



Location:

Vadul lui Voda,  
Moldova

Time:

September 2019

Training Course

**Make**

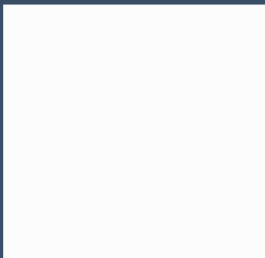
**Democracy**

**Great Again**

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# About the Project



Though populism is no new concept, its unexpected rise in the past few years has allowed its influence to permeate societies and social structures and bring about changes that are still not fully understood by people and researchers alike.

There are multiple factors that have fostered the growth of populist movements some of which are stagnating incomes as a negative consequence of globalization, reactions against progressive cultural values such as internationalism, LGBTQ+ rights and feminism and the impact of some global shocks e.g. the refugee crisis.

In the face of such dramatic changes in society and the economy, people become more responsive to populist politicians and movements that raise issues, which major parties have either downplayed or overlooked, and that offer simple “quick fix” solutions.

However, to achieve their political aspirations and gain popularity, populist leaders often (but not always) use divisive narratives such as:

- anti-establishment, including distrust of mainstream parties and experts
- anti-globalization, including Euroscepticism and narrow nationalism
- xenophobia and Islamophobia
- cultural conservatism and misogyny

What is more, populists focus on the conflict between” the people” and” the elite” or” the establishment”, all of which are vague terms and can be interpreted differently. They also use rhetoric that stirs up anger among citizens and directs that anger to” straw men”.

In order to respond to these changes in society, the Danish-Romanian Association held a training course called “Make Democracy Great Again” aimed at increasing youth workers’ competences upon supporting young people in their political identity formation and helping them understand the characteristics of populism and its tools. The training course was held between 4th till 13th of September 2019 in Vadul lui Voda, Moldova and was funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

As a part of the programme of the course, the participants created their own non-formal education methods aimed at enhancing young people’s critical thinking and encouraging them to reflect on their own political identity. The finished methods are presented in the following pages with instructions on how to facilitate them and how to encourage young people to reflect on the learning that takes place.

The methods are suitable for large groups with 15+ participants and the average duration is between 30 to 50 minutes.





## FRUIT SALAD UNION

**TIME:** 40 min

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- identifying elements of populist rhetoric
- reflecting on populist tools and how they are used to influence opinions

### **Instructions:**

Present to the participants the following situation – they are all living in the fictional country of Green Banana. The country is faced with the very important decision of whether it should stay or leave the Fruit Salad Union. There are two parties representing the leave and remain sides - Orange party and Strawberry party, respectively. Choose 6 participants to form the parties – 3 members in each. The rest of the participants are citizens of Green Banana.

The two parties have to prepare a speech arguing why Green Banana should leave or remain in the FSU. They will have 15 min to prepare their speeches, which should be no longer than 2 minutes each. After the parties present their speeches, the citizens have 5 minutes to vote on the referendum. Once you have counted the votes and announced the vote of the majority, you can go into debriefing.

### **Debrief Questions:**

1. Which party was more convincing in its arguments and why?
2. What kind of key words and ideas did each party use to make their speeches compelling?
3. Was it difficult to choose a side? Why/ Why not?
4. Is a referendum a good way to resolve the given issue? Why/ Why not?

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

TIME: 35 min

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- recognising common features of populist rhetoric
- discerning populist and non-populist communication
- developing critical thinking

### Instructions:

1

Divide the participants in groups of 4-5. Each group will be given 2 papers, both containing pieces of a political programme/statements/speeches. The quotes on the first paper will be from populist politicians, and heavily populist in their rhetoric. The quotes on the second will be less populist, traditional political communication. You can find example quotes attached, but feel free to adjust them or come up with your own.

2

Explain which paper belongs to populists and which do not. The goal of the groups will be the following:

- 1) find common elements in the quotes on each paper
- 2) find differences between the quotes on the two papers

Make sure that they concentrate on the rhetoric utilised in the statements, and not just on their content. Give them around 15 minutes to read and discuss in their group the statements.

3

Afterwards, reunite the groups, and let someone from each group explain what they have found, and whether they agree or disagree with the others. Finish with debrief questions, reflecting on what they have learnt.

### Debrief Questions:

1. Was it easy to find similarities and differences?
2. Did you agree with the placement of each statement? Was there any that did not belong?
3. Which key words and concepts are used by populists?
4. Which one is more convincing?





# WHO IS THE POPULIST?

**TIME: 60 min**

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- to help young people recognise populism and its characteristics
- to encourage young people to reflect the differences between populist and other political parties

## **Instructions:**

Introduce participants to the setting of the exercise. The action takes place in the small town of Happyville, on the annual traditional local festival which is a marvelous and colourful display of culture and customs for both residents and guests of Happyville. Representatives from two parties are attending the festival to make an opening speech and to address all attendees.

Choose people who will present the two parties – Cheer Nation and JoyForAll (about 2-3 people in each). Both parties should create a speech about 1:30-2 min. Each party wants to push forth their political agenda and get as many supporters as they can. They have about 15 minutes to prepare their speech. Every group will get a list of key words and instructions. One party is populist and the other is right wing. Do not reveal this information to the rest of the participants but only to the people in the parties.

In addition, choose 2 people to represent an immigrant minority and two traditionalist who are against foreigners. While the parties are preparing their speech, these people are trying to speak to the citizens about their convictions and beliefs. The rest of the participants are the citizens of Happyville and they should listen attentively to both speeches. After the speeches, tell the participants that the two parties represent two different political ideologies – populism and nationalism. After that you can go into debrief.

## **Debriefing:**

- What are the differences between the two speeches you just heard?
- Were there any similarities between the two?
- Were you able to recognize which party is which?
- How can you recognize who is who? What are the features of each direction (nationalism and populism)?
- Were there any key words that helped you recognize the populist party?

## **Tip for facilitators:**

- Consider the people you choose to develop and deliver the speeches. They should be able to understand the role and feel comfortable with speaking in front of an audience.
- It is important that the participants in the political parties do not reveal their political identity before the end of the exercise so you might want to separate them further away from the citizens.



## THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED



*"Widespread intellectual and moral docility may be convenient for leaders in the short term, but it is suicidal for nations in the long term."*

-Carl Sagan

**TIME: 30-50 min**

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- Understanding how populism works and what it appeals to
- Understanding how populism can influence middle classes
- Reflecting on active citizenship and how one can take action against populism

### **Instructions:**

A few participants will take part in a short theatre performance, where there will be a clearly defined oppressor and an oppressed, plus another couple of actors. The play will be split into 2 scenes – the first scene takes place in the oppressor's home where he complains about an increase in the cost of living and shows some interest in the "People's Party", a populist party particularly against migrants. Here you can show a video of a populist leader speaking as if it is played on TV. The second scene takes place in a pub where the oppressor adopts an antagonistic attitude towards the oppressed and a friend of the latter who eventually decide to leave the pub.

After the play, the game rules are explained and the actors will play over and over again. Each time, max. 1 person from the audience will have the chance to freeze the scene and take the place of one of the actors but the oppressor and the oppressed. Not more than one interruption is allowed per play. This way the audience will play an active role in determining the outcome of the performance and shaping the fate of some of the actors.

### **Debrief Questions:**

1. Why, among all actors, did you choose to impersonate those actors rather than others?
2. Why have not you decided not to act the part of certain actors, and, if you had, then what do they envisage the outcome of the play being?
3. Have you or any of your friends come across people of the sort in your everyday life? If so, how did you/they react or would have liked to react?

## EXTINCTION VOTE

TIME: 30-50 min

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identifying populist methods of influencing voters
- Distinguishing populist techniques in argumentation
- Promoting self-reflection before decision making/critical thinking

### Instructions:

The introduction of the method must present the fictional scenario described below, with importance being applied on the severity of the vote as all species or subjects of debate are near extinction, i.e. even if mosquitoes are chosen as a specie, it must be stressed that they are under threat of extinction in this hypothetical scenario.

At the core of this method lies the simulation of a voting procedure whereby three political parties must present their respective presentations on a certain topic to convince the participants into voting for their narrative. The topic of discussion must involve three examples of subject matters for the parties to advocate for. One must be an object of relatively little importance to be supported by the Populist party; the other two must be of significant importance to the outcome, so as to render voting for the populist party as the objectively wrong choice. An example is the protection of an animal species at the cost of two others. Each political party must present a case in defense of their respective specie of importance. Crucially, the parties' political belonging must not be indicated by their name and it must be left up to the participants to make the judgement on which party is populist. For instance, The Populist Party can be called the White Party; the Liberal Party can be the Orange Party; the Conservative Party can be the Purple Party.

The Conservative party is interested in protecting the specie of Coelacanth Fish and must rely on factual and unemotive arguments in support of the specie's preservation.



The Liberal party is interested in protecting mosquitoes as a specie and must also rely only on factual and unemotive arguments in supporting their case.

The Populist party must advocate for the protection of the Hazel Dormouse. In the process, the party representative must rely on the use of emotive language, makeshift facts and vitally to aggressively dismiss the importance of the narratives purported by opposing parties.

The voting process is to be facilitated through the dispersal of pre-prepared voting sheets mimicking ballot papers containing the names of all parties. After they are individually completed by the participants without external influence, they are to be collected and counted so as to yield the final result of the vote.

### **Guidance for Reflection of Learning:**

It is crucial to describe the importance of the final outcome, regardless of the winning party. Such as, why mosquitoes and Coelacanth fish are important for the environment. Next, elaboration on possible outcomes of the vote must take place, whereby the only wrong vote is that for the populist party supporting the Hazel Dormouse, as it will bring ecological catastrophe in the hypothetical scenario. In the process the participants will be encouraged to discuss their reasons for voting for the respective parties; to observe the factors differentiating the populist party from the conservative and liberal parties; reflecting on the emergency of the voting process as no time for deliberation will be allowed between the final party statement and the voting as this is a tactic facilitating the growth of populist movements and is a frequent tool in their arsenal; commenting on the use of populist methods to varying degrees by all parties as fundamentally all politicians can be said to adopt some level of populist narrative.

## CONTACT

### **Debrief Questions:**

1. Why did you vote for the specie you chose to save?
2. Do you consider the other two species important for the environment?
3. How did each speaker choose to present their case? Did you find any differences or similarities?
4. Who was the most convincing speaker and why?
5. Were you able to recognize which party is populist?
6. What are the characteristics of a populist party?





## Participating Organisations

YouNet (Italy)

InterCollege (UK)

IDEAL GELECEK (Azerbaijan)

A.O."Copiii Bugeacului" (Moldova)

Dansk Rumænsk Forening (Denmark)

Stowarzyszenie Sztukater (Poland)

EUROTENDER EGYESULET (Hungary)

## DISCLAIMER

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

## FRUIT SALAD UNION: Key Cards

**Orange Party** –You should convince the citizens that being a member of FSU is a burden for Green Banana. Consider that there is a great amount of immigrants in your country and their presence threatens to change the dynamic and the composition of society and their culture will affect your own irreversibly. Moreover, you see being a member of FSU as an intervention into the internal affairs of Green Banana.

**Strawberry Party** - You should convince the people to vote for staying in the FSU. Emphasize the fact that you are an activist for human rights and strongly disagree with the anti-immigrant attitude of your main opponent- Orange Party. Highlight the significant role of FSU for the country's economic growth and prosperity that has been achieved through investments and funding.

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

### Populist statements (example)

All power to the people! As we move forward in these trying times, we must understand that the power will always and forever remain with the people. To the millions of women around the world who marched to bring awareness to the many injustices facing humanity today; the power remains with you. To the thousands of veterans who spent many cold nights defending the native lands of an objectified people; the power remains with you. To the masses who protested against the brutal murders of citizens by law enforcement; the power remains with you. To the students who spent countless hours in study bringing attention to issues that affect our future generations; the power remains with you.

I will give choice to the People. Because in the democracy only the people can be right against them... The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens.

People want to take back control of their countries and they want to take back control of their lives and the lives of their family.

Victory is not exactly that I was elected as a Prime Minister of Sleepyville. The victory is that you have decided.

### Non-populist statements (example)

It is our position that special education teachers can currently expect a downright humiliating pay check, so the government must adjust their salaries.

We know that every child, no matter who they are, how much their families earn, or where they live, should have access to a high-quality education, from preschool through high school and beyond

We believe that climate change poses a real and urgent threat to our economy, our national security, and our children's health and futures, and that the citizens of Sleepyville deserve the jobs and security that come from becoming the clean energy superpower of the 21st century.



At the heart of our policy objectives are three closely interlinked areas of focus: the quality of participatory and representative democracy, social justice, and the protection of the environment and ecological sustainability.

The gratitude of every home in our Island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the airmen of Sleepyville who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of the World War by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.

## WHO IS THE POPULIST?

### Key Cards

#### Populist party:

You represent the populist party, you should prepare a speech against the corrupted “elite” that controls Happyville and has diverged funding from the public sector – such as schools, hospitals and even the current festival – to building new luxurious apartment buildings and expensive shopping centres.

**Your key words: #elite #us versus them #fake news #economic development and prosperity for all; #people first.**

#### Nationalist party:

You are the nationalist party. Your speech will focus on anti-internationalization and the negative sides of immigrant influx, the threat they seemingly “pose” to national security and the changes that they bring in the local society and culture.

**Your key words: #nation #immigrants #national identity #national security and safety; #our country first; #less crime; #defend what is ours; # Old Glory.**

## EXTINCTION VOTE

### Speeches:

#### Orange Party (saving mosquitoes)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The choice we are about to make is crucial, but I am convinced that eventually the decision made will be guided by reason and dignity, even though my choice of species seems to be infamous for its putative crimes.

But let us take a moment and think about mosquitoes!

The way I see it is that actually most people don't even think of them as living beings. They just kill them cold-heartedly, without hesitation. Think about all the reasons people are preventing mosquitoes from contributing to other animals' and plants' lives! For example, a toad could have easily eaten that mosquito. And the



things that that mosquito could have eaten! Millions of decomposing pieces of plants and other small creatures just waiting to be consumed by a nice mosquito.

Ladies and Gentlemen, after having saved this wonderful species I am intending to launch an awareness campaign in order to stop this infantile killing, stop the madness, stop the genocide! I, personally, have never in my life killed a mosquito. Well, at least not intentionally.

Last week I did my yearly tour to the local swamp, and I was amazed by the amount of mosquitoes there! Did you know that they are an indicator of the local biodiversity? By them I was immediately aware of how superb and diverse ecosystem I stepped into. Yes, I was bitten quite a few times while being there, but, for me, it is only a small sacrifice to witness the beauty of nature.

Please, my friends, let us, for a moment, appreciate the bliss of wonder mosquitoes truly are.

Thank you for your time, thank you for your attention,

I trust we will make the right decision!

### **Conservative party's Coelacanth fish manifesto**

My dear honest friends, I am here to talk with you about an urgent matter: imagine the oldest friend you know, my grandma is 96 for example. A quite ripe old age, right? But that's nothing compared to 400 million years old. This is the time when our oldest neighbor came to this country. Coelacanth fish started to populate our sea 400 million years ago, 400 million! It became a crucial element to keep the equilibrium of our marine ecosystem and the biodiversity of it. It is one of the oldest living fossils on earth!



The choice here is not just about keeping our national heritage alive, it is about preserving jobs, about maintaining our national and local economy stable. Coelacanth, in fact, by keeping the population of crabs and squids down, suppresses the growth of the three species groups which have a significant impact on fish stocks. Thereby benefiting local fishermen, hence local and national economy... and making us able to eat our delicious fish products. This promotes agricultural fishing which means jobs and again...good food.

Saving coelacanth means saving the ecosystem. Saving coelacanth means saving our economy. I beg you to make the right choice, vote wisely, my friends, vote for coelacanth.

### **Populist Party's Hazel Dormouse Manifesto**

I would like to thank my esteemed colleagues for their work, but the need for this vote confuses me. The answer I believe is clear. Friends, when we wake, we are concerned with those dearest to our hearts. They who help us through trying times and remind us of the beauty of this world. And our hearts ache when we know they are in danger from those who seek to harm them.

On my way to meet you, wonderful people, I was bitten by seven of these so-called "helpful" mosquitoes, which these supposedly "ecological police" fish have done nothing about. Yet these beasts deserve protection when their existence harms our beloved Hazel Dormice? Whose existence brings light into the darkest times? Whose touch fills us with hope, kindness and love?

Let us be quite clear, my beloved friends. Mosquitoes spread disease and have nothing good about them. I think we can all agree that they are our enemy, not friends. Any reasonable person would recognize that

they are pests who hurt us and our wonderful world. No one is safe from these silent killers! Humans or animals, none of us are spared from their countless curses, such as malaria and even the black death! They don't help ecology, they destroy it and we should take any opportunity to eradicate, not save them!

Our ancestors have fought numerous monsters in the past and we have always prevailed, because we are strongest when fighting evil. Many hellish beasts we have slain, but one has resisted our best efforts for too long! The Coelacanth Fish has cursed our lands for too long! They have killed so many vital species of fish and insects over their life! They have prevented new and important animals from developing, because they take up a spot in the evolutionary cycle. The opportunity to eradicate them is a blessing!



We must help the world's ecosystem this way and protect the humble Hazel Dormouse to solve two pressing problems at once! But my dearest friends, when our heart pushes us to action, who among us can resist its calls? When our soul screams to protect the weak and helpless, only the most hellish of monsters would deny them the help they so desperately need. We are a nation of morals, of compassion, of love. We help the weakest and especially those who help us. The noble Hazel Dormouse has guided civilizations to survival and prosperity for generations.

They help hunters find their way back home to their families and maintain the health of every forest in the world! It is vital for our national – no, for our world ecology to protect them! But most crucially the Hazel Dormouse must survive, lest we lose the sanctity of our souls! So I urge you, my dearest friends. Listen to your hearts, your mind and soul and make the right decision for the future of the Hazel Dormouse and our world.