HOW TO USE
EUTOPIA RESULTS
GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

EST.edu.pl GYIÖT LogoPsyCom. MISTERY TOUR YuzuPulse

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This guide is for youth workers and other stakeholders who would like to use the resources produced during the project EUtopia. EUtopia is an Erasmus+ project funded by the European Union that aims to encourage and promote civic participation among youngsters through the concepts of utopia and dystopia.

What are the concepts of utopia and dystopia?

A utopia represents a perfect, harmonious society in which individuals coexist in peace, prosperity, and happiness. It is often characterized by equitable resource distribution, justice, and freedom.

In opposition, a dystopia portrays a nightmarish, oppressive society marked by suffering, inequality, and dehumanization, where totalitarian regimes or catastrophic events create environments of despair and control.

These concepts are frequently explored in literature and philosophy to reflect on human aspirations and the potential consequences of societal flaws and political systems.

To learn more about these concepts and how to relate them to youngsters' civic participation, visit our **project website** and **download our handbook** on the historical experience and pedagogical objectives of using utopias and dystopias for citizenship education.

Our guide contains practical information and expert tips designed to seamlessly integrate our developed activities and tools into your youth work. We've curated a collection of best practices, step-by-step instructions, and strategic advice to help you navigate the implementation process effectively. These insights cover various aspects, from initial planning and resource allocation to execution and evaluation of youth-led projects.

To provide real-world context and inspiration, we've included a diverse range of testimonies from youth workers, educators, and young participants who have successfully utilized our resources.

They offer valuable perspectives on the challenges faced, solutions devised, and the positive outcomes achieved. By sharing these stories, we aim to demonstrate the tangible impact of our tools and motivate others to adopt similar approaches.

Our guide includes an extensive list of resources to support your work. We've conducted rigorous field testing to ensure the quality and efficiency of our resources. This thorough testing allows us to provide evidence-based recommendations and insights on how to optimize the use of our resources.

Recognizing the diverse needs of different communities and youth groups, our guide offers suggestions on how to adapt and customize our tools and activities. We provide examples of successful modifications and encourage users to innovate and tailor the resources to their specific contexts. A key focus of our guide is to empower youth workers to guide and mentor young people effectively. We offer strategies to:

- Foster youth initiative and leadership
- Facilitate the transition from guided activities to independent project creation
- Support young people in developing their ideas into actionable plans
- Encourage peer-to-peer learning and collaboration
- Long-term Impact and Sustainability

By offering this comprehensive and detailed guide, we aim to equip youth workers and educators with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to effectively engage young people, foster their creativity, and support them in becoming active agents of positive change in their communities.

It was created by our partnership: Centrum Edukacyjne EST (Poland), GYIÖT (Hungary), SCS LogoPsyCom (Belgium), Work in Progress (Italy), and YuzuPulse (France).

Happy reading!

WHAT IS NON-FORMAL EDUCATION?

The following definition of non-formal education is written in the Council of Europe's publication:

Compass – Manual for Human Rights Education for Young People (Brander, De Witte, Ghanea, Gomes, Keen, Nikitina and Pinkeviciute, 2023, p 31.):

"Non-formal education refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational curriculum. Non-formal education is what happens in places such as youth organisations, sports clubs and drama and community groups where young people meet, for example, to undertake projects together, play games, discuss, go camping, or make music and drama. Non-formal education achievements are usually difficult to certify, even if their social recognition is increasing.

Non-formal education should also be:

- voluntary
- accessible to everyone (ideally)
- an organised process with educational objectives
- participatory
- learner-centred
- about learning life skills and preparing for active citizenship
- based on involving both individual and group learning with a collective approach
- holistic and process-oriented
- based on experience and action
- organised on the basis of the needs of the participants"

The Activities and Tools collection's methodology and the workshop scenarios are based on non-formal education as this is what we believe best serves the project's objectives and what we use in youth work settings. The tools and activities are designed to improve skills and empower young people for active citizenship. They are adaptable to different circumstances, environments

and the needs of participants. Our aim is to help transforming ideas into actions, which is an important approach when working with utopias. In the following chapter, you can read more about how it contributes to active citizenship and youth participation.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

A Cornerstone for a Thriving Democracy

Youth participation and active citizenship are critical to the health and vitality of any democratic society. In a world where the challenges are increasingly complex and interconnected, the involvement of young people in civic and political life is more important than ever. Here we can explore the significance of youth participation and active citizenship, examining how young people can contribute to society, the challenges they face, and the benefits their engagement brings to the democratic process.

The Importance of Youth Participation

Young people represent a significant portion of the global population, and their voices are crucial in shaping the future. Their unique perspectives, creativity, and energy can bring fresh ideas and innovative solutions to longstanding problems. Youth participation is essential not only because young people are the future leaders, but also because they are the present stakeholders in society. Engaging them in civic activities helps build a sense of responsibility, ownership, and commitment to the community and the world at large.

Active citizenship among youth is also vital for the sustainability of democracy. Democracies thrive when citizens are informed, engaged, and willing to contribute to the public good. By participating in civic activities, young people learn the values of democracy, such as equality, justice, and respect for diversity. This engagement fosters a culture of participation that is necessary for the continuous renewal and strengthening of democratic institutions.

Forms of Youth Participation

Youth participation can take many forms, ranging from traditional political activities like voting and running for office to more grassroots forms of engagement such as community service, activism, and social entrepreneurship. These activities can occur within formal settings, such as schools and political organizations, or in informal networks and online platforms.

One of the most significant ways young people can participate is through social and political activism. Movements like the global climate strikes, led by youth activists such as Greta Thunberg, demonstrate the power of young people to influence public policy and societal norms. Social media has become a powerful tool for youth activism, allowing young people to organize, communicate, and amplify their voices on a global scale.

In addition to activism, youth participation in local governance and community development is crucial. By involving themselves in local decision-making processes, young people can directly influence the policies and practices that affect their lives. Volunteering and community service are also vital forms of participation that allow young people to contribute to the welfare of their communities while developing essential skills and networks.

Challenges to Youth Participation

Despite the importance of youth participation, several barriers prevent young people from fully engaging in civic life. One of the primary challenges is the lack of access to information and education about civic rights and responsibilities. In many countries, civic education is inadequate, leaving young people ill-prepared to participate effectively in democratic processes.

Additionally, young people often face structural barriers to participation, such as age restrictions, lack of resources, and limited opportunities for involvement. Political systems and institutions are often dominated by older generations, making it difficult for young people to break through and have their voices heard. Social and economic inequalities also play a role, as marginalized youth may lack the resources and support needed to engage in civic activities.

Another significant challenge is the perception of youth as apathetic or disengaged. This stereotype can be self-fulfilling, as it may discourage young people from participating and lead to their exclusion from important decision-making processes. Overcoming these challenges

requires concerted efforts from governments, educational institutions, and civil society to create more inclusive and supportive environments for youth participation.

Benefits of Youth Participation

The benefits of youth participation extend beyond the individual to society as a whole. When young people are engaged in civic life, they develop critical thinking skills, a sense of responsibility, and a commitment to the common good. These attributes are essential for the functioning of a healthy democracy.

Moreover, youth participation can lead to more responsive and inclusive governance. Young people bring new perspectives and innovative ideas that can help address complex social and political issues. Their involvement ensures that the needs and interests of all segments of society are considered in policy-making processes.

Youth participation also fosters social cohesion and community resilience. By working together on common goals, young people can bridge social divides and build stronger, more connected communities. This is particularly important in today's world, where polarization and division are increasingly prevalent.

Conclusion

Youth participation and active citizenship are fundamental to the health and sustainability of democratic societies. Young people have the potential to drive positive change, bring fresh ideas to the table, and strengthen the democratic process. However, to fully realize this potential, it is essential to address the barriers that prevent youth from participating and to create environments that support and encourage their engagement. By investing in youth participation today, we can build a more just, inclusive, and vibrant democracy for tomorrow.

Opportunities

Nonformal education, which occurs outside traditional classroom settings through activities such as workshops, community projects, and volunteer opportunities, plays a pivotal role in fostering this form of citizenship among young people. Nonformal education helps young people become more active and responsible in society by providing practical skills, empowering them to take

initiative, offering real-world experiences, fostering critical thinking, instilling civic responsibility, building networks, and promoting personal growth. These elements collectively contribute to the development of engaged and responsible citizens who are well-equipped to contribute positively to their communities.
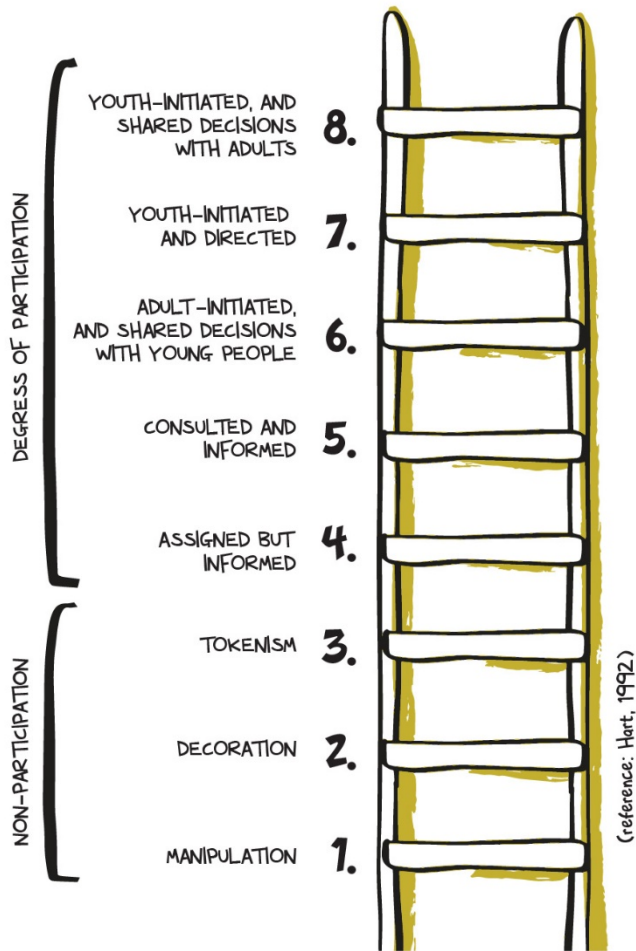
The Ladder of Participation

One of the most well-known concepts is the adaptation of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation from 1969. In this concept, a strong dimension relates to political participation or in other words those aspects that in a democratic system engage citizens in various ways in decision-making processes. Having said this we should not forget that a broader understanding is necessary to have a full picture. The Ladder concept distinguishes the various dimensions from no participation at all to an ideal situation where citizen participation involves a shared decision-making power.

Hence the model wasn't sensitive to the needs of young people in the early 90's (as part of the Declaration on the Rights of Children) Roger Hart created an adapted version (1992).

See the following image as it visualizes the different stages!

DEGRESS OF PARTICIPATION

8. YOUTH-INITIATED, AND SHARED DECISIONS WITH ADULTS

7. YOUTH-INITIATED AND DIRECTED

6. ADULT-INITIATED, AND SHARED DECISIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

5. CONSULTED AND INFORMED

4. ASSIGNED BUT INFORMED

NON-PARTICIPATION

3. TOKENISM

2. DECORATION

1. MANIPULATION

(reference: Hart, 1992)

According to Hart, there is incomplete participation until the third rung of the ladder; after that, there are stages of real participation.

Young people often only are "victims" of manipulation. It is a degree where programmes are often explained as youth-initiated only because they asked some young people (or the youth council) about their needs. In manipulation often happens that young people are being persuaded by adults that this way their voice is being heard, but is that real participation?

This persuasion is associated with the support of young people, which is nothing more than a tick on a list, in which the question is: have they been involved in the process?

Young people appearing as decoration is perhaps even more common than manipulation. It is quite common for young people to be shown as 'display' at the unveiling of a statue or ceremony. The aim here is nothing other than to make it clear that young people support the cause.

Token participation, although with varying degrees of seriousness, is an existing and established practice. It is a degree of participation that goes somewhat beyond showing young people in pictures. It is about giving young people a voice in processes that have been assigned to them. They may not have anything to say, so they cannot present their own ideas and the issues that concern them.

An informed degree is the minimum level expected in youth participation. Here we are mostly talking about involvement in a specific issue, where young people are involved and informed about the details. They are given a mandate, so to speak, to contribute with their opinions. The information should be presented in a youth-friendly way and its accessibility should be the same for all groups.

Consultation is one of the most common degrees of youth participation, as it is not so uncomfortable, even at a depth that is acceptable for the adults - decision makers. Nowadays there is stronger motivation to involve young people, which means that the views of their peers are somewhat important. This level also assumes that the views of the peer group are as important.

More often than not, it is even more common for young people to be involved in decisions related to adult initiatives. This is not a problem, because it could be the result of a well-functioning partnership; or it could be the result of youth work in municipalities: i.e. the needs of young people are heard, but the adults are already responsible for putting them into practice. Youth councils could be a good example to explain this rung of the ladder.

The final stage is where decisions on young people's initiatives are taken jointly together with adults. We see this rarely in our countries.

HOW TO CREATE A UTOPIAN SPACE?

Tips on how to implement cultural references (maintain the spirit) of utopias and dystopias

Foreword

Creating a space in tune with the workshop objectives and participants' expectations is the prerequisite for a more effective participation and involvement experience. Therefore, it is essential to have a clear vision, an open mind, and the right amount of creativity and imagination to make the space available in the right setting for an educational, inclusive, engaging, and memorable experience.

As in a story, a workshop needs the right scenario to set the activities. If this scenario conflicts with the story, it will have a weak element from the start, and the storyteller will find it more challenging to engage listeners and convince them to follow them into their world.

Conversely, when participants feel inspired by their surroundings, they are more likely to engage and experience the training as a truly inspirational experience for their lives. The right location promotes a sense of belonging and motivates people to contribute effectively to the activity's success.

The goals to set when imagining and organising a workshop location are:

- allowing people to meet easily and inclusively, without hierarchy and discomfort;
- building trust by encouraging open communication, encouraging everyone to participate and share their ideas freely;
- inspiring creativity, allowing participants to give space to their emotions and imagination.

How to create a scenario suitable for 'hosting Utopias'. Some examples

If what is written in the introduction is generally valid for all types of workshops, it becomes even more decisive when young people are involved. You want to work on creating and developing ideas, as in the case of the workshops linked to the EUtopia project. It is not so much a matter of having the right furnishings and physical elements but of creating an atmosphere that favours the emotional involvement of the participants and their propensity to allow themselves to be immersed in the workshop's themes, to be inspired, and to follow its dynamics.

Music is always a great ally—use it to create an atmosphere! The website and the **article "Utopia in Songs" offer** some **suggestions for songs with utopia as a protagonist**. But you can find many more or get inspired by the music you know.

In general, the cultural resources provided on the EUtopia website can be used to create an exemplary scenario. In the articles on art, culture and music published on the project website, we have made available a series of films, songs, books, and works of art that deal with Utopias and Dystopias from different aspects. These tools can be handy for creating an exemplary scenario for a workshop, introducing the topic of utopia, and making the participants "enter" a dimension conducive to concentration, creativity, and imagination.

Let us now look at some examples.

First of all, it might be effective and impressive to gather the participants in the first room or even outside the room, explaining that their prejudices, mistrust, and fears must be left behind. One is about to enter another dimension where anything can become possible. Stepping through the door represents a 'passage' from a known, imperfect place, tending to be constructed and regulated by others, to a place to be imagined and built, where potentially everything is possible, and thoughts can become a reality.

Paradoxically, it could be a **totally neutral environment,** like a blank sheet of paper (it could be a meeting room, any room). To this end, it would be advisable to **work not on adding elements but on eliminating everything superfluous**, everything that could interfere with or deviate from the project's contents.

In a situation like this, it could be very effective to leave the room in semi-darkness and play a song in the background or project some film sequences.

Picture the intrigue of a transition **into a completely dark room**! Equipped with torches, participants will face the challenge **of bringing light back into the room.** This could involve opening a window, finding switches to light lamps, or using torches effectively.

Or we could create a **creative workshop**, playing on the sense of '**building or rebuilding together**' from what we have. This space could then be filled with books, evocative posters, and objects that can inspire observation, study, design, and creativity.

Photo from Freepick.com

Or you could create a somewhat magical space **where you can let your emotions and imagination run free**. How about, for example, a **workshop at night in a meadow lit by torches**? Or what about setting up the workshop room with thoughts written on post-its, books and evocative objects... **hanging from the ceiling**?

An urban setting can also be very suitable, especially if your goal is to think together and create something aimed at your city or local community. **A public square or garden could become a**

perfect setting by asking the administration to **restrict or 'personalise' the space,** e.g. with colourful ribbons or chairs. The workshop will have an even more powerful effect, as it **will also create curiosity in passers-by, who may be informed, sensitised, or even involved**! In Paciano, Umbria, a truly impressive intervention was realized with coloured umbrellas!

https://umbrianotizieweb.it/images/upload_utenti/301119/ombrelli.jpg

It is true that customising a space is not always easy or cheap, and sometimes there are objective constraints. The trick is not just to add elements to the starting space but to find a suitable interpretation for the space and elements we have available.

Imagine our workshop venue is a **gymnasium**! You might feel discouraged: How can we create a suitable environment to talk about utopias and work on dreams and projects in the midst of sports equipment? The first mission is to try to make this objective constraint and the physical elements of the place an opportunity, giving the space a suitable meaning and value.

In this scenario, we could welcome participants by highlighting the parallels between change and sport. Just as every change requires training, perseverance, and commitment, so does the planning of a successful workshop. By staying dedicated, we can achieve results, just as in sports. Each piece of equipment in the gymnasium has its own function, and similarly, every element in our space can be used to foster the birth and development of an idea.
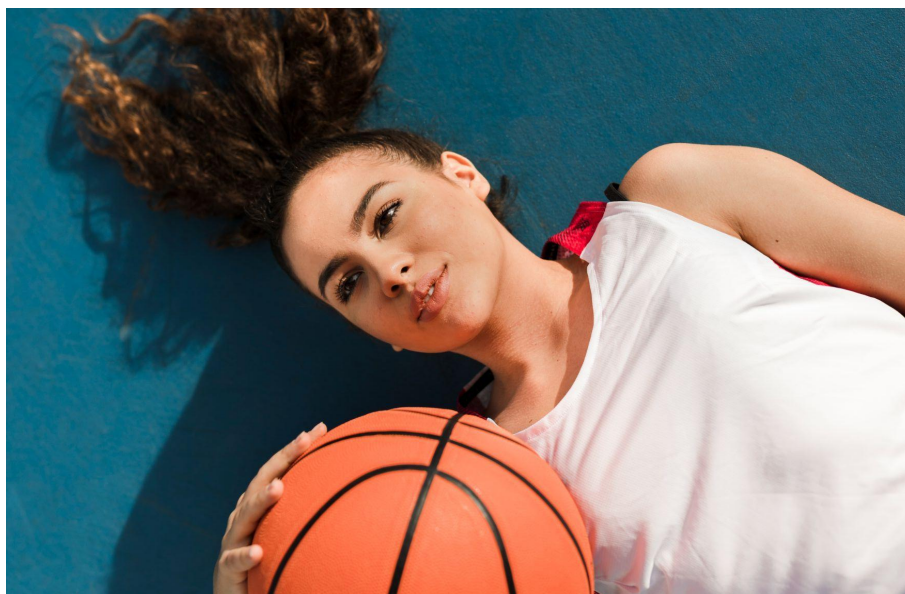
Photo from Freepick.com

A short initial training session could also be proposed, using the gym's equipment and giving each test a precise meaning:

- The **axis of balance represents the need to focus on a goal**, which requires concentration to be pursued. This implies leaving the mind free of other distractions;
- The **hoop represents the dream of jumping high to get closer to a goal**; this is not always easy and obvious, and one does not always succeed, but perseverance allows one to acquire a greater capacity to succeed;
- Introducing a relay race among the participants not only adds an element of fun but also **underscores the importance of cooperation in achieving a common goal**.

- In general, reasoning about **fair play**, which, in the game as in life, also involves **renouncing personal benefit for the benefit of the whole group**; talking about loyalty with 'rivals', acceptance of defeats, help and altruism as the key to growth.

Concluding, it's important to remember that youth trainings are more than just activities. They are opportunities to create lasting memories and meaningful connections. A key factor in achieving this is the customization of the event space. There's no one-size-fits-all formula, but tailoring the space to the type of event is crucial in engaging participants and fostering meaningful connections. It's not just about aesthetics, it's about creating an atmosphere that resonates with participants, making them feel comfortable and motivated. This sense of belonging can significantly enhance the overall experience, encouraging active participation and collaboration.

How to create a credible space by conveying trust. Some suggestions

We know that it is important to create a trusting relationship between the trainer and the participants. We suggest reflecting on simple but important things to have the right attitude, strengthen motivation, and optimise the workshop's success.

1. Create a set of rules and follow them

Everyone needs motivation for something, no matter where you are. A great way to do this is to share the path you are about to take, where it starts, why you are beginning, what the stages will be, and how it will end. Create a set of rules for yourself and the participants and stick to them.

2. Be realistic and honest

Nobody can provide a magic potion in the workshop to solve any problem! So convey this concept: there is no potion, but a positive attitude. Your aim as a trainer is to encourage participants to shift their thinking. Small changes lead to continued success over time. of the

training plan to help them achieve their goals so that they know from the beginning what it will take to get there.

3. Optimise your time

Leave nothing to chance; plan your activities precisely. Being organised and professional will encourage participants to trust you and motivate them to do their best.

4. Look for opportunities for self-improvement

It is important to be sure of what you are going to tackle together. No one can have confidence in a trainer who does not have confidence in himself and what he is proposing. If you believe that what you are doing has meaning and value, you will automatically transmit confidence. Continuous training, lectures, and scientific readings—the greater your technical and cultural background, the greater your confidence.

5. Show as much empathy as possible.

Remember that everyone is different. While many young people may see the ultimate goal, others need more courage, motivation, or confidence. Spend time getting to know the stories of your participants and trust will build over time. Understanding better can also help customise your approach and build unique relationships.

INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK

As a first step of the EUtopia project, we created [a handbook](#) to enhance the understanding of

utopia and dystopia concepts and their relevance in youth work and citizenship education for young people.

It has been the occasion for our partnership to better discern these concepts. It serves as a pedagogical, editorial, and graphic design guide for the EUtopia project, as well as for youth workers who want a complete introduction to the project's context and objectives.
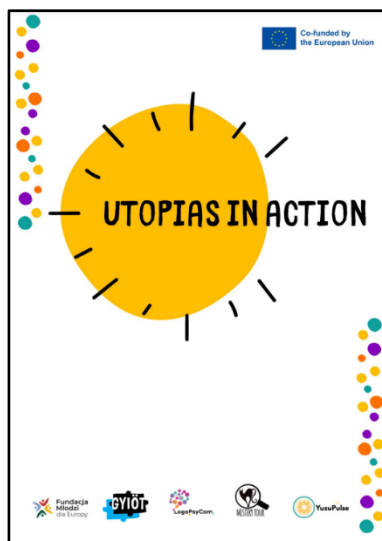
In this handbook, we explore the EUtopia project in detail, including its target groups, structure, pedagogical objectives, and the concepts of utopia and dystopia, along with their potential educational applications in citizenship education for youth. We also added a list of cultural references to dystopias and utopias in the handbook's annexe as an inspiration for youth workers or youngsters to use them as learning support.

As part of the EUtopia project, we had the opportunity to interview 20 youth workers from the five countries in which the partnership was based. We appreciate the diverse perspectives and contributions of these experts, which have provided valuable insights into local youth work and young people's visions of utopia.

According to our interviews with youth workers, they don't use the concepts of utopia and dystopia to teach youngsters about civic education or citizenship. However, these concepts could be useful tools to help youngsters develop their ideas and increase their civic participation.

Handbook's table of contents:

- Introduction
- Specificities and expectations of each target
- Pedagogical objectives of the project
- Inclusion and equal opportunities
- List of expected deliverables
- Utopias and dystopias
- Politics and civic participation
- Fight against discrimination
- Environmental and climate change
- Conclusion
- Bibliography
- Annex – cultural references of dystopias and utopias

Our handbook is available on the project website for free under a common creative license. Feel free to download it, read it, and share it with others!

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTIVITIES AND TOOLS

This chapter will outline the learning objectives of our carefully designed collection of activities and tools, each chosen to enrich your repertoire and enhance your effectiveness in engaging young people to active participation.

Our collection comprises of 11 tools and 14 activities ready for immediate use. These resources are crafted to support you in creating and facilitating non-formal educational sessions that not only educate but also empower young people. From fostering basic social skills to encouraging active participation in society, the variety within our collection ensures that you can tailor sessions to meet the diverse needs and interests of the youth you work with.

Our collection includes straightforward, adaptable tools and activities such as the "Concentric Circles," "Mural," and "Mentimeter." These are designed to be flexible and can be modified to fit various non-formal educational contexts and topics. Whether you are discussing community involvement, personal responsibility, or global citizenship, these activities serve as foundational building blocks that you can expand upon.

For those who need more specific material for citizenship education, we offer specialized activities like "Around Belonging" and the "Observation Game". These activities delve deeper into the concepts of community, identity, and civic engagement, providing a way to discover a richer, more focused exploration of what it means to be an active citizen in today's world.

Recognizing the importance of actionable learning, we also provide additional tools to support the youth in turning their ideas into concrete actions.

These include:

- ✦ **Action Template:** A structured framework to guide the planning of initiatives.
- ✦ **Action Plan & Example:** Detailed steps for developing and executing plans.
- ✦ **Evaluation Plan & Example:** Tools to assess the outcomes and impacts of their actions.

To assist you further, we have included a descriptive table that categorizes each tool and activity by its primary focus and application. This will help you quickly identify which resources best align with your educational goals and session themes.

We encourage you to visit our website for more detailed information and additional materials.

Let's explore how these activities and tools can be implemented to achieve our shared goals of empowerment and engagement.

Name	Main objectives	Tool or Activity	Group size	Time required (preparation, implementation, discussion)
Project Zero	Help participants articulate their thinking at the beginning of a learning experience.	Tool	5-25 participants	Min 30-40 minutes per topic
Kialo	User-friendly platform for debating concrete topics.	Tool	Unlimited	Min 30-40 minutes per topic
Around belonging	Monitor and develop individuals' sense of belonging.	Tool	2-6 participants per group	90-120 minutes
Chatfuel	ICT tool for interactive tailoring conversations.	Tool	1-4 participants per group	20-30 minutes
Padlet	Real-time collaboration.	Tool	Min 2 participants	Min 1 week
Observation game + sheet	Guided tour to observe and analyse your neighbourhood.	Tool	3-10 participants per group	60-90 minutes
Mural	Digital collaboration and brainstorming.	Tool	1-20 participants	30-40 minutes

Mentimeter	Making a presentation.	Tool	1-20 participants	30-60 minutes
Checklist for speech techniques	Prepare a speech and improve your oral skills.	Tool	1-20 participants	30-60 minutes
Cards for facilitating a discussion	Facilitating diverse discussions.	Tool	5-10 participants	30-40 minutes
Games Play Engage Participate	Innovative gamified tools tailored to address various levels of participation.	Tool	Min 5 participants	Around 60 minutes depending on the game.
Concentric Circles	Shortly discuss diverse topics.	Activity	6-14 participants	2 minutes per round
Socratic Seminar	Understand information by creating a dialectic class in regard to a specific text.	Activity	Min 4 participants	Min 15 minutes
Think-Pair-Share	Discussion technique.	Activity	3-30 participants	6-9 minutes per round
Local challenges	Support local youngsters to know more about their hometown.	Activity	Unlimited	4-6 months
Mind-map	Visualizing the problems and needs.	Activity	5-20 participants	60-70 minutes
Brainwriting	Generate ideas and creative solutions to a problem.	Activity	6 participants per group	5 minutes per round
Collection of Utopias	Inspire and collect ideas.	Activity	Unlimited	Minimum 2 months.
Laboratory of context analysis	Identify cause-effect relationships and major context-related factors.	Activity	1-6 participants per group	20-30 minutes

Role-playing	Simulate diverse scenarios.	Activity	2-6 participants per group	30-40 minutes
Choose a structure	Find the best structure for your presentation to ask decision-makers.	Activity	5-20 participants	30-60 minutes
Cold email writing techniques	How to reach out possible stakeholders.	Activity	3-15 participants	60-90 minutes
How to disagree	Guidance on how to disagree effectively in discussions.	Activity	2-4 participants per group	60-90 minutes
ParticipART	Tell and share experiences to become active citizens and participate in society through art.	Activity	5-10 participants	90-120 minutes
Participatory video making	Involves participants working together to understand and solve a specific problem that affects their community.	Activity	Min 4 participants	Depending on the skills of the participants, from couple of hours to a couple of weeks.
Action template	Implementing ideas into actions.	Tool	Min 4 participants	60-90 minutes
Action plan	Implementing ideas into actions.	Tool	Min 4 participants	60-90 minutes
Action plan – Example	Implementing ideas into actions.	Tool	Min 4 participants	60-90 minutes
Evaluation plan	Evaluating concrete actions.	Tool	Min 4 participants	60-90 minutes

Evaluation plan – Example	Evaluating concrete actions.	Tool	Min 4 participants	60-90 minutes

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP SCENARIOS

In the framework of the EUtopia project we developed five workshop scenarios promoting active citizenship of young people, their sense of initiative and social entrepreneurship. These scenarios are based on the identification of some of the most critical questions around youth engagement and help young people transform their ideas into action. At the same time, they give us an opportunity to practically address the key goals of the project which aims to:

- Encourage youngsters to participate in democratic life more actively,
- Make youngsters aware of their social, cultural and historical heritage,
- Empower young generations to understand their present's primary socio-economic, cultural and environmental contexts,
- Shape a more equal, inclusive, coherent and tolerant vision of the future,
- Inspire further projects, ideas and local/global changes,
- Develop local youth work.

What follows is an outline of the five scenarios tested by the project partners in their different contexts of youth work.

Define Your Impact Project!

Objectives: This workshop scenario, developed by YuzuPulse, aims to help young people transform an idea or a need into an action plan. The workshop can be a standalone session or a follow-up to an initial idea-generation workshop. In the course of working on the action plan the participants develop a number of skills and competences: teamwork and cooperation skills, decision-making, active citizenship and entrepreneurship.

Process. The workshop consists of three sessions:

- Introduction and icebreaker activities,
- Collaborative work on an action plan
- Closing with sharing the workshop experience

Tools and Resources: The workshop can be conducted online or offline, but offline is more effective for engagement. Required materials include:

- Tables and chairs,
- Pens and papers

The following tools and activities featured on the EUtopia website can facilitate the workshop implementation:

- Action Plan Template,
- "Think-Pair-Share" method,
- Cards for Facilitating a Discussion,

- Mural or Padlet

Learning Outcomes for the participants:

- Learning to work as a team and articulate their ideas,

- Creating concrete action plans,

- Presenting projects or ideas clearly to an audience,

- Reflecting on their projects' feasibility,

- Engaging in debates and discussions on specific topics

Building a Bug Hotel and Protecting Biodiversity

Objectives: This workshop scenario, developed by WIP, addresses the need to protect biodiversity in urban environments by educating young people on the importance of insects and guiding them in creating bug hotels. The workshop aims to raise awareness among young participants about biodiversity loss and its consequences and, more specifically, to transform the perception of insects from nuisances to vital ecosystem contributors.

Photo from Pixabay – Eveline de Bruin

Process. The workshop is divided into three sessions:

- Presentation of the scale of biodiversity loss and its global impact, identification of its main threats and encouraging positive actions and lifestyles to support it,
- Educating participants on the importance of insects addressing common fears and myths about them,
- Building a Bug Hotel using recycled materials and Promoting the initiative through the participants' social media and community engagement.

Tools and Resources: The workshop requires minimal space and cost, utilising recycled materials for bug hotel construction. Essential materials include:

- Bamboo canes,
- Herbaceous stems,
- Perforated logs,
- Clay,
- Pinecones,
- Stones

The following tools and activities featured on the EUtopia website can facilitate the workshop implementation:

- Mural,
- MindMap,
- Padlet,
- Concentric Circles,
- Participatory Video Making

Learning Outcomes for the participants:

- Gaining awareness of biodiversity and its significance,
- Understanding the threats to biodiversity and their consequences,

- Learning how to contribute to biodiversity protection through small actions,
- Overcoming irrational fears of insects and appreciating their ecological roles,
- Acquiring skills in building bug hotels,
- Becoming motivated advocates for biodiversity, capable of educating peers and promoting insect-friendly urban environments.

Be More Youth Friendly! How to make cities/towns more youth-friendly to ensure social sustainability

Objectives: This scenario, developed by Logopsycom, aims to involve young people in reflecting on their neighbourhood's qualities, problems, and areas for improvement and further to empower them to actively participate in decision-making processes concerning their communities. It thus fosters a sense of belonging and provides local engagement opportunities in which participants explore ways to make their cities/towns more youth friendly.

Process: The workshop consists of three parts, designed to be conducted over several sessions:

- Introduction and team-building activities to create a safe, collaborative environment,
- Observation game in the neighbourhood to identify issues and propose improvements,
- Activities to envision and plan for a youth-friendly city, including drawing maps, group discussions, and action planning.

Tools and Resources: The workshop primarily requires offline engagement, with materials such as:

- Paper and markers,
- Flipcharts,
- Chairs

Some activities may benefit from online platforms for sharing resources and follow-up actions.

The following EUtopia tools and activities are recommended for use in this scenario:

- Define Your Impact Project,
- Brainwriting,
- Laboratory of Context Analysis,
- Action Plan Template,
- Concentric Circles,
- Think-Pair-Share

Learning Outcomes for the participants:

- Developing maps of their hometowns, highlighting significant places and community assets,
- Recognising the social, cultural, and historical heritage of their neighbourhoods,
- Identifying and expressing opinions on their neighbourhood advantages, problems, and areas for improvement,
- Identifying potential next steps for community action,

- Developing a more inclusive, tolerant, and equal vision of their future,
- Improving skills and competences: speech techniques and presentation skills, communication and critical thinking skills.

Build the Bridge! – Meeting with Decision-makers

Objectives: The primary goal of this workshop scenario developed by GYIOT is to promote dialogue between young people and decision-makers to foster mutual understanding and collaboration on local issues. It is designed to help youth present their ideas to high-ranking officials, such as town mayors, to seek support for their initiatives.

Process: The workshop is structured into two main parts:

- Welcoming participants and letting them present their ideas with a brief introduction by the facilitator,
- Processing youth proposals, discussion, and evaluation with reflections and feedback from decision-makers.

Tools and Resources: The workshop requires a setup with a circular seating arrangement. Necessary materials include:

- Post-it notes,
- Flipchart paper and markers
- Technical equipment for presentations

The scenario recommends the use of the following EUtopia tools and activities:

- How to Disagree,
- Participatory Video Making,
- Concentric Circles,
- Cards for Facilitating a Discussion,
- Miro or Mural

Learning Outcomes for the participants:

- Gaining a better understanding of each other's perspectives and proposals,
- Enhancing their presentation and communication skills,
- Learning about decision-making processes and requirements,
- Receiving constructive feedback and support for their initiatives.

In Concert: Youth Connections Across Cultures Through Music

Objectives: The workshop scenario, developed by EST, primarily aims to help participants organise a music event featuring peer musicians from different countries. The idea originated from youth workshops, where young artists organised exhibitions enhanced by local music performances. This led to the idea of involving musicians from other countries, fostering intercultural connections through music.

Concert in Kaflarnia, Wadowice, 29th June 2024

Process: The workshop consists of several phases and activities:

- Team building,
- Planning and organising the concert,
- Concluding with the final music event featuring international musicians

Tools and Resources: Preparation involves both offline and online sessions using tools like:

- Zoom,
- Mentimeter,
- Mural, Kialo and Padlet for communication and collaboration

Essential resources include a suitable venue, audio/visual equipment, instruments and support staff. The following EUtopia tools and activities are particularly useful for this scenario:

- Brainwriting,
- Context Analysis,
- How to Disagree,
- Action Plan Template

Learning Outcomes for the participants:

- Gaining practical event management skills,
- Experience in using digital collaboration tools,
- Enhanced intercultural communication skills,
- Broadening musical horizons and social networks, fostering empathy, respect, and understanding across cultures

Full versions of the above scenarios are available on the EUtopia website for free download. We encourage you to consult them and consider implementing and/or adapting them into your own context of youth work.

WHAT CAN BE POTENTIAL CHALLENGES, AND HOW CAN THEY BE DEALT WITH?

1. To reach and engage young people

In our handbook about the concepts of utopia and dystopia related to youth civic participation, we highlighted that one of the main challenges the youth workers we interviewed talked about was the difficulty in reaching and engaging young people. It was specifically to engage youngsters in topics such as civic participation and political topics.

Most of the time, young people who are involved in civic participation activities are already aware of the problems and are interested in improving their participation. The main challenge is to engage youngsters who are not into civic participation because they don't know the topic, they don't feel involved in civic life, or even feel excluded from it.

One way to reach youngsters is to get them something in return that they will benefit from. It has to be two-way. For instance, one youth association in Roubaix (France) proposed to their members to rent them a music studio for one or two hours if they participate in a workshop about civic participation or any other related topic. That way, youngsters who are interested in music and want to pursue a career (or even do it for fun) and cannot afford any material or studio experience have the opportunity to develop their skills in exchange for their participation in civic education workshops. That way, they can develop a sense of belonging through activities about local processes and more fun ones to focus on knowing their environment better. If they start to feel that the city or place is theirs, they become more motivated to make it better.

2. To involve everyone

The challenge of inclusion is also very important. We won't go into further details here, as you can find all the information in chapter 11 on "What makes an activity inclusive?" However, inclusion is a big aspect of civic participation, and the implementation of activities and workshops related to it.

Here, we will mainly talk about involving everyone in an activity in terms of finding one's place in a dialogue or a team. As you no doubt know, while some young people are already comfortable speaking in front of a group, expressing their ideas without fear of being judged, or having confidence in their own skills and using them in a team project, it's not easy for everyone.

Another inclusion challenge could be related to online tools and access. In our resources, we proposed online versions of tools, and some workshops can contain online sessions. However, not all youngsters have access to online tools.

However, in other cases, online tools such as social media, videoconference platforms or online collaboration tools can be a great way to involve everyone and increase inclusion. Some youngsters may not be able to come to your organisation, or shy persons can benefit from online tools.

Image by pch.vector on Freepik

3. **To create a follow-up after the workshops or sessions to develop a project fully**

Another big challenge you could encounter is the difficulty of successfully following up with youngsters so that they can develop a project fully. The main objective of the resources created during the project is to encourage youngsters to turn their ideas into actions through impactful projects. However, developing a project cannot be done in only one session or workshop. Youngsters need to be guided and followed up to complete their projects successfully. If you plan

to organise workshops or work sessions with young people on civic education or the creation of projects, be sure to plan several sessions and communicate with youngsters.

A follow-up can also be needed to get feedback on the quality and efficiency of what you propose to the youngsters. Feedback from them is precious for improving youth work, understanding their specific needs, and then better helping them.

The main challenge of follow-up can be the lack of means to create other sessions or even the youngsters' lack of motivation or means to continue their project or to come to your workshops.

A solution for certain challenges related to follow-up can be the use of online tools. It can be a idea if the challenge is finding availability for everyone or travelling to the youth workers' organization. Real meetings are more efficient and human, but in today's context, online tools are very useful too. It can be a great way for youngsters to be updated on their progress or for them to ask for help when needed. It is also a solution to plan follow-up sessions and stay flexible.

Finally, when their idea can not be fully implemented because of financial or other reasons, it is important to work on the adaptation together to keep motivation high and make them feel satisfied even if they can only implement some parts of their idea.

4. **To adapt your workshop or activity to the group dynamic**

Our resources are meant to be adapted. They are not fixed. For instance, activities and tools are to be implemented into a specific workshop that you would decide to do. They are inspirations for you.

Each activity and tool can be used and adapted according to the group dynamic or the youngsters' needs. That is why it is important to:

- Remember that your workshop organization must be flexible and adaptable to the current need and timeframe.
- Speak with the youngsters before the workshop (if possible) to learn about their needs and profiles.
- Plan an inclusive and safe environment so that everyone feels comfortable.
- Ask for feedback during and after the workshop to better understand everyone.

Sometimes, based on the group dynamics, a session or a specific activity or discussion can take more or less time. For instance, if a group of youngsters already know each other and get along together, debates and discussions will be easy to organize. However, a group of young people who don't know each other and are not used to working as a group might need an icebreaker activity, to support to start their thinking process, and more time to be at ease and open to their group. In the second case, this is where our collection of activities and tools is useful.

5.   To open discussion and debate and fight against the polarisation of opinions

A great challenge specifically related to civic education is managing debates and discussions so that everyone is respectful and comfortable saying what they think.

With today's rise in technology and social media use, there are many polarisations of opinions. The algorithms used by social media owners create filter bubbles that tend to lock youngsters into only one opinion. It becomes very difficult for them to be confronted with diverse points of view. The problem is that always consuming the same political or cultural content tends to make them extreme in their ideas. Additionally, the misinformation that circulates on social media is not helping.

However, if these issues with social media can make it difficult to create a debate or discussion with youngsters on political topics and civic participation, it is also a great exercise that will help resolve this issue. Both are interconnected. That is to say, that, to reduce the polarization of opinions, which makes us less inclined to have interesting debates with people who are opposed to our point of view, we need to discuss and debate with them.

6.   To build a real-life community

In an increasingly digital world, one significant challenge for civic participation among young people is the transition from online engagement to building real-life communities. While social media platforms and online forums provide avenues for connection and discussion, they can lack the depth and authenticity of face-to-face interactions. Youngsters may find it easier to express their opinions and collaborate virtually, yet this can lead to a superficial sense of community that

fails to foster genuine relationships or local engagement. To cultivate a vibrant civic culture, it is essential to encourage young individuals to step outside their screens and participate in local initiatives, volunteer opportunities, and community events. By doing so, they can develop meaningful connections, enhance their social skills, and contribute to the collective well-being of their neighbourhoods, ultimately bridging the gap between their online identities and their real-world experiences.

To create a safe space and open the discussion with youngsters, refer to chapter 10, "What makes a space safe? ".

WHAT MAKES A SPACE SAFE?

In the chapter of How to create a Utopian space?, we addressed the issue of the workshop space. While creating the right setting is very important, it is also crucial to take care of the space in terms of safety. In this chapter, we will try to give practical suggestions for making all participants feel welcome through the organisation of a space that is:

- **safe** to ensure the safety of the participants;
- **protected** to make everyone feel comfortable and encourage participation;
- **efficient**, to optimise time.

Several factors must be taken into account.

- **Risks and safety**

The health and safety of the participants are paramount. The assessment of all risks within a space is the foundation of safety. We encourage you to consult the Risk Assessment Document prepared for the workshop venue, as it provides insights into the risks identified by experts in that specific space. Your understanding and involvement in this process are crucial for ensuring a safe and welcoming environment.

A **hazard** to persons is the inherent property or quality of a given entity (tool, substance, work method) that has the potential to cause harm. On the other hand, the **risk** to people is the probability that they will be harmed under certain conditions of use or exposure. A hammer is capable of causing harm. Therefore, it constitutes a hazard even if stored in a box. If it is left on a ladder from which, for whatever reason, it may fall or is left on the ground in a poorly lit passageway, the hammer itself constitutes a hazard. **For a risk, a person must be exposed to a hazard.**

Behaviour can really minimise risks. One of the fundamental factors that determine the safety of a place is the behaviour of those who frequent it.

For ease of reference, we suggest a short list to pay attention to:

- **Structural risks,** such as cracks, lesions, breaks, and anomalies, should be reported immediately upon observation. These issues can be found in floors, walls, ceilings, roofs, stairs, railings, doors, windows, fences, and structures in general.

- Risks arising from **electrical installations** are difficult to detect visually. Frequent interruptions in the power supply, even as a result of plugging in a household appliance (jumping of the meter), voltage fluctuations (lowering and raising of the amount of light emitted by the lamps), the presence of bare wires, the detachment, even partial, of lighting fixtures indicate the need for immediate intervention. In addition, multiple sockets and reductions must not be connected as they could absorb more energy than the wire allows and, therefore, cause fusion and its consequences (short circuit, fire). Do not connect equipment with absorption more significant than that permitted by the wire used for the system. Take care that the sockets are always intact and the wires recessed. Do not allow participants to insert plugs into the sockets or otherwise have direct contact with electrical material.

- **Escape routes**, both inside and outside the building, must always be kept completely clear. Knowing the location of emergency exits is essential for swift intervention in an emergency.

  The **microclimate** is a fundamental factor for the healthiness of the working environment and, therefore, for the productivity of both participants. An adequate microclimate avoids exudation, with consequent loss of water and mineral salts, headaches, altered blood pressure, irritability, etc.

- **Correct lighting** is a fundamental element to avoid accidents and to safeguard the health of participants. The light must be sufficient according to the activity to be performed and must not cause glare on any element, especially on the work and/or reading surface.

- There are many hazards in **outdoor spaces**. They range from paving, fences, natural and non-natural obstacles, the furnishing of green spaces, the presence of foreign materials, including gates left open and their type, to the lack or absence of spaces for gathering people in case of emergency. It isn't easy to foresee them all, but they are generally easily visible during an inspection. It is, therefore, a good idea to view the site in advance and pay particular attention; the participants' behaviour may aggravate latent dangers.

- Another crucial aspect is the **furniture**, which must adhere to standards and be certified. However, the presence of uncertified or damaged furniture, such as doors, windows, radiators, and sharp-edged pillars, can pose significant risks.

- **It's important to note that behaviour is the primary cause of risk.** Therefore, it's essential to influence participants to adopt appropriate behaviour during all phases of the proposed activity. This is the most effective way to prevent accidents and incidents.

Other useful factors for securing a workspace

- **Freedom of expression and inclusion**

Once you have ensured that no factors expose participants to risks, try to create a comfortable environment where participants feel free to express themselves and make mistakes. Making mistakes means experimenting; experimenting is the best possible training ground for developing creativity and genuinely innovative ideas. Talking freely without feeling judged leads to a calm exploration of possibilities, even the seemingly absurd ones, which can be an essential stimulus for evaluating alternatives, risks, and opportunities.

It is essential to create an inclusive environment that promotes the inclusion of every participant.

Creating an inclusive learning environment means providing opportunities for everyone, regardless of their abilities, cultural backgrounds or socio-economic backgrounds. This approach requires a collective commitment and a series of concrete actions. Here are some good practices:

- Valuing diversity: recognising and valuing the diversity of each young person, respecting their abilities, backgrounds and contexts.

- Adapt to different abilities: offer support and educational adaptations to the various needs of participants, both in terms of learning and communication.
- Promoting integration: involving participants with disabilities in common activities and experiences, encouraging the active participation of all.

- Establish open and constant communication to identify learners' needs and work together for their development.
- Create a safe environment: ensure a climate of respect and safety in which participants feel free to express themselves without fear of judgement.
- Promote physical accessibility: ensure that the environment is accessible to all, for example through wheelchair ramps or adequate transport.

- **Space dimensions**

The size of the space determines the success of the workshop. It is essential to ensure that participants can move around comfortably to foster a sense of dynamism and active involvement. Overcrowded spaces can negatively affect the experience. Ensure adequate seating so participants can move around freely, promoting a positive atmosphere conducive to learning and collaboration.

A well-organised seating arrangement makes participants feel involved and limits distractions. Circular seating arrangements, interactive zones, and open spaces can encourage communication, break down hierarchical barriers, and allow everyone to express their ideas comfortably.

- **Space for conviviality**

The availability of relaxation areas encourages dialogue, interpersonal relationships, and the exchange of ideas. These spaces are invaluable in fostering spontaneous creativity and brainstorming, allowing participants to come together, share thoughts, deepen opinions and concepts, and feel the power of collaboration beyond formal sessions.

WHAT MAKES AN ACTIVITY INCLUSIVE?

This chapter is dedicated to promoting inclusion in the youth field. It addresses key questions on the topic, providing practical advice and concrete tips for implementing techniques and methods into the practice of local youth workers. If you're passionate about inclusion, we highly recommend reading the Handbook we've developed during this project.

To be able to navigate in the world of inclusion, first of all, we have to answer two basic but important questions:

- ✴ What does it mean to be inclusive?
- ✴ What are the benefits of inclusive activities for youth work?

Inclusion is not just a principle; it's a fundamental human right. It's about embracing everyone, regardless of race, gender, disability, medical conditions, or other needs. Inclusion is a powerful force that provides equal access and opportunities while also eliminating discrimination and intolerance by removing barriers. This principle has the potential to transform all areas of public life, offering a hopeful vision of a more inclusive future for all.

This description might explain why inclusion is important in youth work and other areas. In simple words, it supports everybody's participation and ensures equal opportunities.

More comprehensively, inclusive activities in youth work offer numerous benefits that positively impact individuals and the community. These activities enhance social skills by encouraging interactions among peers from diverse backgrounds, fostering communication, empathy, and collaboration. They promote equality by teaching youth to respect and value differences in race, gender, ability, and other characteristics.

Participating in inclusive activities boosts self-esteem and confidence, as youth feel accepted and valued for who they are. These activities also reduce prejudice and discrimination by breaking down stereotypes and promoting understanding and acceptance among different groups.

Diverse groups bring various perspectives, enhancing problem-solving skills and creativity as youth learn to approach challenges from multiple angles. Exposure to diverse viewpoints and experiences enriches the learning environment, making activities more engaging and informative.

Inclusive activities prepare youth for the realities of a diverse society, equipping them with the skills to thrive in multicultural settings. They foster personal growth by challenging youth to step outside their comfort zones and engage with new ideas and perspectives.

Moreover, inclusivity strengthens community bonds by fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support among participants. It ensures that all youth have equal access to activities, opening up more opportunities for personal and professional development.

Overall, inclusive activities in youth work create a supportive and dynamic environment that benefits individuals and the community as a whole.

Understanding diversity among youth

Diversity among youth encompasses a broad spectrum of characteristics, including cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual orientation, socioeconomic statuses, physical abilities, and learning styles. Recognizing and appreciating these differences is crucial for creating inclusive environments in youth work.

The methods of non-formal education, which is a core of youth work support inclusiveness well, but diverse groups often face unique challenges in non-formal settings. Cultural misunderstandings can lead to conflicts or feelings of exclusion. Socioeconomic disparities may limit some young people's participation due to a lack of resources. Physical barriers can hinder the involvement of youth with disabilities, and a one-size-fits-all approach to learning can leave some youth struggling to engage.

This is why it is very important to pay special attention to inclusion in non-formal education.

In general, we can say that empathy and understanding is the key.

Facilitators can address each individual's specific needs and challenges by fostering an environment where youth feel seen and heard. Empathy allows for deeper connections and reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings.

But what makes a non-formal activity inclusive?

Principles of inclusive non-formal activities

Adhering to several key principles—accessibility, engagement, adaptability, and the use of inclusive language and behaviour— is essential to creating truly inclusive non-formal education activities. These principles ensure that all participants feel welcome and can fully participate regardless of their backgrounds or abilities.

Accessibility: Ensuring physical and informational accessibility is fundamental. Physical accessibility means that the location and facilities are accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities. This might involve providing ramps, accessible restrooms, or ensuring that the activity space is easy to navigate for all. Informational accessibility ensures that all materials and instructions are available in formats that everyone can understand and use, such as braille, large print, easy and inclusive language or translations for non-native speakers.

Engagement: Effective strategies for engaging diverse learners are crucial for inclusive activities. This involves recognizing the different ways individuals learn and participate and incorporating a variety of methods to cater to these differences. Interactive and participatory methods, such as group discussions, hands-on activities, and multimedia resources, can help engage youth with varying preferences and learning styles.

Adaptability: Flexibility in activity planning and execution is key to inclusivity. This means being prepared to adjust plans based on the needs and feedback of participants. Adapting activities to be more inclusive might involve:

- ✶ Modifying rules.
- ✶ Providing alternative ways to complete tasks.

✴ Offering additional support to those who need it.

The ability to pivot and tailor activities ensures that everyone can participate meaningfully.

Inclusive Language and Behaviour: Using inclusive language and behaviour sets a respectful and welcoming tone. This involves avoiding assumptions about participants' backgrounds, abilities, or experiences and using language that is respectful and acknowledges diversity.

In practice:

✴ **Facilitators should model inclusive behaviour.**

Showing respect for all participants and encouraging a positive, supportive atmosphere.

✴ **Use a plural antecedent.**

For example, a teacher has to familiarize himself with the gamification techniques— better to say: Teachers have to familiarize themselves with the gamification techniques.

✴ **Omit the gendered word.**

Example: A teacher has to redesign his/her curriculum before including gamification techniques – better to say:

The school curriculum must be redesigned before including gamification techniques.

✴ **Use the passive voice (in certain situations) to avoid gender constructions.**

Example: The teacher has to pay special attention to the materials he is preparing to make them inclusive – better to say, "The teacher has to pay special attention to the materials being prepared to make them inclusive.

If you would like to delve deeper into the inclusive language principles, we recommend you to check the "Guidelines for Gender-Inclusive Language in English" by the United Nations.

Designing inclusive activities

Creating inclusive activities requires careful planning to ensure full engagement from all participants. This involves assessing participant needs, planning activities accordingly, and implementing strategies inclusively.

Assessing Needs

Gather information about participants through surveys, interviews, or informal conversations to understand their backgrounds, abilities, interests, and specific needs. Creating a safe and open environment is essential for participants to share their needs. Flexibility is vital, as unexpected needs may arise despite initial surveys or interviews. Listen carefully and be ready to adapt.

Planning

Design activities that accommodate diverse needs by setting clear, inclusive goals. Consider factors like physical accessibility, learning styles, and cultural relevance. Use various methods for engagement, such as visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic approaches. Ensure materials and instructions are accessible and build flexibility into plans for adjustments as needed. For more details on tailoring activities, refer to the next chapter.

Implementation

Execute activities with attention to detail and responsiveness. Start with a welcoming, inclusive tone and clearly communicate the activity's purpose. Be observant and make real-time adjustments to include everyone. Foster interaction, use inclusive language and behaviour, and provide assistance without singling out individuals.

Remember, that this is a learning process even for experienced professionals. To support your development we highly recommend to gather feedback from your participants, so you can implement their ideas and insights into your practise ensuring your constant grow as a professional.

References:

CESIE. (2019, November 15). *Inclusive Youth Work Practices and Approaches - CESIE ETS*. CESIE

ETS - the World Is Only One Creature. https://cesie.org/en/studies/inclusive-youth-

work-practices-and-approaches/

Gender Inclusive Environment in Youth Settings Guidance. (2024). In National Youth Agency,

National Youth Agency. https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Gender-

Inclusive-Environment-in-Youth-Settings.pdf

Hudson, K. (2022, October 16). *What does Inclusion mean?* Inclusion.

https://www.inclusion.me.uk/news/what-does-inclusion-mean

Inclusion and diversity | European Youth Forum. (n.d.). European Youth Forum.

https://www.youthforum.org/topics/inclusion-and-diversity

Jagoo, K. (2024, March 16). *What is inclusion?* Verywell Mind.

https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-inclusion-5076061

National Youth Council of Ireland. (2020, December 18). *What is Inclusive Youth Work? - National

Youth Council of Ireland*. https://www.youth.ie/articles/what-is-inclusive-youth-work/

National Youth Council of Ireland. (2022, March 23). *8 Steps to Inclusive Youth Work - new

resource launched! - National Youth Council of Ireland*.

https://www.youth.ie/articles/inclusive-youth-work-in-8-steps-resource-launched/

Pollithy, C., Cojocari, D., Siemasz, K., Kalantaridis, K., Chatzimichail, P., Moulana, P., Farren, R.,

Rowies, T., Molay, V., & European Youth Forum. (2018). Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines.

In I. Davidovska & N. Paddison (Eds.), *European Youth Forum*. European Youth Forum.

https://www.youthforum.org/files/Diversity20and20inclusion20guidelines.pdf

TOWARDS INCLUSIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN YOUTH WORK. (2020). In *TOWARDS*

INCLUSIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN YOUTH WORK [Report]. https://www.inclusive-

youth-work.eu/_files/ugd/a7bcb4_e197bc547b88471fa006d5632ec3c8c7.pdf

United Nations. (n.d.). *UNITED NATIONS Gender-inclusive language.*

https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml

HOW TO ADAPT ACTIVITIES?

Adapting an activity is crucial for ensuring its relevance and effectiveness for diverse groups like young people. By tailoring activities to meet the specific needs, interests, and contexts of participants, we enhance engagement and learning outcomes. Adaptation allows for the inclusion of diverse learning styles and accessibility needs, promotes cultural sensitivity, and maximizes participation. This approach ensures that the activities are not only inclusive and engaging but also aligned with the defined learning objectives, ultimately improving the overall effectiveness and impact of the non-formal activity.

How to start

Having the right information is essential when adapting an activity or workshop. To select and tailor activities or tools for various contexts and needs, you must answer several key questions. Some of these can be determined, while others require input from your target group. Regardless, all should consider the needs of the target group. The most effective approach is to begin with a needs analysis. For an effective needs analysis, you need at least a starting point, such as a topic, hypothesis, question, goal, or a target group. For example, you might want to explore what interests young people aged 18-20. Using this as a foundation, you can ask the right questions to ensure the needs analysis effectively aligns with your work. To identify this starting point, it is also crucial to listen to the community and its representatives, aiming for an outcome that is truly valuable and widely embraced. A project becomes significantly more effective when you build networks to support and expand it through all its stages, from design to implementation.

What is a needs analysis, and why is it important

A needs analysis is a systematic process used to identify and evaluate the requirements and gaps within a specific group or organization. In the context of youth work, a needs analysis helps in understanding the current situation, the challenges faced by youth workers and young people, and the resources required to address those challenges. This process is essential as it ensures that the non-formal activities designed are relevant, targeted, and effective. By conducting a

thorough needs analysis, you can gather critical information that guides the development of activities, ensuring they meet the actual needs of the target group. This enhances the overall impact and success of the program.

How to define the target group

Defining the target group is a critical step in designing effective non-formal activities. For youth workers, this involves understanding their specific characteristics, needs, and contexts. To know better your target group, you should have the following information:

- **Demographic information**: Gather basic information such as age, gender, educational background, and professional experience.
- **Needs and interests**: Identify the young people's specific needs and interests. This can be achieved through surveys, interviews, or focus groups.
- **Challenges and barriers**: Understand the challenges they face in their life and any barriers to participation in the program.
- **Learning preferences**: Consider the preferred learning styles and methods of the target group to ensure the activities are engaging and effective.
- **Context and environment**: Take into account the cultural, social, and organizational context in which the young people operate.

How to set up a SMART goals

Based on the need analysis, you must establish your goals and learning objectives, which will guide you like a torch on your path.

Setting up goals using the SMART criteria ensures that they are clear and achievable. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

- **Specific**: Goals should be clear and specific, leaving no room for ambiguity. For instance, instead of saying "improve civic knowledge," a specific goal would be to "increase understanding of local government structures and functions."
- **Measurable**: It is crucial to have criteria for measuring progress. For example, "raise awareness of voting rights among 70% of participants through interactive workshops."

- **Achievable**: Given the resources and time available, goals should be realistic and attainable. Setting overly ambitious goals can lead to frustration and demotivation. For instance, aiming to "organize three community engagement events within the next two months" is realistic and manageable.

- **Relevant**: Goals should align with the program's broader objectives and be relevant to the needs of the youth workers. For example, "develop leadership skills in youth to foster community participation," which directly supports the goal of empowering youth to become active citizens.
- **Time-bound**: There should be a clear timeline for achieving the goal, such as "within six months." For instance, "implement a social media campaign on civic responsibilities, reaching 500 young people within six months."

Pedagogical objectives: why they are important, and how to set them up

Pedagogical objectives are specific, measurable outcomes that youth workers aim to achieve through their activities. These objectives are vital because they provide a clear focus for both the youth workers and the participants, ensuring that all efforts are directed towards achieving tangible learning outcomes.

To set up pedagogical objectives:

1. **Identify the desired outcomes**: Determine what you want the learners to know, understand, or be able to do by the end of the activity.
2. **Ensure alignment with goals**: The objectives should directly support the overall goals of the program.
3. **Make them specific and measurable:** Clearly define what success looks like and how it will be measured. For instance, "Participants will be able to explain the process of voting in local elections and identify three ways to engage in community service."
4. **Consider the learners' starting point**: Take into account the young people's current skills and knowledge to set realistic and attainable objectives.
5. **Review and revise**: Continuously assess the relevance and effectiveness of the objectives, making adjustments as needed based on feedback and observations.

Adapting activities and tools

Preparing for a workshop or activity involves thoughtful consideration of several key factors to ensure its success and relevance to the participants as you saw before in this chapter. Furthermore, it would help if you considered other practicalities when choosing or adapting the activities and tools for your workshop. Select activities that align with the participants, venue, goals, objectives and topic to enhance learning engagement is the main goal and tailor them based on the needs and practicalities.

It may sound simple yet complex simultaneously. Let's explore further to gain a clearer understanding of what this means in practice.

Consider the following practical factors to ensure alignment with the needs, goals, and learning objectives:

Age Group

Understanding young people aged 13-30, as defined by the EU, means appreciating their diverse stages of growth and what interests them. This age ranges from early teens facing identity crises and social dynamics to young adults navigating careers and community involvement. In youth work, activities should grow with them—from building foundational skills like teamwork and decision-making for teens to honing leadership and civic engagement skills in their twenties. Tailoring activities to their interests—whether it's exploring personal passions, societal issues, or career aspirations—ensures they stay engaged and find relevance in citizenship education.

For example, teens might enjoy role-playing exercises to navigate peer pressures, while young adults could thrive in projects tackling real-world challenges they're passionate about.
Also, it is important to remember that every group, situation, and individual is unique, and age is sometimes just a number. Flexibility in approach allows for adapting activities to suit diverse

personalities, preferences, and developmental stages, fostering inclusive and impactful learning experiences that empower young people to shape their communities positively.

Number of Participants

Adjusting activities based on group size is important for keeping everyone engaged. Smaller groups allow for deeper discussions and personal connections, ideal for focused topics. Larger groups benefit from structured activities like debates or projects, ensuring everyone can participate and contribute effectively. Adapting activities to group size ensures a positive learning experience where all participants can actively engage and learn from each other. Remember, you can always divide a large group into smaller ones if needed t trick the system.

Level of Involvement and knowledge

When designing workshops, it is crucial to tailor activities based on participants' levels of involvement and knowledge. Whether they are newcomers, long-time volunteers, or members of youth municipal councils, the approach should vary to suit their experience and background. Focus on activities that empower newcomers to participate actively and build confidence while also ensuring that long-time volunteers are challenged with more advanced projects or leadership roles within group activities. Members of youth municipal councils bring valuable knowledge and experience to workshops, making them ideal participants for discussions on policy-making, community impact projects, or strategic planning sessions that leverage their expertise.

In reality, groups are rarely homogeneous. Therefore, it's essential to pay attention to diverse needs and find inclusive ways to serve them together. In practice, it doesn't mean you have to divide them based on the level of participation; having mixed groups can also be beneficial, thanks to peer-to-peer learning. As a youth worker or facilitator, you have to ensure that all voices are heard and that diverse needs are fulfilled.

Group Dynamics

Understanding group dynamics in workshops involves practical considerations based on participants' familiarity with each other and their shared goals. If participants are unfamiliar,

starting with icebreakers and team-building activities is essential to establish relationships and foster a supportive atmosphere. These activities can help break the ice and build trust among individuals who may be meeting for the first time.

If participants already know each other from previous interactions or collaborations, a shorter icebreaker or team-building exercise may be enough to re-establish connections and refresh group dynamics. In such cases, the focus can shift quickly to discussing shared interests or diving into collaborative tasks related to a familiar goal everyone understands well.

The nature of the conversation also varies depending on whether participants are exploring each other's interests for the first time or already working together towards a common objective. When working towards a shared goal, discussions can be more focused on planning, problem-solving, and individual strengths to achieve collective success.

This practical approach ensures that workshops not only meet their educational objectives but also cultivate a positive and productive group dynamic conducive to meaningful collaboration and learning.

Time Frame

Planning activities within the allocated time frame is key to running a smooth and effective workshop. It means choosing activities that fit comfortably into the schedule without feeling rushed. Sequencing them in a logical order keeps everyone engaged from start to finish. Being flexible with the schedule allows for breaks to keep everyone refreshed and focused. Monitoring the pace ensures each activity gets enough attention while staying on track with the overall plan. This approach helps create engaging and productive workshops where everyone can learn and participate fully.

If you're uncertain about how much to plan at first, remember that time management skills develop over time. Beginners may find it beneficial to plan more activities than needed initially. This approach offers flexibility to adjust and remove activities if necessary, preventing the need for last-minute additions.

Venue

Online Workshops: For virtual sessions, pick activities that work smoothly with video calls. Use features like breakout rooms and polls to keep things interactive. Sort out any tech issues beforehand to keep everyone engaged.

Offline Workshops: In physical settings, think about the room layout and equipment needed. Don't forget about accessibility.

Choosing the Perfect Venue: When selecting a venue, consider the specific needs of your workshop plan. For online sessions, ensure the platform supports your activities and that participants have easy access. For physical locations, assess space, equipment availability, and comfort to create an environment conducive to learning and collaboration. Being thoughtful about venue selection ensures your workshop runs smoothly and meets its objectives effectively, regardless of the setting.

Special Needs

Accommodating participants with specific learning disorders or disabilities is essential for ensuring inclusivity and accessibility in workshops. This aspect involves understanding and addressing individual needs to create a supportive and welcoming environment where everyone can fully participate and benefit from the experience.

Understanding needs: Begin by familiarizing yourself with the specific challenges and requirements of participants with learning disorders or disabilities. This might include cognitive, sensory, physical, or neurodevelopmental conditions such as dyslexia, ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, or mobility impairments.

Adapting activities: Modify activities to ensure they are accessible to all participants. Provide alternative formats for materials (e.g., digital copies, large print), use visual aids, or offer assistive technologies as needed. Clear and concise instructions, along with flexibility in participation requirements, can also support inclusivity.

Creating a supportive environment: Promote a culture of respect and understanding among all participants. Encourage open communication about accommodation needs and preferences. Address any physical accessibility concerns in the venue, such as wheelchair access, seating arrangements, and lighting.

Individualized support: Offer individualized support based on participants' specific needs. This may include providing extra time for tasks, offering breaks as needed, or assigning a buddy system for peer assistance.

Training and awareness: Ensure that workshop facilitators and staff are trained in disability awareness and inclusive practices. This includes recognizing and responding to diverse needs sensitively, proactively addressing barriers to participation, and advocating for accessible resources and accommodations.

Alignment with needs, goals, and learning objectives

Make sure every activity in your workshop directly contributes to achieving its goals and objectives. Start by understanding what participants need and what they aim to learn. Set clear, achievable goals and break them down into specific learning objectives. Choose activities that are engaging and relevant to these objectives, such as role-playing or group discussions. Continuously assess and adjust activities to ensure they're helping participants progress toward their learning goals. This approach ensures your workshop is focused, effective, and meaningful for everyone involved.

Flexibility

Flexibility is really important in workshops because things can change unexpectedly, and it's crucial to adapt smoothly. Whether it's giving more time for discussions that are going well or adjusting activities on the fly to make sure everyone understands, being flexible keeps things flowing. It's all about finding a balance between sticking to our main goals and being open to what participants need at the moment. By keeping communication open and listening to

feedback, we can adjust things as we go to make sure everyone feels included and gets the most out of the workshop. This approach makes the whole experience more engaging and meaningful for everyone involved.

By focusing on these principles, youth workers can create engaging and impactful learning experiences that empower young people in their personal development and civic engagement endeavours.

CONCLUSION

We hope this guide has provided valuable insights, practical strategies, and a wealth of resources to inspire and support your work with young people. The EUtopia project is more than just a set of activities; it is a call to action for youth workers and educators to harness the power of imagination and critical thinking in fostering civic engagement. By exploring the concepts of utopia and dystopia, we can challenge young people to envision better futures, recognise societal flaws, and take meaningful steps towards creating positive change in their communities.

As you use the tools and knowledge shared in this guide, we encourage you to continue adapting and evolving these resources to fit the unique needs of your groups. Remember, the impact of your work extends beyond the activities themselves—it lies in empowering young individuals to become proactive, informed, and compassionate citizens.

Thank you for your commitment to youth development and civic participation. Together, we can build a brighter, more inclusive future. Happy implementing and may your journey with EUtopia be filled with creativity, collaboration, and transformative experiences. Be sure to visit our website to explore additional resources and stay updated on our latest initiatives.

**Co-funded by
the European Union**