



BUILD THE BRIDGE! – MEETING WITH DECISION-MAKERS

Context


The following workshop provides a potential scenario and practical tips on how to effectively facilitate meetings between young people and decision-makers using non-formal learning methods. This workshop is particularly useful when a group of young people has a well-formed idea or initiative they wish to present to decision-makers to seek their support, collaboration, or assistance for successful implementation.

Young people often find it challenging to express and present their ideas effectively. This situation can be even more overwhelming when they need to present their ideas to high-ranking officials, such as the town mayor, and request their support. This workshop focuses primarily on local, community-level scenarios, but the practices can be adapted to other contexts and participant groups with slight modifications.

It is vital for the successful implementation of this workshop that the young participants, with the support of an expert, prepare their ideas in advance. They need to be ready to present these ideas to the invited decision-makers, considering the tools to use, the order of presentation, and who will present what.

Objectives

The aim of the workshop is to create a framework for meetings between young people and decision-makers, providing an opportunity for these two different groups to understand each other's perspectives on one or more common topics. Additionally, the workshop seeks to find shared responses and solutions to typically local-level issues. These interactions contribute to both individual and group learning for the participants.





Main objectives:

- ✦ To promote dialogue between young people and decision-makers, allowing these two groups to get to know each other.
- ✦ To enable young people and decision-makers to better understand and accept each other's viewpoints, and to consider and respect these perspectives in the future.
- ✦ To create a safe environment for young people to present their ideas and initiatives to decision-makers.
- ✦ To provide decision-makers with the opportunity to directly convey their opinions and suggestions to the young people.

Tools, resources and facilities

We recommend facilitating the workshop in person. It is essential to arrange a space where participants can sit in a circle, allowing everyone to see each other.

If the young participants are preparing a presentation, it is necessary to provide the required technical equipment (projector, screen, and sound system if needed).


Additionally, materials such as post-it notes, flip chart paper, and markers may be required for the non-formal activities.

Description of workshop activities

The main goal of this workshop is to bridge the gap between young people and decision-makers by facilitating meaningful dialogue and collaboration. It aims to empower youth to present their ideas effectively while providing decision-makers with insights to better support and engage with youth-led initiatives for positive community impact.

Please note that this session serves as inspiration for involving decision-makers in dialogue, but it is essential to organise preparatory sessions with young people beforehand to ensure they are well-





prepared and comfortable with the situation. We also recommend using role playing methods to simulate the meeting with the decision-makers.

For preparation, we recommend utilizing some of our tools and activities:

- ✦ Checklist for speech techniques
- ✦ How to disagree
- ✦ Preparatory video-making

The suggested time frame for the sessions:

- ✦ Part I. Welcome, Icebreaker activities: 20-30 minutes
- ✦ Part II. Youth presentations: around 60 minutes (depending on the number of presentations, one presentation can take 5-10 minutes on average)
- ✦ Part III. Processing youth proposals, discussion and evaluation: 90 minutes


Part I. Welcome, Icebreaker activities, and youth presentations

At the beginning of the workshop, a representative of the organisers (such as the youth worker) should briefly welcome the participants and summarise the event's main goal, agenda, and main logistical details. This introduction can also cover expectations for participants, the methods to be used during the workshop, and how participants should address each other.

We advise you to start the workshop with an introductory circle (such as the [Concentric Circles](#)), selecting a non-formal activity that facilitates getting to know each other while considering the comfort levels of participants of different ages and backgrounds. Therefore, we recommend avoiding activities that require physical contact. Allocate at least 30-40 minutes for this icebreaker session, depending on the number of participants or the fact that they know each other, and also take into consideration that due to the difference between the participants, it might require more time.

Part II. Youth presentations





Following this, the floor should be given to the young participants to present their own ideas. The facilitator may briefly introduce them to help decision-makers understand the context of the youth's proposals and ideas. If necessary, the workshop facilitator can provide instructions and requests to the decision-makers to facilitate their participation. After the presentations, it may be beneficial to include a short break in the program.


Part III. Processing youth proposals, discussion and evaluation


If the workshop has fewer than 20 participants, the facilitator, preferably a youth worker, may moderate a discussion where reflections and feedback can be asked and shared by decision-makers. For larger groups, it is recommended to divide participants into smaller groups, seating them comfortably at tables. Groups can be organized beforehand or chosen randomly, with an aim to mix young people and decision-makers, paying attention to those who may face difficulties or feel less confident in such situations.

It's beneficial for the facilitator, either independently or in collaboration with the youth, to prepare questions in advance primarily for the decision-makers. If the workshop continues in a plenary format, the facilitator should pose these questions flexibly, adapting to the flow of the discussion (prioritizing important questions but not sticking to a predefined order). During small group discussions, it's useful to write the questions on paper cards or flip chart paper in advance and place them on tables for the groups to discuss. For this part, you can also check one of our tool "[Cards for facilitation discussion](#)" as an inspiration.

The questions should prompt reflection from decision-makers on the presentations they've heard, exploring how they could support the initiatives, suggesting modifications to the young people, and detailing specific steps and roles for implementation. Some questions should serve as conversation starters to encourage participation of the young people.

Conclude the workshop with a closing circle where each participant briefly reflects on the workshop. For smaller groups, this can also be done in a plenary manner, while larger groups may benefit from non-formal activities or group divisions. Depending on the atmosphere, participants could be asked





to express good wishes for the initiatives and projects, which can be collected on a large board, flip chart paper or even on Miro or Mural (useful for future reference when the initiatives are implemented).

The goal of the evaluation round is to help participants recognize what they have learned during the workshop and its outcomes. Depending on the program's length and the participants' backgrounds, the following questions are recommended:

- ✦ How did you feel during the workshop?
- ✦ What did you like the most / least?
- ✦ What would you do differently next time?
- ✦ What was the most surprising /shocking information?
- ✦ What will be your specific next step regarding the initiative?

Learning Outcomes

What are the expected learning outcomes?

- ✦ Young people and decision-makers can gain a better understanding of each other and their respective opinions and proposals on the topics raised by the youth.
- ✦ Decision-makers have the opportunity to better understand younger generations, gaining insight into their thoughts, needs, expectations, and operations.
- ✦ Provide young people with a closer insight into the world of decision-makers, offering a view into how decision-making processes work and their time and other requirements.
- ✦ Discuss and receive proposals and support for young people's initiatives, which can include passing on experiences already encountered by decision-makers.
- ✦ Provide a positive experience for all participants in youth dialogue events, which also contribute to building the future with real actions and steps forward.





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