sense of business*

- ▷ *Flexibility*
- ▷ *Look forward; don't linger in the past*

Rules of the Village, when solving conflicts:

- ▷ *All families have one vote*
- ▷ *If one of the solutions gets more votes than any other, all families must accept this conflict solution*
- ▷ *If there is a tie between two solutions, the conflict is unresolved*

BOROWIC

You own the bank and the food store in the village. Your family have always been careful spenders, knowing the value of wise investments and savings. The other families call you cheap, but as soon as anyone is in trouble, they come to you, asking for loans

One hundred years ago, your family as well as the others owned a lot of land at that time, but times were hard and you had had several bad harvests in a row. It was then the Anderson family moved to the village, and offered to buy the land in return for a very acceptable sum of money. Your family, as well as Daniels, sold your land to Anderson.

A few years later, Anderson sold off the land at tenfold the price they'd offered you for it. You naturally felt cheated, but Anderson claimed they hadn't known at the time that the land would increase in value. To this day, this issue is still sensitive.

Being wise spenders, your family used the money earned to make a good living as bankers and by opening the village's food store. You also rent out a house to Daniels.

The Collins were the only family who had refused to sell their land to Anderson. Over the following years, Collins borrowed a lot of money from you, and they still owe you a considerable amount, which they haven't been able to pay back.

Important values to your family are:

- ▷ *Law and order*
- ▷ *Paying your dues*
- ▷ *Politeness*

Rules of the Village, when solving conflicts:

- ▷ *All families have one vote*
- ▷ *If one of the solutions gets more votes than any other, all families must accept this conflict solution*
- ▷ *If there is a tie between two solutions, the conflict is unresolved*

COLLINS

Your family owns a small farm at the outskirts of the village. Farming doesn't make one rich, however.

One hundred years ago, the Anderson family moved to the village. Times were hard then, and when the wealthy newcomers offered to buy the land, two families agreed – Daniels and Borowic. You didn't sell, and today you are grateful indeed for having seen through Anderson's lies.

Just a few years later, the land had increased in value and was now worth tenfold compared to what Anderson had offered you. Same for Daniels and Borowic – but they had already sold their land.

Despite the high market value, you still refuse selling your land. You still hang in there, managing to get by year after year. A lot of it is thanks to the money Borowic lent you – a lot of which you still haven't been able to pay back.

Important values to your family are:

- ▷ Loyalty
- ▷ Traditions
- ▷ Pride in one's family and homestead

Rules of the Village, when solving conflicts:

- ▷ All families have one vote
- ▷ If one of the solutions gets more votes than any other, all families must accept this conflict solution
- ▷ If there is a tie between two solutions, the conflict is unresolved

DANIELS

Your family are workers at the Anderson family's tools factory. You rent your house from the Borowic family.

One hundred years ago, you owned the largest amount of land in the village. Food prices had fallen several years, and you had had several bad harvests. You didn't have a choice when Anderson, who'd just moved to the village, offered to buy the land. Like you, the Borowic family also sold their land, but Collins refused to sell.

Finding new employment was hard, however. It turned out the land you'd sold had increased tenfold over the coming years. You demanded that the Andersons would give back your land in return for the money they'd paid. They refused, of course. To this day, your family haven't forgotten Anderson's greed and ruthlessness towards you and the people of your village.

Not having any other way to get by, you started working at Anderson's tools factory, while renting a house from the Borowic family. While you are glad to have employment, you believe what the Anderson family did one hundred years ago were unfair and unjust.

Important values to your family are:

- ▷ Justice
- ▷ Honesty
- ▷ Social responsibility

Rules of the Village, when solving conflicts:

- ▷ *All families have one vote*
- ▷ *If one of the solutions gets more votes than any other, all families must accept this conflict solution*
- ▷ *If there is a tie between two solutions, the conflict is unresolved*

CONFLICT 1. “THE LAKE”

A few minutes’ walk from the village border is a lake with clean water, a sand beach and a jetty. The Anderson family owns the beach, but anyone who wishes may bathe or fish in the lake.

As of late, the amount of fish in the lake has decreased drastically. Soon the reason why becomes evident: The Collins family have been fishing and sold their catch in a nearby village to get some extra money.

So far, it’s been free to fish in the lake for anyone who wishes. Is it fair that Collins can use a public resource for economic gains? Or should they be exonerated due to their economic difficulties?

What do you think should be done?

- 1. Collins should pay a fee to the village for using a public resource for their own gains. The money can be used to implant more fish in the lake.*
- 2. It’s no big deal if Collins wants to fish in the lake. They are having a hard time getting by as it is.*
- 3. Collins may keep the money they earned, but may not continue fishing and selling the fish.*

CONFLICT 2. “PROFIT OR PRESERVATION?”

A company wants to build a vacation resort by the lake, and has offered the Anderson family a huge sum of money for the land around the lake.

Legally, Anderson may sell the land, if they want to. But selling would mean that everyone in the village would lose the possibility to visit the beach or fish in the lake. From what everyone have heard, the plans for the resort means the lake would be completely walled off from the village.

What do you think should be done?

- 1. Anderson shouldn’t be allowed to sell even more land to companies. Period.*

2. Anderson have the law on their side. Even if we don't like the decision to sell, they must be allowed to proceed.

3. The land belonged to Daniels and Borowic before Anderson tricked them into selling. The profit should therefore be split between the three families.

CONFLICT 3. "HARSH TIMES"

For a long time now, demand has decreased for the tools produced in the village's factory. The tools company is facing bankruptcy.

As a result, the Daniels family lost their jobs, and now they are unable to pay Borowic for food and housing. Borowic decides they need to evict the Daniels, and has asked Collins to be there as witness and security.

Borowic knocks on the Daniels' door. This is followed by an exchange of insults, and emotions run high as Borowic begins to carry the belongings of the Daniels family out of the house. A fistfight erupts, and the Collins family are stuck in the middle, defending themselves furiously. A person from the Daniels family gets badly hurt in the fight.

The Anderson have heard the noise and come out to see what is going on. The scene turns into a giant fight and hours pass before everyone calms down enough to talk things through.

The families gather to see if a common solution can be found.

What do you think should be done?

1. This is all the Andersons' and Borowics' fault. They have been cheap and only tried to help themselves to get more money. They should give half of all their money to the village, then leave and never return.

2. The Collins family have caused nothing but trouble. They are indebted, and now they have hurt a person from the Daniels family. They should leave the village.

3. It doesn't matter whose fault it is. According to the law, the Daniels family must leave their house since they are unable to pay the rent. They should leave the village.

Citizen-who

In a nutshell, what is this method about?

Students from a class (or a group) have to express how they understand citizenship, what do they mean by active citizenship and how do they contribute with their own actions to be considered as a good citizen. This method aims to reflect on understanding of citizenship and also to motivate students to put into practice a real action connected with the meaning of citizenship in the perspective of their local community. This method can be considered as single method for one group, or it can be a part of future challenge (not a competition) to other schools' classes or youth groups.

Which Social and Civic Competences does this method develop?

This method helps to develop civic engagement competences, in the sense that it motivates, supports and encourages young people to engage in initiative groups, non-profit organisations, volunteering, youth councils and other bodies to act socially for the local communities. It also develops their team working competence and a sense of social entrepreneurship.

How much time does this method need?

Depending on how many participants it involves, it can last from 1 to 3 months.

What group is this method best for (size, age, etc.)?

This method is appropriate for high school students aged 15–18 years.

What materials should be organised? What space is best for this method?

At the initial step it is important to find a space, which can be a classroom, but also less formal space connected with the school or everyday learning space, like for example a garden nearby or the school's hall.

A flipchart can be useful to collect participants' ideas on citizenship and some white paper and pencils to make personal notes on their ideas.

During the activity implementation the space and materials should be defined according to what kind of activity participants choose to implement.

At a further stage, while implementing the activity, a camera (can also be a phone with camera) will be needed. For the last step a social media virtual space will be needed.

What step-by-step instructions does the facilitator need to follow to do this right?

Step 1 – Active citizenship – what does it mean for us?

The first task of the facilitator is to help to encourage a discussion between students of a school (it can be a class of students only) about what citizenship means for them and an analysis of what they do or could do in everyday life in order to be a good citizens. Students need to reflect on the possibilities of their involvement in the local community or involvement in solving a local problem. The facilitator should help to identify those actions which can be a good example for other young people, e. g. going to give blood, helping in a children's care home, retirement home, etc.

Step 2 – Selection of an action

The next step, and role of the facilitator, is to support this group of interested/involved students to choose one civic action as the best, in their opinion, example of active citizenship in their local community. This could also be to act as a catalyst to challenge students from other classes/groups.

Step 3 – Get involved

Usually social initiatives are run by local organisations or institutions and the students' task is to contact selected a institution/organisation in order to find out about its activities and mission and inform them about the "Citizen-who?" initiative undertaken by students.

This group of students should arrange activities with the organisation that they will undertake and terms under which this will be done, as for example, a volunteer agreement may need to be signed.

Step 4 – Make a movie

The task for students is to prepare a short movie on their activity. The aim is to develop a sense of teamwork and to divide their roles according to their skills, passions and creativity and to catch the best and attractive moments of their civic action. The movie should respect and show the values presented by a school's students and show how important active citizenship is for them.

Step 5 – Share experience

This task consists of positive use of social media for sharing experiences. The movies can be uploaded to the social media of the school or the informal group, but it can be also added to the school's profile with an invitation for other students to comment with how they understand citizenship, or if they have other ideas on how they could act as good citizens.

The message of the movie can include the challenge option, where other classes/groups are invited to undertake similar activities. In this option a dedicated virtual space should be provided in the social media.

The App

We found a bunch more methods that we're not including here. Because you know what, we made an App for that.

In our App you can browse methods of Civic and Social Competences by all kinds of categories, such as thematic focus, age group, time needed, etc. All the methods are stored offline in your smartphone, so the App is also useful when you're at a summer camp without mobile internet connection, for example.

Check out these screenshots and then head over to the Google Play Store and download it for free to your Android device. Don't have such a device? Never mind, all of the methods are also on our website <http://findthethod.eu/>, which is easily accessible on your PC or iPhone or any other device that can't get the app: <http://findthethod.eu/app>.

4: *Situating Learning*



Chapter 4: Situating Learning for Civic and Social Competences

Where do we learn all those things that we call Civic and Social Competences? Knowing how a government works, knowing who we are, being able to say what we think and articulate how we feel, being able to convince others with arguments, expressing ourselves creatively and feeling that we are worth being listened to and seen – is there a class for that? A summer camp we can join? Can a friend explain it to us? Maybe. Probably. But most likely, we develop these competences in different spaces, in different ways and at different times.

These diverse ways in which learning can be organised and facilitated have names. We call them Formal Education, Non-Formal Education, Informal Education and Incidental Learning. Let's look at each and see what limitations and possibilities each has.

Formal Education is what most people think of when they use the word 'Education'. It's the organised, structured form of learning that happens in kindergarten, school and universities. The teachers are all trained to teach and they are aware that their role within these institutions is to help young people learn something. The students and pupils all know that they are expected to learn and that they will be tested in the end to prove that they have in fact learned the required material. There is very likely a curriculum and a schedule. Towards the end there is a certificate for each person that is officially recognised as an entry ticket to the next stage of formal education or for entering the job market.

What's really great about Formal Education is that everyone is there and is there for a long time. For most young people between 7 and 20, school or university is the place where they spend most of their time. Primary school in particular is a very democratic place, where children from different social backgrounds spend time together and learn with each other. Teachers really get to spend a great deal of time with their pupils and can work with them over a span of years, which is an amazing opportunity to sustainably support the development of all sorts of competences.

The other side of this coin is that Formal Education is NOT voluntary. Pupils very often don't decide whether they want to go, and what they want to learn, so their intrinsic motivation is often low and they internally detach as a means of silent protest. Pupils also don't get to choose their teachers or get away from them if the relationship is not working. Great teachers can make school a fun and incredible time in young people's lives. But not so great teachers can lead to very negative associations with learning and stifle young people's confidence in their own creativity and curiosity.

Non-Formal Education is education in the sense that it's a purposeful act of helping people to learn something that is important for them to know. Another similarity to formal education is that there is typically a person or a team of trainers, facilitators or youth group leaders that has a responsibility for the learning process, has prepared it and is likely leading it. The participants are also aware that they are participating in something that has to do with learning and development. A big difference though, between Formal and Non-Formal Education (and why Non-Formal is primarily defined as being NOT formal) is that Non-Formal Education is voluntary. No-one has to participate and participants have typically chosen to take part in the activities or have joined the youth group because they wanted to and it suited their interests. Another big difference is that no-one gets an individual evaluation or certificate at the end of the activity or programme that can serve as an entry ticket to a next stage of learning. If programmes are evaluated, it is typically the participants themselves that evaluate their own learning and decide for themselves what they want to focus on next, or if they even wish to continue.

Informal Education is still a conscious and purposeful act of learning. However, the person planning and leading the learning and the person doing the learning are the same. Imagine you want to make some really nice cupcakes but you don't know how. So you buy a cookbook or you watch a bunch of YouTube videos to educate yourself about how to bake, decorate and transport cupcakes. Or you see a star on the night sky and you want to know more about it, or you want to improve your painting and drawing technique or you spend 2 hours, by yourself, on the basketball court and throw one ball after the other into the basket to develop your aim. You know you are learning, you have arranged the time to learn and you consciously engage in developing a skill or learning about a phenomenon and you use material that is designed to deliver information or train a skill. But it's not organised by someone; it's purely self-directed.

Incidental Learning, finally, is the act of just learning without being aware about it, without having planned it and without someone else being consciously aware they are teaching you. In terms of what we know and what we're able to do, by far the most of it has been learned through Incidental Learning. It's how we learn what just is done and what isn't done in certain spaces, situations or with certain people. It's how children learn how to speak, it's how young people learn how flirting works, and it's how young adults learn what 'professional behaviour' looks like. It's how we learn the rules of our community. Incidental Learning always happens in response to an incident, like a problem (I really need to learn where the bathroom is in this train station) or something that feels good (that person looks at me with this spark in their eye, I definitely need to do more of what I did that provoked that).

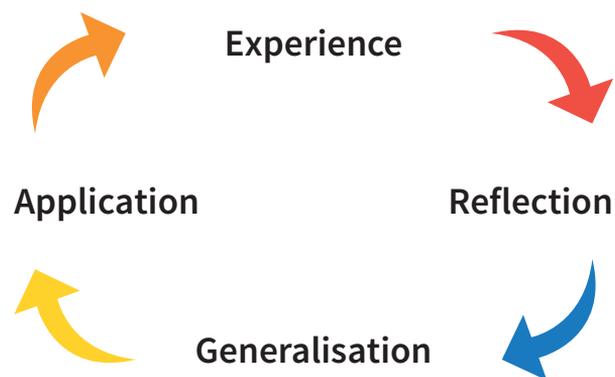
A little overview:

	Formal Education	Non-Formal Education	Informal Education	Incidental Learning
Participation is...	Mandatory	Voluntary by choice	Voluntary by choice	By chance
The setting is...	Built for education to take place in it	Sometimes built for education, but often multi-purpose	Informal – bedrooms, living rooms, libraries	Random life-situations
The primary source of the learning is...	A teacher	The other participants	Books, videos, Wikipedia, etc.	Anyone and anything that happens to us
The process is...	Controlled by the teacher	Proposed by the facilitator, but highly interactive	Controlled by the learner	Not controlled, steered or facilitated
The learning is evaluated by...	The teacher	The group of participants themselves	The learner	The universe (i. e. the fact that we managed to solve our problem)

The methodology of choice in Non-Formal Education: Experiential Learning

There is another term connected to learning and education, which gets thrown around a lot in the field of Youth Work: Experiential Learning.

Experiential Learning is not a field or a category of Education, but rather it's a methodology; a way of organising the process of learning. You may have seen the "Experiential Learning Cycle" in other places. It's very useful to know, so we'll quickly describe it here as well.



In experiential learning we always start with an experience (thus the name). The experience can be many different things:

- ▷ the participants' actual life experience that they reflect on and share,
- ▷ a simulation or an activity that triggers some sort of emotional response or allows the participants to gain an insight into how they and others think and feel about different issues.

In the second step of the cycle, this experience is then reflected. That often means that the participants sit together and talk about what happened:

- ▷ What did they do and how did they feel along the way
- ▷ What behaviour did they observe in others
- ▷ How do they think their peers felt

This leads to a third step, where participants look at the bigger picture of what happened during the experience and generalise it:

- ▷ In which other situations might I feel or behave like this?
- ▷ The way we treated each other – where else do people treat each other in this way?
- ▷ What can we learn from this?

Finally, the participants discuss what this might mean for their future and how they can transfer that learning to their lives and their communities.

Experiential Learning is used a lot in Non-Formal Education. In fact, many people think of Experiential Learning and Non-Formal Education as being synonymous. Experiential Learning is also often highly collaborative. Participants are posed problems that they have to solve together. Through this they learn about the problem itself, but also through the process of collaboratively exploring options and discussing solutions, they develop crucial skills.

However, there are of course great teachers that use Experiential Learning in schools and sometimes, in a youth exchange or a youth club, there is a presentation, or people are just doing things together that are then not reflected upon and analysed. So, suffice it to say – while there is a lot of Experiential Learning in Non-Formal settings, the two are not the same.

This example, however, of teachers using Experiential Learning in their classroom or youth workers giving a presentation from the front, or even of you writing in your diary and essentially using the Experiential Learning methodology for your own Informal Education – all of this doesn't fit into those four buckets that are described above. So maybe, we need something better?

The Learning Continuum

The categories of Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Education along with Incidental Learning are not useless. In fact, they can be very helpful to think and speak on an abstract level about how learning is organised. However, if we really want to understand better what is happening in those different spaces where learning is taking place, we might need to look differently at the process of how learning happens.

This is particularly true if we want to reach young people who are not typically drawn to youth organisations' Non-Formal Education offering and who have dropped out of school. If we, as youth workers, want to reach young people who are not where we are (youth organisations, clubs, societies, youth centres, etc.) and who have very likely not had the greatest experiences with educational institutions, the concepts of Formal, Non-Formal, Informal and Incidental Learning might not be as effective as we'd like.

We propose to think instead of four different dimensions that all greatly affect what the learning looks like:

Purpose, Context, Content and Process.

The Learning Continuum is a tool for participant centred, situational, and purpose driven design of educational activities. It can be used by anybody who wants to support others in their development and facilitate their learning. Teachers in school, facilitators of Non-Formal Education activities, University professors and even business trainers. The fact that using the Learning Continuum encourages us to think very concretely about our target group and the setting we will work in makes it the ideal approach to work with young people who are not in education, employment or training.

Purpose – Balancing what your and your organisation's needs are with the needs of your target group

This is the big question of WHY, of course. Learning is always an answer to a gap. You want to know something, you want to be able to do something and you're not yet there – so you learn it.

Typically, in facilitated learning situations, we have two WHYS to deal with: The purpose of the person or organisation that wants to support the learning, that wants to educate; and the purpose of the target group. Ideally, these are aligned, but very often they are not.

As educators, we need to be aware of the fact that just because we might want someone or a group of people to know about online petitions and internet activism, democracy or inclusion, this may not correspond to what the people we want to work with actually want or need.

Starting with the needs and the interests of the target group, with their world, is the simplest way to ensure that there is an actual intrinsic motivation to participate and engage and invest energy into the learning. Learning something is hard and uncomfortable so the goal needs to be attractive to the target group. You might not think that having fewer likes on a picture you upload to Instagram or Facebook is a serious problem to have. You might not enjoy skateboarding or rap-music or graffiti or video games. But for the young people you work with it might mean the world. You're not doing this for you, but for and with them. If you don't respect and take seriously the things that matter to the young people you work with, you cannot expect that they will respect you and take you seriously, and the same goes for whatever you want to speak with them about.

Just as learning how to play a musical instrument is easier if you practice with songs that you love and want to be able to play beautifully, learning about citizens' participation mechanisms is much easier if it is embedded in a process of actually trying to achieve something the young people you work with want: building a public fitness court in the neighbourhood or establishing a band-practice room in the local youth centre for example.

Spend as much time (no, spend MORE time) thinking about your target groups' reality as about what you find interesting. Spend time with them, speak with them, and be authentically interested and curious about their lives and interests. Often, youth leaders or youth workers are coming from a background where education has always been important and curiosity was encouraged. This might not be the case with the target group that you want to work with. A shared purpose is the foundation for any successful educational project or activity. Invest your time heavily into empathy and genuine interest for your participants' world and then build your activity on that. It will stand much stronger in effect.

As youth leaders, it's important that you are aware of your privileges and critically reflect your assumptions. Ask yourself: What did it take for you to earn respect of your peers? Who taught you how to 'be', and what lifestyle is worth pursuing?

Find your target group's passions and only then consider how you can combine that with what you feel it's important they learn, may it be how to solve conflicts peacefully, listen actively or engage in the city's citizens' projects.

Context – Using your world as an enabler for learning

WHERE the learning takes place, the actual physical space and who else is there, while we learn, has a big impact as well on how the learning is shaped.

Are you in a forest? A classroom? Your living room, main street or in a marginalised neighbourhood?

Are you 5 people or 50?

Does everyone know each other really well, or are they all new to each other?

Which materials for learning do you have right there for you that are unique to this place?

Innovative education happens when the possibilities of a space are really exploited to the fullest for the learning process.

You can approach this from two different directions.

You can start with the space and ask yourself:

- ▶ We have this space and my participants are here all the time anyway. What could we do here that really makes use of this space?

Or you could think about your purpose first and ask yourself:

- ▶ I want to achieve this, which environment would be the best environment to learn about this, practice this or discover this?

You might be limited by your space in that you have to be at the school or you have to be at the youth centre. Or you might be more flexible and venture out, make appointments with different people in different locations to speak with them or learn about what they do. Whatever it is that you want to achieve, let the world around you work for you to facilitate the learning. This is particularly important when working with young people who are not in education, training or employment. Their past experiences might give them good reason to be sceptical of educational institutions. However, formal spaces can also give a great sense of respect and being seen and valued. As a creator of educational activities, think deeply about the space where the activity or activities will take place and be aware of all their symbolic meanings, and their pragmatic possibilities and limitations.

Content – What it's about on the surface and deep down

Once you have clarity about what you want to achieve and how you can embed that within the interests of your target group you can think about what your activity or your project needs to be about.

Think about the different dimensions on which an activity can be about something. Great educational activities are very similar to great stories, in that they are about different things on different levels. Harry Potter is about a boy, who is a wizard, often gets into trouble and always emerges successfully. But Harry Potter is also about friendship, growing up, power, love, responsibility and forgiveness, among many other things. Similarly, an educational project can be about football at the same time as it is about confidence-building and conflict transformation. An activity can be about bullying and how to be safe online, while all you're explicitly doing is learning how to make music videos. As the person leading the activity and developing it, it's your task to think about how to combine things that are possibly boring for your target group with something that is fun and exciting. Combine what you're serious about with what they're serious about. We all have the capacity to be incredibly focused, engaged, dedicated and involved in the things we care about. And we all find it very hard to care for things that have nothing to do with our lives, our interests or what is important to us. So whatever you do with the young people you work with, make sure it's always about something that they are already excited about and find the connections to the things you want to talk about.

Process – What needs to happen to make it all work

Unfortunately, the process is where many educators start their planning process for educational activities. And it's understandable, because it's quite exciting to think about what you're going to do and how it might look like and who will do what. We all have our favourite methods or an approach that we experienced as participants that we really want to try out.

But the method is (only) the medium; it's a way of transport. Just like a bicycle is meant to transport us from A to B, an educational method is meant to transport our brains from A to B.

But just like a bicycle can't get everywhere and is not the best means for transport for every situation, most educational methods aren't suitable for every situation or every purpose. It's the destination that decides the journey and how to best travel it. It is the Purpose, the Context and the Content of your project or activity that should determine the Process.

To develop the actual process of your activity, what happens first, then second, then third, etc... make use of the Experiential Learning Circle we spoke about earlier and go through it backwards. What transfer do you want your participants be able to make in order to improve their lives or solve their problems? How can you create a parallel to that competence in your activity? What do you need people to do and feel so that it shines a spotlight onto this competence? And finally, how can you embed it into an experience that is fun and exciting? The experience itself should have moments of frustration, challenge, but also of fun and relief and experiences of success. Do you want to embed it into a story and create a simulation-game? Should it be physical and get people to move and interact with each other in unusual ways? Should it be creative, with outputs that last and can be displayed for others? Or should it be a 'normal' activity (like playing football or applying for a permit to turn the youth centre basement into a gym) that you structure and intersect with moments of reflection and practice and knowledge acquisition in order to be successful? There is no perfect method or activity. But there is a method that is perfect for THIS group at THIS time with THESE needs. Developing such a method is a lot of fun (as well as a lot of work) and implementing it is pure joy.

How does the Learning Continuum Approach differ from Traditional Approaches to education?

Learning Continuum	Traditional Education
Takes participants' needs and interests as a starting point	Takes its curriculum as a starting point
Tries to fit the content to participants' interest	Tries to make participants interested in the pre-decided content
Makes the best of the context and the materials available	Implements programme, regardless of context
Treats participants' world and their experience of it as paramount	Treats the educator's world and their experience of it as more important

We have built an Activity Development Canvas, which can help you to develop a cool educational activity for your target group. It works best if you go through it step by step and really consider each step before going to the next. We used it to develop the methods in the next chapter and we encourage you to do so as well. As you can see, we used it to develop activities that ranged from a one-person target group to larger groups. That's what we find so cool about it, it's a tool that helped us to think about who we want to work with, what their world looks like, and how we can reach them where they are.

Nerdbox:

We were, obviously not the first ones to think about Non-Formal Education, even though the idea of the Learning Continuum is, we think, original. Here are some resources that inspired us:

The distinction between Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Education was probably first made by Philip H. Coombs in 1968 in the book "The World Educational Crisis: A Systems Analysis" (Oxford University Press).

In 1984, David A. Kolb, published "Experiential Learning: experience as the source of learning and development", where he laid out the Experiential Learning cycle that we mention here.

There is the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1437(2000) on Non-Formal Education, which is pretty great. The Council of Europe also held a Symposium on Non-Formal Education in October of 2000 and its report by Lynne Chisholm is good reading when it comes to the topic.

In 2010 Patrick Werquin from the OECD wrote a publication called "Recognising Non-formal and Informal Learning", where he gives an overview of how this is going globally.

The book "Informality and formality in learning: a report for the Learning and Skills Research Centre" by Helen Colley, Phil Hodgkinson and Janice Malcolm of the Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Leeds was where we got the idea of a Continuum and looking specifically at Purpose, Context (Setting), Content and Process.

In summary: the idea of non-formal, informal and formal education is not new. We don't know, however, of any definition that includes incidental learning as a distinctly different form of acquisition to informal education. The idea of a Learning Continuum doesn't originate with us, nor does the distinction of Purpose, Context, Content and Process. But we're pretty sure that no-one else has developed a system to develop contextualised and participant-centric educational activities using this.

5: All that we made



Chapter 5: All that we made

Using the Activity Development Canvas, we, the youth participants of the Pathways project, went ahead and created our own educational activities, custom designed for the target groups we worked with, who in many cases were young people who were not in education, employment or training, and who wouldn't normally participate in activities of youth organisations. We custom-fitted our methods to the spaces where our participants are and we made them about the things they truly care about, while at the same time providing opportunities to develop their Social and Civic Competences.

Because these activities are so specific to the young people we worked with, we don't want to give you instructions on how you can replicate them. In fact, doing that would be completely counter to the basic idea of the Learning Continuum: that you custom design learning experiences for each and every person or group you work with.

No, what we want to do is tell you stories. Stories of what we did. And hopefully you will find them inspiring enough to do something similar with the young people you work with, but of course, adapted to their needs, their context, their interests and their passions. Enjoy!

Will we be friends?

Created by: Tomáš Fogl, Veronika Stříbrná, Stanislav Štěpáník

We organised this activity for a group of 15 young people between 14 and 15 years old. They spend a lot of time on Facebook and it's really important for them how many likes they get, how many comments on their posts, etc. Doing an activity, where they are allowed to use their mobile phones was actually really attractive for them, as in other educational settings they are not allowed to do so. We wanted to develop their competences in identifying challenges, opportunities and problems in social environments, particularly online.

The activity took around 1.5 hours. It was important that we had very strong Wi-Fi. Other than that we needed a flip-chart, markers, pens and enough clean paper so that each participant could use 1–2 pages.



We started by watching a video about different behaviour in the virtual world and in real life. If you want, you can watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22gUYhzG3il>

Then we asked the participants to go through their list of friends on Facebook and divide them into three groups:

- 1) Close friends (they meet them every day)
- 2) Not so close friends (they meet them, but not that often)
- 3) Virtual friends (they have never seen them in real life)

These are the groups that we used. But with different youth in a different setting, you can also use different categories, of course. For example thematically (friends from sports, friends from school, friends who like the same music, etc.).

When participants divided their Facebook friends into these three groups, we asked them to make a chart that shows how big the groups are in relation to each other. Then we made smaller groups and each group discussed the different charts and how they feel about their results. Later we compared all the results together in the bigger groups and drew some conclusions. We discussed, for example, how people who we have never met and who only know us online, can influence how we feel.

We also talked about how much we share about ourselves online, and how we sometimes might not think about who reads it and what this could mean for us.

The participants left this activity saying that they were surprised how many of their friends on Facebook are not people who they would call friends in their of-line life. They also said that they will be more careful in the future about how much they share and how they interact with people online.

Ideas – Small, any, big

Created by: Sára Kostrhonová

The target group for this activity was just one person: a relative of mine. She was not in education anymore, but also didn't have a job and wasn't in training anywhere, and she seemed a bit lost. So I used the Learning Continuum and the Canvas to develop an educational experience for this one person, just like all other participants had used this approach for developing activities for groups of people.

To understand the context better, I spent a lot of time with her and her relatives to understand her world better. I also spoke to her parents and consulted with professional psychologists. It turned out, there was no trauma or any serious issues, just a lack of habits to get out and do something.

So through many informal meetings, of just drinking something together and talking, I learned more and more about her and her interests, what excites her and what she might already be good at. It turned out that knitting was a skill she had, and so I looked for ways to make this the content of an activity that would allow her to get out, feel useful and competent and develop habits that could help her go in a positive direction.

I found a school that was looking for a knitting instructor for after-school classes and so I informed my relative about that. While she refused to do this, she still agreed to teach me how to knit.

This is where we were at the time of this writing. This approach to facilitating learning and the development of Social Competences is a slower, calmer and more personal approach, one that requires patience and sustainable care.

But this may be the most effective approach to reach someone who is off the grid, not active in an organisation or feeling like they can and want to participate in organised activities.

Our pathway will continue down this bumpy, difficult and very rewarding road.

Stressed out

Created by: Michaela Doležalová, Dominik Jeřábek, Martin Kučaba, Michal Vyvlečka

The young people we worked with are all in school and very often they are stressed and don't know how to deal with the pressure. But they are also very curious and want to learn and develop. Our goal was to help these young people think about ways how they can deal with their stress and balance their ambitions with their mental well-being enough to be happy.

We arranged a time (we needed around 60 minutes for the whole activity) and space (we used a classroom with enough tables and chairs for participants to work in small groups) and told the participants that the activity would be about orientation in a text, about finding information in a text and how to work with it. We did not tell them that the real aim of the activity was to create a stressful situation, and only after it was finished did we tell them the truth and discuss how the participants felt and how they deal with stress in their daily lives.

We divided the participants in small groups of 3–4 and gave each group a document containing a difficult text. We used a report from the website of the United Nations that had seven pages and was written in English. It is important to recognise which text is suitable for your group of participants, mainly depending on their age (our participants were between 16 and 18), but at the same time being challenging for them. Their task was to read the document carefully, answer questions connected to the text (to make it more difficult we changed the order of the questions, so it did not match the original flow of text) and find out the Czech meaning of some difficult words they did not understand using a dictionary (a book, not an online version), that we provided them. Then the time was set – they had 30 minutes to complete all the tasks. Actually we knew that it was impossible to finish in that time.

While the groups were trying to read the documents, understand the texts and finish the tasks, we distracted them with all kind of different actions (talking loudly, turning on the coffee machine, spilling water on documents, making personal phone calls, whistling catchy tunes, playing with a ball, etc.). Of course at this point we didn't tell them, that we were doing this on purpose to distract them or make it more difficult for them to concentrate.

After the time elapsed, we stopped the exercise and invited everyone for debriefing. Here we asked how they felt during the group work and whether they felt that they really understood those texts. We also asked what made it easier and harder to work and how they felt about us during the exercise. Naturally they were mad at us and complained about our behaviour. Then we revealed what we had really done, that this exercise was actually not about the content of those documents and we explained the real aim of the activity. Thereafter we started to speak about stress during the activity, how stress influences their lives and how they deal with it. Participants reflected on their experience during the activity, realised that the problem was mainly in their time management and talked about possible ways to avoid or at least reduce stress. In the end they evaluated the activity itself – they appreciated the secondary effects of the activity, e.g. team work and the language aspect.

“A mile in their shoes”

Created by: Ieva Rimšaitė, Dominyka Kozlovskā, Gintarė Dobilaitė,
Mantas Daniel Blaževičius, Agnė Skyriūtė

One very cold day we invited some young people to participate in our project. It was an activity which, we believed, would help people to develop their empathy by stepping into the shoes of a person living with a disability for a couple of hours. In our advertisement for this activity (on our Facebook page), we highlighted the adventure, trips and challenge part of this as well as the social provocation by giving an open question – “Have you ever tried to measure your empathy?”. We used the Activity Development Canvas to develop our method where we pointed out the purposes of the activity:

- ▶ To challenge personal prejudices and stereotypes in relation to disability issues;

- ▷ To develop the sense of empathy by giving able-bodied people a chance to experience the struggles physically disabled people face every day;
- ▷ To give participants an idea of their level of empathy;
- ▷ To improve their communication skills and understanding.

For us, the involvement and expression of feelings (of the participants) would be the indicator of successful action.

We worked in a group of 6 people – 3 participants and 3 leaders – who were divided into pairs. The participants were young people who wanted to measure their empathy. They were school students – 18 years old, who spend their time volunteering or taking actions in all kind of projects that can improve and develop their competences. They attended because they are active, curious, and interested in our activity’s description. They loved the idea of having the opportunity to put themselves in a disabled person’s shoes and to understand what it means and feels like to be disabled in one or another way. Also the participants understood that after this method they would appreciate their health and well-being more.

The activity took place outside in different places in the city centre of Vilnius, Lithuania and took about 3 hours. The final reflection took place in a coffee shop with a calm and nice atmosphere.

The main materials that we used for the simulation of different disabilities were ear muffs, a wheelchair and an eye band. As for the reflection we created “Empathy thermometers” for each person that helped to measure their personal empathy level before and after the activity.

The content that we created was focused on attractive things for young people. Throughout trips, adventures, challenges and social provocation, etc. we aimed to improve competences and skills such as empathy, respect, confidence, self-expression, communication, self-reflection, value priorities, critical thinking and taking action.

Three pairs (of one facilitator and one participant each) “in disability shoes” were formed. One group was about visual impairment, one about hearing impairment and one about mobility impairment (disability of movement). Before the start and at the end, participants also measured their individual empathy level with the help of “empathy thermometers”. They indicated level points on a scale they felt they were at, according to the following statements: “I know a lot about disabilities and people with disabilities”,

“I can easily relate to experiences of disabled people”, “I feel comfortable around people with disabilities”. The pairs then had a short discussion about their fears and expectations for the trip. Having before-and-after data of the “empathy thermometers” helped to spot the change in people’s understanding and ability to empathise.



To navigate people from one stop to another and from one exercise to another, the app was introduced to the participants. The app “A mile in their shoes” was created on <https://en.actionbound.com>. It had all the tasks participants had to complete during the tour in the city and also gave them references for where to go further. The results were uploaded directly in the app. For example, people had to take photos, and make videos or audio recordings expressing their experience on real-life tasks and situations like using public transport, going shopping, visiting a public library and sightseeing in Vilnius.

After the activity all three groups met in a coffee shop for a reflection. It was amazing to hear how what seemed at the first glance to be a simple tour around the city became a huge challenge for all participants. Not only was everyone psychologically tired of not being able to hear, see or walk which they were not used to, but also people felt physically exhausted. First of all, having disabilities made them move really slowly and a short 20-minute walk became an hour and a half long. Plus it was a freezing cold day and everyone quickly felt flu symptoms. Also, for a person in a wheelchair it became a painful strength workout, and at the end the person had terribly red hands and aching arm muscles.

However, people shared their thoughts on how positive that experience was. Someone caught herself panicking and refusing to make a single more step which made her think the most. One person hardly found words to express his feelings when he saw his reflection in a window, which was different than normal, because he was sitting in a wheelchair. Another person expressed her enthusiasm at making herself understood when communicating to others, and her joy when it happened. Participants also shared their observations about reactions of passers-by. Some people, according to their stories, tried to be nice and helpful, they assisted when it was hard to ride on a sideways or suggested writing notes for people who couldn’t hear. Participants expressed their appreciation talking about these experiences. However, one also encountered very unpleasant and even dangerous situation, when crossing the street in a wheelchair.

Since he was moving quite slowly, a car tried to drive by very fast. The participant said he had felt really insecure, not being able to move the way he was used to.

It was amazing that only a couple of hours of authentic experience can have such an impact on people. The effect was also reflected in the repeated “empathy thermometer” grading, which showed that people felt like they gained more empathy during the tour.



Our app: <https://en.actionbound.com/bound/amilein>

This app helped us to upload everything directly online, to collect pictures and to make everything innovative. If you hadn't finish the previous task you were not able to skip to the next one, so the participants had to follow the rules, visit every place that was marked in the app and had to do all the tasks.

Persona

Created by: Ieva Rimšaitė, Dominyka Kozlovskā, Gintarė Dobilaitė

Our method “Persona” aimed to develop the leadership competence. The concept of leadership might sound mystical, like a super power that some have and some don't. But in fact, if you take a look at what lies in it, you can find very familiar components, such as self-confidence, stress relief, initiative, creativity, communication and collaboration. These are the core parts of leadership and they can be trained and developed separately step-by-step.

The method testing took place at a high school in Vilnius. As a target group we chose 12th grade students, who feel stressed out because of the exams, they feel anxious about their looks, their grades, their attitudes and so on. At the same time, they were quite aware of problems the stress causes them and they wanted to work on it. We offered them an activity based on theatre games and exercises. On one hand, drama and games are fun and non-binding activities, that is why our participants were tempted to try it. Especially in such an intense time for them, the offer to spend some time playing games put a smile on their faces. Another thing is that drama has a lot of benefits, such as building confidence, concentration, encouraging cooperation, developing creativity and emotional intelligence, and helping to learn and master certain behaviours, like a rehearsal.

Theatre games help people to get used to stressful situations which leaders tend to be in, for example public speaking, representing yourself, stress related body tension, mind and creativity blocks and so on.

The method was based on a certain sequence. There were three parts leading to the final one that we called “Persona”.

The first step we called “Getting to know each other” which let us know each other’s names and few things about every group member. Throwing a ball of string to each other with a sentence of introduction (e.g. your name and something you like) and finding that at the end we all are connected also took away some stress.

The next part was “Warming up”. There we had two activities that helped us relax our throat, face, arms, legs and other muscles and use them more actively and with more expression. It was also to get rid of any fear of acting funny and improvising. Little by little, it was getting more comfortable to be in the group, people acted and moved more freely, and laughed more.

Then came the “Games” part, which was mostly about setting people’s mind free for unrestricted improvisation. This also needed the ability to accept the ideas, to encourage them and not to make someone look like a fool. The first game “Yes, and!” was an improvised story telling in pairs when someone gives an opening statement (for example, “the river is full of fish”), and another has to keep going by starting their sentence with “yes, and...” Also, every new statement has to be more and more exaggerated. Here is the example:

- ▷ “The river is full of fish.” (Opening statement)
- ▷ “Yes, and one of them is enormous.”
- ▷ “Yes, and it’s swimming toward us.”
- ▷ “Yes, and it looks hungry.”
- ▷ “Yes, and we are trapped in this boat.”
- ▷ “Yes, and it looks more like a whale than a fish.”
- ▷ “Yes, and now the motor won’t start.”
- ▷ “Yes, and it’s about to swallow us.”
- ▷ “Yes and I just remembered that this boat is also a plane.”
- ▷ “Yes and lucky for you I just got my pilot’s license.”

After the game, we had a talk about the importance of accepting others’ ideas and building on them, and how it feels when the ideas are rejected.

After two more games (“Gibberish”, where you have to carry on a conversation in pairs, using various weird sounds and utterances instead of a normal language, and “YouTube Karaoke”, which is a funny improvisational karaoke game for a group of people – vocalist, guitar player, drummer, dancer and so on – who prepare a chosen performance from YouTube) we were ready for the last and the main part of our method.

For the “Persona” part we needed a little preparation: Group members’ belongings (shoes, trousers, jackets, books, scarves, umbrellas, glasses and everything that they had with them at that time) were put into one pile. Everyone had to think of a character for himself/herself and create his/her image taking things from the pile.

Then came the performance part which took around 15–20 minutes. Participants gathered in a circle wearing these clothes and items and everyone presented his/her character, saying their name, profession, age, character traits, and started acting accordingly. One by one, they created a common improvised performance.

The most important and the longest part of “Persona” is the reflection. It took us one hour and was divided into three parts. The first one was where the feedback was given by two participants. They talked over how they felt in the selected role, if the role reflected their situation in the group, to whom they communicated or not during the play, if communication with same and opposite sex felt somehow different and if this performance reminded them of other situations they’ve experienced life.

Secondly, for the feedback each group was given a leader, who was observing the performance. They discussed the course of action and said the things they noticed.

In the last part, “Returning to reality”, the following questions were given to the group by the leaders:

- ▷ Can we look at each other the way we are?
- ▷ Do we want to express our feelings to particular person in a group?
- ▷ Are we eager to explore our interrelations?

By talking about the performance, their characters and the whole dynamic, participants were able to connect their experiences with real life and to master the behaviour, attitude and approach for the future situations. In addition, analysing the work in groups helped the young people to learn to express their opinion and make themselves understandable for others.

At the very end, we wanted everyone to measure how much of each different competence they gained during the whole activity. That way we could also measure our method's efficiency. We prepared paper human silhouettes and asked participants to imagine that they are this silhouette. Then they had to colour it, using colours appropriately, red for self-confidence, yellow – creativity, green – communication, blue – collaboration, and purple – initiative. People also could leave some part of their body empty if they wanted.

Our method test lasted about two hours (of course, the duration depends on the activity of the participants). We asked participants to bring some random stuff, like pens, books, jackets and so on. At first people found it weird, but once we had some warm-up games, people started to enjoy it and became more active. It was interesting to observe the group dynamic during this time and hear their impressions and ideas at the end. The activity helped to detect natural leaders and people who were following them. After a long debriefing we discovered that our participants were just shy, and all they needed was some time to get to know each other. Talking about specific competences they gained that day, people mentioned self-confidence, communication skills and public speaking as the things they improved the most. Since our method testing took place in a school, we had a chance to invite a guest – a psychology teacher – who also has an acting degree and a solid popularity among the students. He helped with the activity and warm-up. Our method was a great success and our advice to people who would want to try the same method: smile a lot and bring your good mood to the activity.

Nesting Boo(x)

Created by: Rima Aleknavičiūtė-Stasiulė, Dovilė Dudėnaitė, Ieva Rimšaitė

The youth we worked with are from the open youth centre “BAZE”. Speaking with the youth workers from the youth centre helped us to know the target group better. They are 14–20 years old and mostly male. The majority of them are students. However, they tend to have problems with school attendance and learning. Also most of them are from troubled families or families with high social risks, and tend to have socially and emotionally related difficulties. They were young people who are interested in crafts/construction/decoration.

They felt that they were seen negatively and not wanted as part of the neighbourhood. However, the youth wanted to get along with the neighbours and be part of the community. And in fact, the neighbourhood did not actually like having them around, because of negative stereotypes and prejudices. So the young people were really interested in showing others that they are not bad or dangerous. After a conversation with the workers at the centre, we thought that these young people might enjoy building “nesting boxes” and through that have a discussion about the “community” topic. A ‘nesting box(x)’ is like a public book-shelf, but it looks like a large nesting box for birds. There are books inside and members of the community can come and take a book and put a different book into it. Like this, the community can read together and share in their mutual resources.

The centre offered us space inside and access to multimedia equipment. We also brought some ourselves – printed instructions, half-prepared construction of a nesting box and various writing and building tools. The activity was planned to last three weeks – three meetings, once a week.

Explicitly, the activity was about practical creative activities: crafts, working with wood, meeting new external people, book (or other goods) exchange, etc., but for us, implicitly, it was much more about topics such as taking responsibility, participation, and the sense of being an important part of the community. Because of that, our main goal was to develop the idea of accepting ownership in a community and responsibility in it.

So here is what we then did with the young people from the youth centre:

At the first meeting (2 hours), we started off with a little ice-breaker to get to know each other a little. Following this we discussed questions such as: What communities do I belong to? What part do I play in it? What is important for our community? What are responsibilities of community members? What are their interests? Do your community members have common points?

We then presented the idea of the “Little Free Library”, a worldwide phenomenon, as well as alternative projects (“Little free pantry”...). We used a quiz-method to do this introduction.

Following this we first of all discussed whether this is actually a good idea for their community. Is reading important nowadays? Do you read often? What are the prices of books? Can all of your community members buy them and read? Maybe there are other needs of your community, like exchanging food, toys, clothes, etc.

When we agreed that building such a ‘nesting Boo(x)’ was a good idea, we talked more about how such a thing might look.

We showed them three example Nesting Booxes that we had half-prepared and participants could choose one to finish or come up with their own design.

After working for a while on these, we asked the participants to draw how they imagined their “Little Free Library”. We then discussed what purpose we would like it to fill, who needs it the most and where we would place it.

We also prepared a “wish and thank you” board, which will be hung for the community members to request something (e. g. books for school), thank other people, share the news.

Between the first and the second meeting, the participants developed their ideas further and finished their Nesting Booxes themselves. At the second meeting, we then divided the group into three smaller teams:

Team 1 were people responsible for PR, who would spread the word about the Opening Event (invitations, maybe leaflets about the event...).

The second team would be the Event Organisers, who would make sure the community members are aware about this action, gather books for the Nesting Boox, and maybe invite a band to an opening event.

Lastly, the Technical Group would make sure everything ran smoothly (taking care of stands, boards, nesting boox, keeping the key or activating the process and books moving in box...).

The third meeting was then the opening event of the Nesting Boox, which was great.

In the end we saw that they chose a book sharing idea above others, meaning that they saw the value in books and in sharing knowledge and ideas with their community. The youth have taken initiative and responsibility, co-ordinated with each other and collaborated on a joint project.

The centre has taken steps toward reconciliation and creating beautiful relations between the centre’s youth and the rest of the neighbourhood. First, cooperation with the local government (awaiting permission to build a nesting box outside of the centre, etc.) also developed some great experiences in dealing with public authorities.

The number of participants grew from 4 to 10. Today there are 10 constant and 5 changing participants of the group that takes care of this Nesting Boox. Several of the participants are currently not in education, training or employment. The young people found interest and meaning in this activity and importance for them. They also improved their knowledge about their community and importance of being a part of it. And they also became more informed about worldwide initiatives and projects in this field and they felt like a part of a global movement.

Hot chairs

Created by: Monika Kabata, Maciej Miklaszewski, Paula Wiśniewska

The purpose of the method “Hot chairs” was to support the development of self-confidence and communication skills. Our target group were first year undergraduate students of European Studies (19–20 years old). After high school, those young people are used to being “participants”/ receivers of teaching process. We could observe among them a lack of self-confidence skills like presentation and controlling emotions. The group didn’t know each other well and they needed to make friends (some students joined them just few days before). As during their studies they will need to take part in internships and some of them will soon look for their first jobs, they needed to develop skills for controlling stress and taking the initiative.

By giving them the opportunity to present themselves and make new friends we wanted to help them gain self-confidence. The participants were aware from the beginning that the activity would be about self-confidence. They were interested in improving their self-confidence skills because they need it in daily life: during exams, interviews, etc.

25 students took part in the activity. We had 1.5 hours and a classroom with board, chairs and pens.

For us as the facilitators it was important to develop their self-confidence and ability to control stress in spontaneous situations. Through the proposed activity they also had an opportunity to make new friendships and get to know each other better.

The activity started with an ice breaker which showed us what students think about their level of self-confidence. We had prepared 10 questions for which students were answering “yes” or “no” by standing on the opposite sides of the room. Below you can find our list of questions which were prepared specifically for the students regarding their interests and problems:

1. Are you self-confident?
2. Do you take the initiative e.g. to go out to cinema?
3. Do you say “hello” first to your friends?
4. There is a problem which should be discussed with the Professor. Will you volunteer to go to talk to them?
5. You have studied for your classes, however your Professor is giving information which doesn't fit with what you have read. Will you protest?
6. You have class about European institutions but your Professor is talking about his holidays. Will you protest?
7. Leaving a shop you realise that the book which you just bought cost more than it should have. Will you go back to ask about it?
8. You see in a tram a very pretty girl / handsome boy. Will you go and chat to her/him?
9. They rejected your application for a scholarship. You think that this is groundless. Will you appeal?
10. You see a person has just parked a car in a place for disabled people. Will you protest?

After it we moved to second part which relied on few short, 1 minute sessions. This exercise was done in pairs which were proposed by us to avoid friends working together.

Firstly, one person had 1 minute to sell a pen to the other one. Then for another minute she/he had to make compliments. In the end there was time for telling a joke and laughing loudly. After each of this exercises they had to change the roles.

During those they didn't feel observed by others. Well only by us but they didn't feel such pressure from the group.

This changed in the third part where they had to work in front of the whole group. Firstly, volunteers had to present themselves as during an interview. They had 1 minute to do that.

The second task was about making contacts: One person was sitting on a chair while the second one was coming to her/him as a stranger and had to start the conversation.

To summarise the activity we used a blackboard which we divided into three parts. Each participant again introduced himself/herself and wrote on the board what he/she liked, disliked and what was difficult. When they finished we discussed our results to identify the difficulties and possibilities of minimising them. We found out that listening to compliments was more difficult for them than making them!

LET'S MAKE A STATE!

Created by: Anna Dworak, Agata Nassim, Paula Wiśniewska

We had a small group of 8 European Studies students. They didn't know each other very well, because it was their first year at the University. Among the participants we could observe a lack of critical thinking and creativity. They weren't obligated to take part in this, it was just voluntary. We wanted to create a space which would help our participants to understand the importance of finding balance between keeping your own values and understanding and respecting the rights of others. Also, we tried to create a chance to learn about negotiation, achieving consensus and solving conflicts. Thus through this activity we wanted the participants to develop these skills and competences: critical thinking; art of argumentation, compromise, expressing your own opinion, implementing new ideas, negotiation; conflict solving and teamwork.

Concretely, this is what we did:

After an introduction of ourselves and everyone in the group, we did an ice-breaker with questions such as "Is my opinion/point of view more important than opinion of other people?", "What is more important in team-work: objective aim or compromise?" and "What is more important: working together or the impact of the work?" The discussion that followed those questions brought us into the topic of how difficult it can be sometimes to collaborate and achieve results in a team.

We then divided the group into 4 smaller teams of 2 people each. Each team was introduced as the citizens of their own cities. Their tasks were to create and write down values and history to build their rules, professions, institutions.

We gave them precise instructions for this:

“Imagine that you’re living on the continent called Commonland, where there are no states, only cities. They’re all in different locations, and their fundamental beliefs, political regimes, administration and social organisations are not the same. Your task is to describe your cities:

- ▷ create a short description of how the society is organised; name of the city, language, administration, political regime, location (lay of the land), religion, society;
- ▷ give 10 most essential rules/laws;
- ▷ define 8 most important professions;
- ▷ define 6 most important institutions.

You have 20 minutes for it, let’s start!”

After 20 minutes, we gave each team two pieces of cardboard. They had to write one the 6 most important institutions they came up with on each. We then introduced the second step of the activity:

“Now you’re in danger. On the continent there’s a new state called Dangerland, which wants to become an empire by taking control of your cities. To defend yourselves from them you have to connect with others and make one state. You have 30 minutes.”

We then made two teams, each one having one person from each city, whose tasks were to create a society based on a common set of rules (4 most essential rules/laws), a priority list of professions (3 most important professions) a list of the most important institutions (2 most important institutions), a fair economic system and a just political system.

The groups discussed and finally described their new state. In the end, each team presented what they had come up with.

In the end we discussed with the group how working in the different groups was different and which they found easier and which harder. Finally, we evaluated the whole workshop. Participants said that they got better at negotiating, working in groups and coming to a consensus with different ideas and views.

Lifeboat

Created by: Monika Kabata, Agata Nassim, Olha Petko, Natalia Kacperska, Justyna Dziemianowicz, Paula Wiśniewska

The young people (14–17 years old) we worked with all regularly participate in the activities of a local community club. The four girls and three boys were all at higher risk of being socially excluded. We met and spoke with the pedagogue who works in the community club and he told us that this group is particularly interested in strategic board games. Based on that, we decided to develop a simulation game, which can be challenging, and which involves and supports the process of making decisions and our own choices.

Based on what we learned from the leader of the community club on the reality and world of the young people we'd be working with, we decided that the main aim of the method was to improve skill of expressing and understating different points of view. More specifically, we wanted to:

- ▶ increase the level of critical thinking skills in decision making processes in the group;
- ▶ improve the 'art of argumentation' of their own statements and choices;
- ▶ improve the ability to understand different points of views;
- ▶ improve the ability to achieve solutions which are acceptable to each person in the team and
- ▶ improve the ability to work in a team and be part of a team.

On the day of the activity, we met at the community club and started our activities by initiating interaction with the participants, general conversation, asking questions. It helped us to get to know them better and identify roles in the groups. Thanks to this preparation time, both of us – facilitators and the group – became more familiar with each other.

Then we did an energiser which helped us to feel better in a group.

After this, we started the main part of the activities.

We split the group into 3 smaller groups and told them a story of how they won a lot of money and decided to spend it on a cruise all over the world. Unfortunately, the boat crashed and they had only one lifeboat to save themselves.

Furthermore, in the lifeboat there is space only for them and 7 other people from a list which we prepared.

Each team got a list of 14 characters. Each character had one advantage and one disadvantage.

1. **Doctor** – she is the best surgeon in the country; she doesn't like people and society.
2. **Builder** – he is able to design and build everything; usually when he starts his work he is not able to finish.
3. **Carpenter** – he is able to create everything made of wood; he is 75 years old.
4. **Actress** – she is beautiful and talented; she doesn't like to clean.
5. **Fisherman** – he catches and knows all kind of fish; he drinks a lot.
6. **Astronomer** – he is able to read the stars and the sky but he is closed in his 'own mind'
7. **Banker** – he is smiling and sociable; he wants to achieve own goals at all costs (despite others' feelings)
8. **Swimmer** – he's like a fish in the water; he is bold and freakish.
9. **Body builder** – he is very strong but needs some attention to be helpful.
10. **Journalist** – she is creative; she talks a lot.
11. **Politician** – she is able to motivate the group; she sees conspiracies everywhere.
12. **Scout** – he knows how to survive everywhere; he is 12 years old.
13. **Handyman** – he can fix everything; he likes to gossip.
14. **Student** – he is perfect team manager and conflict solving person; he spends all his time partying.

The task for the groups was to choose 7 persons from this list who they would like to share the common space on the lifeboat with.

When each team was done, they came together in the bigger groups and had to create one group choosing 7 characters that they could all agree on.

Finally, we also gave the group the task of creating a list of the most important rules to set up for the lifeboat crew.

Then we debriefed the exercise. We asked about how easy or difficult it was to choose specific persons, giving the reasons why they have been chosen, the difficulties and easiness of reaching an agreement among all participants in the small and big group.

We then tried to transfer this experience to their real life, asking about examples of situations where it is necessary to give your own point of view, and how they behave when they have different opinions than others. However, it was easier to speak about the game and conclusions from the 'lifeboat' than about the real life.

Before the activity we had some doubts if it would be interesting for the participants. It was great to see that the method was interesting for them and all of the groups got involved. Participants were discussing the task, trying to find arguments and reach compromises. It was much more difficult to list the most important rules. We planned to have a list of 10 and we decided to finish with 7.

The implementation of the method was useful for the participants and we achieved what we planned. It also had a positive impact on us as facilitators of the meeting. We could improve our skills of facilitating the group of participants with higher risk of social exclusion.

6: *Validate!*



Chapter 6: Validate this!

If we were to give you money to run a great project that helps young people to develop their social and civic competences, how would we know that it was a good idea to give you money, and that you did in fact support those young people to develop these crucial skills and attitudes and insights?

And even if we didn't care if you were successful, how could these cool young people show others that they have been working on their social and civic competences? How could they make their learning visible to potential employers, clients, schools or universities, beyond just their behaviour?

Hard luck. There are no diplomas and no certificates in non-formal education that everyone accepts as valid proof that you are able to do certain things. It's a real problem, and a real paradox, that we don't have a formal way to prove learning that took place in non-formal situations.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is increasingly seen as a means of improving lifelong learning and learning in a variety of places and forms. More and more European countries stress the importance of visibility and appreciation of learning outside formal education and training institutions, such as work, leisure, home, and of course non-formal education.

In the current situation of rising unemployment, which is particularly affecting young people, and slowing economic growth, new opportunities for non-formal learning and skills are emerging.

There are several policies, recommendations and initiatives at EU level which give more and more importance to the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning 2012/C 398/01 stresses that “At a time when the European Union is confronted with a serious economic crisis which has caused a surge in unemployment, especially among young people, and in the context of an ageing population, the validation of relevant knowledge, skills and competences has an even more valuable contribution to make in improving the functioning of the labour market, in promoting mobility and in enhancing competitiveness and economic growth.”

When designing and planning a programme of non-formal education for social and civic competence development in young people, it is necessary to think about how we would prove that they have acquired those competences and to what level. In formal education we have certificates/diplomas based on standard curricula. In non-formal education there are no universal methods or tools. We believe, however that young people taking part in the educational process have a right to obtain proof of their learning experience. How can we do that?

Validation of competences in non-formal education is still not a solved issue. At the European level, there’s no universal system, as for example, ECTS for higher education, which could work properly.

Validation, recognition, accreditation

So what are we actually talking about, when we speak about “validation” or “recognition”? When you look at the different systems and tools out there, these terms get thrown around quite a lot. Let’s clear up the meaning of those terms according to the Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus (2001):

To accredit means to certify as meeting required standards.

To recognise means to give formal acknowledgement and approval of competences.

To validate means to confirm, corroborate and give official force to competences.

Clearer now? No, we didn’t think so either. It is easy to see that those 3 terms cannot be considered as synonyms, however there is still confusion given by translation of English words and their conceptual meaning.

As for our project we decided to use official CEDEFOP definition of validation as follows: ‘The confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.’

Ok, so it all starts with validation and in order to do that you need some pre-defined criteria and standards. And this is easier said than done.

While it is quite easy to assess on which level we communicate in English or other languages, it’s not at all easy to define such criteria for social and civic competences. There’s no grammar book or dictionary that we can study and then be tested on when it comes to empathy, how we can communicate with others or how much we can motivate ourselves to persist in the face of difficulties.

By the way, we’re not the only ones that find this hard. Eurydice (2009) found that, of the eight key competences: ‘...only three, namely communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, and mathematical competences and basic competences in science and technology, can be directly linked to individual subjects... these three competences are the ones most commonly assessed in national tests. By contrast, in many European countries the remaining key competences such as ‘learning to learn’ or social and civic competences, which usually relate to more than one subject, are not at present generally assessed in national tests’.

When we think about validation of social and civic competences in the context of non-formal education, we need to be aware that there’s no universal system of validation that works really well for this. What we can realistically do in this context is to find a way that is tailored to our educational pathway. It means for us that we need to think about how our participants could show how they have grown while we plan our educational activities. Just as we need to develop the educational pathway specifically for our target group and the social realities they are in, we need to develop a way for them to communicate their growth that fits with who they are and what aspirations they have for their future.

One way forward in this situation would be to go with the most used method of assessment in non-formal education: self-assessment. Particularly, Youthpass.

Youthpass is a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes from youth work activities. It is a part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning, putting policy into practice and practice into policy. We think it's great. Youthpass is a process of reflection that helps to define and describe learning outcomes in a youth project, leading to a certificate that documents these learning outcomes, but has one big limitation – it is only available for projects funded by Erasmus+: Youth in Action (2014–2020) and Youth in Action (2007–2013) programmes. So if you do a very local project that wasn't financially supported through these programmes, you can't use it.



More information about Youthpass: <https://www.youthpass.eu>

So what can we do in this situation, where there is no universal system of validation of social and civic competences acquired through non-formal learning for youth in general? Our proposal is to go back to the origin of our learning process and start from the Learning Continuum Activity Development Canvas.

As you know, when you go through the Activity Development Canvas you start by thinking about your target group and all the different stakeholders that are involved in the activity you want to do. You think about the social reality of the youth you work with, what their needs are and what their world looks like. But you also look at who else has an interest in these young people and their civic and social competences. Maybe their organisation? Maybe their potential future employers or clients? Maybe their peers? When you know everything you can know about all these different stakeholders in your educational activity, it sets you up for developing a really, really cool learning pathway that is meaningful and fun and really has an impact. But all of this information is also really useful in helping you to understand how you can best support the young people you work with in having their learning recognised by those around them.

Go ahead and look a little deeper and one step further: What does each of these stakeholders need in terms of learning recognition? And what would make your target group the proudest to have in their hands as they finish the activities with you? Maybe a product they developed themselves (like in the Nesting Boo(x)es)? Or maybe a certificate that details what they have done and that has the logo of your organisation and your partners on it (like in Town for Youth)? Or maybe something else?

We have been looking far and wide for a system that we can use that is adaptable and context specific because that's what our approach is all about. We needed something that can be created for a specific activity, or for a specific competence that is being worked on over several activities. What we found and would love to encourage you to check out are the Open Digital Badges.



Open Digital Badges is the online system of supporting any kind of learning process. The badges consist of a specific picture and meta-data that include such information as: name and description of the particular badge, tasks, and criteria needed to be fulfilled to get it (more info here: <https://www.badgecraft.eu/en/open-badges/understand-badge-meta-data>; <http://ebawebsite.net/>).

The main reasons for choosing open digital badges as a good validation tool for us are their flexibility and ease of creation. You can adapt the badges for specific needs and learning processes and visualise how people progress with (improving/gaining) competences. The huge advantage of the badges is also the active inclusion of participants in their learning process. For us it is a great tool to monitor the influence of specific implemented methods on our participants. And further – to evaluate how effective the method is.



From the variety of issuing platforms we would like to introduce Badgecraft (<https://www.badgecraft.eu/en>), which offers plenty of information about Open Digital Badges. There is a huge library of ready-to-use badges which can be easily adapted for your needs, and the possibility to create your own badges. There is also a management system of badges and earners, where you can create certificates for badges earners.

Because badges are so easy to use and are so adaptable and context-specific, we think they fit really well with the context-specific ways we have been creating our activities. Because each new method and learning process is different we would like to give an example of how to formulate and create the badges by using one of our activities that we tested – “Will we be friends?”.

Badge name and image	Description of achievement(s) represented by badge	Task(s) to accomplish in order to qualify for a badge (badge criteria)	Type of evidence and assessment	Tags (8 key-competences)
<p>True friend</p>	<p>The badge represents an understanding of how virtual world works, what are problems are, and how it can be useful for young people.</p> <p>Helps in reflection on the topic of Facebook friendship and how to use Facebook in an efficient way.</p>	<p>Task 1 – watch this film carefully: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22gUY-hzG3il and say what the important message was for you.</p> <p>Task 2 – analyse your friends on Facebook and split them into 3 groups – regular friends (weekly contact), long-time-ago friends and “friends”, you don’t know in real life and make a spreadsheet</p> <p>Task 3 – give examples of the meaning of ‘real friends’ and the meaning of ‘fake friends’</p> <p>Task 4 – write your reflection on dangerous online situations; if possible give personal examples</p> <p>Task 5 – write your reflection of using Facebook in an efficient way; if possible give personal examples</p>	<p>Evidence 1 + ability to type the text.</p> <p>Evidence 2 + assessment</p> <p>Update the picture of the spreadsheet here</p> <p>Evidence 3,4,5 + assessment Type the text</p>	<p>Learning-to-learn</p> <p>Communication</p>

7: *This is us!*



Chapter 7: This is us



Česká rada dětí a mládeže (Czech Council of Children and Youth) is the national youth council representing Czech children, young people and their organisations in the Czech government, the European Union, other Czech, foreign or international organisations and institutions, as well as the general public. We have around 100 member organisations which in turn have more than 200,000 individual members (children and young people). We aim to support the conditions in society that would be favourable for youth work and youth participation, and which foster the healthy development of children and young people, so they grow into self-confident and responsible citizens. To achieve this, we work with responsible politicians and representatives of other organisations and institutions, bringing forward ideas and opinions of young people, and we provide information to youth and youth leaders, support volunteers working with children and young people, organise meetings, seminars, international youth exchanges and educational projects that lead to useful and cool outcomes, such as this publication. You can find more information about us on our website at <http://en.crdm.cz>.

Fundacja Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych “Umbrella” (Foundation for Support of Non-Profit Organisations “Umbrella”) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2007. The “Umbrella” Foundation is an infrastructure organisation, which aims to encourage civic and social engagement by the creation and development of new organisations. This goal is achieved through training, advice, information and animation.

With funding from the Municipality of Wrocław, “Umbrella” is implementing the Wrocław Non-Profit Organisations’ Support Centre project “Sektor3” whose beneficiaries are organisations and activists who plan work in the non-profit sector. In the framework of the project the Foundation offers free support in the form of specialist training and consultancy on legal and financial aspects, writing and managing projects, communication, fundraising and cooperation with public authorities, Public Relations and soft skills useful in social activities – management, assertiveness, community animation. On average through “Sektor3” project we support 450–650 non-profit organisations per year.

The other objectives of the Foundation include the development of civil society and the organisation of educational and youth work activities. In addition to the Wrocław Non-Profit Organisations’ Support Centre project “Sektor3”, the Foundation has many other projects in the area of education, aimed at different audiences. You can find more information about us on our website at <http://fundacja-umbrella.org.pl/>.

Lietuvos Jaunimo Centras (The Lithuanian Youth Centre) was founded in 2010. Its main goal is to promote positive youth initiatives as well as interaction and understanding between young people with different cultural or social backgrounds. Our organisation seeks to shift the youth's energy towards activities that bring benefits to the society and the country.

The Centre promotes and popularises the ideas and values of young people. Progressive youths who are under the umbrella of the centre encourage non-formal education, democratic reforms, social justice, the emergence of sociability, public spirit and equal opportunities for everyone. We believe that every person should be treated equally, regardless of his/her ethnicity, race, sexual orientation or religious belief.

Members of the organisation are involved in various projects, which are mainly related to the dissemination of non-formal education in Lithuanian regions, and social advertising and implementation of the projects that improve the levels of competence of young people. For more information you are welcome to visit our website <http://www.ljc.lt/lt/>.

