



# **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**



**CHANGE MAKERS  
ACADEMY PROGRAM**



**Erasmus+**

This project has been co-funded with support from the European Commission. This publication and all its contents reflect the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## SECRET CODE PROJECT CONSORTIUM

NGO Logos Polska  
Project coordinator | Poznan, Poland

Associação Animam Viventem  
Partner | Cascais, Portugal

Asociatia "Un strop de fericire"  
Partner | Ploiesti, Romania

Awesome People  
Partner | Örebro, Sweden

Contact information Project Coordinator:  
NGO Logos Polska  
Contact Person: Mr. Marko Boyko  
Address: ul. GROMADZKA, nr 26, 61-655 Poznan, Poland  
Email: logos@logos.ngo  
Tel.: +48 794017718

### Legal Notice

This publication is a document prepared by the Consortium. It aims to provide practical support to the project implementation process. The output expressed does not imply scientific, pedagogical, or academic positions of the current consortium. Neither the partners nor any person acting on behalf of the Consortium is responsible for the use which might be made of this publication.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Document available through the Internet, free of charge and under open licenses.

2021 | Consortium of Secret Code Project

# INDEX

04

Introduction

05

#1 The Basis of Changemaking

14

#2 Connecting the Dots

22

#3 Training Program Guidelines

28

Conclusion

29

References

# INTRODUCTION

Young people's participation is crucial to civil society by building a sense of belonging, solidarity, justice and responsibility, caring for people in need, and sensitivity towards people who are from different cultural backgrounds. Also, democracy needs young people – and young people need democracy. It is in youth that remains the future of democracy as they are tomorrow's leaders and decision makers.

*"Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies."* Kofi Annan - Former Secretary-General of the United Nations

Although Young people aged between 15 and 25 make up a fifth of the world's population, they have limited influence in national political institutions. Unfortunately, global statistics reveal also the low interest of young people in civic life, in knowledge of state institutions, citizens' rights and freedoms, active participation and responsibility within the community. Young people have lost confidence and motivation to change something, only few of them believe that the future of society stands in their hands and act to change something.

Therefore, four organizations from four countries across Europe - Poland, Portugal, Sweden and Romania – have come together for the ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership in the field of youth, "Secret Code for Active Citizenship", funded by the European Commission, to improve the level and quality of active citizenship in at local/national/European/global communities of young people by using innovative educational tools (e.g., escape rooms) and train youth workers, creating a European network of "Change Makers" and allowing a wise participation in society. Young people should be offered involvement in responsible, challenging actions that meet genuine needs. They should have the opportunity to participate in planning and decision-making.

The objectives of the Project are:

- To promote the exchange of good practices among NGOs and other local entities from 4 countries;
- To create an innovative Change Makers Training Experience and mobile escape rooms kits, addressing active citizenship in youth;
- To increase sense of initiative and entrepreneurship in youth at local/global level;
- To foster active participation and active citizenship in society;
- To contribute to the sense of belonging as European Citizens and motivate participants to learn more about the EU, creating a European Network;
- To invest in the capacity building of youth workers promoting high-quality work and innovative methods of reaching out to youth using escape rooms.

The Changemakers Academy Program was developed in this context, bringing together perspectives and reflections on active citizenship and engagement of youth in society. The information and examples included are based on data that was collected through web search, review of scientific literature and policy documents regarding the topic, a survey for youth, interviews with experts in the field and the collection of international good practices, all summed up in the *Report on the State of Art of Active Citizenship*. At the same time, the structure of the program has been tested and reviewed with youth workers from all participating countries on both local and international level.

All in all, the program represents a structured and summarized form of youth workers' and young people's experience and an innovative guide on how to address Active Citizenship as to motivate young people to get involved and be an active part of their communities and not only.

# 1# THE BASIS OF CHANGEMAKING

Citizenship As we stated in the introduction, this program aims not only at providing means and resources to get young people involved. It also aims at offering an accessible approach to the rather abstract and complex notion of Active Citizenship and what it takes to be active citizens. Consequently, before getting down to business, it is very important to better understand what is the meaning of Active Citizenship, what set of skills it requires and what can we consider to be active citizenship actions.

## ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP 101

As *Democracy Dies in Darkness*, as The Washington's Post motto states, we hear more and more often about the need for Active Citizenship. In other words, for society to go towards our ideals, people (i.e. the citizens) have to be a more active part in the works of their communities. Take a moment to think about this and you will probably come to the same conclusion as we did: it makes sense. If we want a dreamworld, we have to stop dreaming and make it reality by getting involved.

Before diving into the concept, we'd like to make a distinction between Active Citizenship and Activism. More often than not, they are treated as synonyms. However, while Active Citizenship refers to a much larger concept, whose meaning we'll discover in the following subchapter, Activism usually refers to Social Activism. Social Activism can be defined as "the use of direct and noticeable actions to achieve a result, usually a political or social one" (Cambridge Dictionary).

Therefore, Active Citizenship can make use of Social Activism as a method, but Social Activism refers only to a small part of what it takes to be an active citizen.

Consequently, we asked other young people and youth workers *What does Active Citizenship mean for you?* Some of the answers that we got were "Think Globally, Act Locally", "have an active position based on your knowledge and experience" or "recognize and find solutions for the problems in our communities". Indeed, not your standard definition, but as you can see all answers refer to some sort of action.

At the same time, the European Union has always been and continues to be a great advocate for youth involvement. Hence, it has taken the reins and created a formal standard to define and measure Active Citizenship, to which we may refer to as the citizenship competence, as well.

The Citizenship Competence has been identified as a Key competence according to the European Reference Framework Of The Key Competences For Lifelong Learning is set to be: "the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability." (European Union Council, 2018).

Thus, citizenship is understood in the very broadest sense of the word "participation" and it goes broader than the political dimension (Hoskins et al., 2006).

Swell! We have a definition so now we know what we talk about. However, you may wonder *What skills or knowledge does an active citizen need?* Well, we asked the same question. The answers that we got pointed to what we today call soft skills such as: communication skills, teamwork, problem-solving etc. But back to the framework offered at an European level, let's take a look:



## KNOWLEDGE TO UNDERSTAND



- **European Common Values**, as expressed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- **General Historical and Contemporary Knowledge** regarding social and economic events and the main developments in national, European and world History.
- **Social and political** change at the global level and their underlying causes.
- Knowledge of **European integration** as well as an **awareness of diversity and cultural identities** in Europe and the world is essential.

## SKILLS TO ENGAGE



- **Critical-Thinking and Problem-Solving.**
- Skills to develop **arguments and constructive participation.**
- Access, have a critical understanding of, and interact with both traditional and new **forms of media.**

## ATTITUDES TO ACT



- Respect for **Human Rights.**
- **Constructive participation.**
- Support for **social and cultural diversity, gender equality and social cohesion and sustainable lifestyles.**
- Promotion of culture of **peace and non-violence.**
- Readiness to **respect the privacy of others.**
- Take **responsibility for the environment**
- Interest in **political and socioeconomic developments, humanities and intercultural communication.**

As you can see it doesn't take going to college to be an active citizen. Most of the time, you've probably already done it and haven't realized. Of course, you can take classes or participate in training courses or even go to college for this, you decide what you put your time into. However, what we are getting at is that **EVERYONE CAN BE AN ACTIVE CITIZEN!** It takes nothing special in particular, just a desire to get involved.

Great! Now that we've settled this, it is time for action. And now you may wonder "Ok! I got it...but *what can be considered an Active Citizenship action?*". No worries, we're about to clarify that by diving deeper into the concept of Active Citizenship.

Measuring active citizenship has been a challenge, specially defining its dimensions or components at a psychometric level. According to the "Active Citizenship Composite Indicator" (Hoskins et al., 2006), a framework studied to measure active citizenship at European level, one way of defining this concept is to analyse it through four important dimensions: Political Life, Civil Society, Community Life, Values.

By defining and understanding better the dimensions, we can better realize what kind of actions can be considered as Active Citizenship actions. This being said, let's dive into the topic:

### POLITICAL LIFE

*"Whether we like it or not, the government plays a huge role in our daily lives, ranging from the amount of tax you pay for your morning coffee, to the types of light bulbs you're allowed to purchase. Since we know that the government impacts various choices we make, why not take the time to understand how the process works? Who makes these laws and how do they impact me?"* - Prof. Jonathan Dolen

The *Political Life Dimension* refers to the sphere of the state and conventional representative democracy such as participation in voting, representation of women in the national parliament and regular party work (party membership, volunteering, participating in party activities and donating money).

Looking at the political participation behaviour of young adults in contemporary Europe, youth workers are faced with a contradiction. On one hand, we see a “disengagement paradigm” supported with empirical findings, such as young adults being the least likely to vote in national elections, the drop of youth membership in political parties, and generally low levels of political interest. On the other hand, we also check an emerging “engagement paradigm of youth participation”, a more optimistic view as it is based on findings in the context of **new forms of political participation**, which are more appealing to and are used more frequently by young adults.

Nowadays, from protest to volunteering and creation of digital advocacy networks, everything can be used to express political opinions and all the dimensions mentioned before can be present in this one. It can happen within the institutional framework (e.g., voting or party membership) or happen outside of the institutional framework (e.g., protest or boycotting).

It seems that young people being less interested than adults in politics, it is related to the fact that they do not view politics, in their narrow definition, as relevant to their lives. In this sense, the low political participation rate among youth is a by-product of their narrow conception of politics and their impression that politicians do not truly care about their needs. Hence, youth disengagement is a result of the organization of politics rather than of the youth's own lack of interest. Young adults tend to participate more in non-institutionalized forms. It seems as if the problem of youth political participation is less a matter of whether they participate, and more a matter of where they participate.

Political participation starts by including youth in the design, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of instruments, strategies and programmes. This is valid for policymakers but also for youth workers. Here are some examples of this component:

- **Promoting opportunities for youth to learn about conventional political participation.** Learning about democracy and the functioning of the current political system, acquire the skills needed for a functioning democracy, such as consultation, negotiation, lobbying, etc. through active methodologies like simulations, encounters with politics, they can also gain an idea as to how political decision-making takes place. In any case, the participation of young people is more than just learning, and young people need to actually have a say in decision-making.
- **Promoting and supporting unconventional political participation among young people.** It is necessary to explore the connection between political dimension and the other spheres of Active Citizenship as the Community Life or Civil Society. To discuss how we can from a volunteering action influence the political context and the legislative process.
- **Promoting and strengthening permanent mechanisms of consultation with young people.** In this sense, structured dialogue is important. The aim of the structured dialogue is thus to deepen cooperation between young people and policymakers.
- **Promoting the importance of youth participation.** One of the key barriers to participation in youth organisations and for youth participation is relatively weak information about the possibilities of participation, the need and usefulness of promoting active citizenship.

For more details on how this dimension relates to the European Framework and implies participation in the political decision making process on an European level, you can check Annex 1.



## CIVIL SOCIETY

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead*

Encyclopedia Britannica defines civil society as a “dense network of groups, communities, networks, and ties that stand between the individual and the modern state.” The Encyclopedia goes further and explains the important role of civil society in safeguarding democracy: “For some of its advocates, the achievement of an independent civil society is a necessary precondition for a healthy democracy, and its relative absence or decline is often cited as both a cause and an effect of various contemporary socio-political maladies.”

This dimension refers to collective action around activism, advocacy, shared interests, purposes, and values as for example involvement in protests, human rights organizations, environmental organizations, and trade union organizations. This dimension has a more societal vision. In other words, it refers to participation that doesn't necessarily include getting politically involved, but it aims at protecting democracy by watching the political decision-making process closely and safeguarding society.

Young people are leading the movement for change. They are marching in the streets for equal rights. They're walking out of classrooms for climate change. They're standing up for people killed by guns. They are ending stigma around abortion. And they're rewriting the script that tells us how to think, behave, and treat one another. **In other words, young people are organizing and youth workers should support and fight for every young person to feel valued and to add value to their local-global community.**

Organizing movements is the process of building power as a group and using this power to create positive change in people's lives. At first it may be hard to find a cause for which the youngster is passionate about or understand that participating in petitions, protests and other collective movements has an impact in the way society is ruled and that youth can have a voice in decisions. Youth workers must participate in the process of creating a culture where youth have the right and responsibility to feel valued and add value, to self and others, to experience wellness and fairness. There are three essential steps to transformative change in the society:

- **JOIN organizations/movements that have a strong cause and care for each member.** A first step in identifying the desired change is to develop a shared vision and strategy within a group about the world they want to create.
- **ORGANIZE or help to organize impactful and mindful actions** with a clear message to defend that cause.
- **REFLECT on what happened**, what could be better and what's next.

To make it last, this three-step plan must include a sustainability strategy, which comes from simply making sure that everyone in the process feels valued and has an opportunity to add value.

Probably one of the most used concepts and ways of action related to the Civil Society Dimension is Social Activism. We will talk more broadly about Social Activism and its most efficient and impactful methods, the social campaigns or campaigning, in the second chapter. However, until then, here are some other examples of social activism:

- ✓ Petitions and demonstrations;
- ✓ Digital Activism: blogging, email, newsletters, social media...
- ✓ Using art and storytelling in activism.





## COMMUNITY LIFE

*"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live."* - George Bernard Shaw

This dimension refers to the engagement of youth in 'community minded' or 'community-spirited' activities that are less political action and accountability of governments, but still stand for democratic values. Examples of this are unorganized help, religious organizations, sport/cultural/social organizations that work at community level... Starting local and involving youth in the community is not only beneficial to being a productive member of society, but also a starting point that allows youth to experience and see relatively quick impact from their actions and opens future opportunities in personal and professional life as well.

### **Pillars of the Community Life Dimension:**

#### **Volunteering**

Research demonstrates that volunteering and community involvement lead to better health and happiness. Why?

- **Volunteering connects to others.** Volunteering allows youth to connect to their community and make it a better place. Dedicating time as a volunteer helps young people to make new friends, expand the network, and boost social skills.
- **Volunteering is good for the mind and body.** Volunteering provides many benefits to both mental and physical health, increasing self-confidence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. Doing good for others and the community provides a natural sense of accomplishment, giving the volunteer a sense of pride and identity. And the better each young person feels about himself, the more likely is to have a positive view of life and future goals.
- **Volunteering can advance a career.** If a young person is considering a new career, volunteering can be the entrance point to get experience in the area of interest and meet people in the field. Volunteering gives the opportunity to practice important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, task management, and organization. In some fields, it can be possible to volunteer directly at an organization that does the kind of work the volunteer is interested in. For example, if the volunteer is interested in nursing, he/she could volunteer at a hospital or a nursing home.

#### **Community Meeting Points**

Participating in community centre classes or clubs allows youth to meet new people, learn new skills and give back to the community. Community centres offer a variety of programs from music, crafting classes to sport classes. Most of these classes cost a small fee and are organized by the local parish, religious organization, education centres like libraries or NGOs. Giving equal opportunities to everyone and joining different layers of a community, these centres help to unite the people of a community in a simple and fun way. Therefore, it is important to engage youth in this type of activity. Looking for local events, being engaged in the local media and social networks are simple ways to involve youth in the local reality.

#### **Having a community mindset in the individual sphere**

If the youngster does not have the time or motivation for group activities, the youth worker should still engage him in the community life "mindset" in his daily life. This means that we still can think about our community when we are in our "social bubble", in our homes or even alone.

One quick example is the importance of shopping locally and being mindful as a consumer. While yes, it is a lot easier for someone to say to shop local rather than do local shopping, it is still something everyone in a community should strive to do. Shopping locally can be anything from a farmers' market to a family store. Keeping the money local has a multitude of advantages: it can build a stronger local economy, bring the community closer together and promote a cleaner environment and cleaner eating habits. Local businesses are able to hire hometown workers for both their staff and for any repairs or remodeling needed for business. Other possibility is to donate resources when the youngster does not need them anymore. For example, clothes, phones...

To sum up, engaging youth to become active in their community is one of the main missions of youth workers. Showing them the infinite benefits and finding with them their own way of helping their community is part of what it means to be a youth worker. Explaining how a youngster can have an impact and make the difference in their daily lives, gives them a 24/7 community mindset with the responsibility of standing out to democratic values and respect for human rights.

## DEMOCRATIC VALUES

*“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.” - Franklin D. Roosevelt*

Democracy means, literally, “rule by the people”. The term is derived from the Greek *dēmokratia*, which was coined from *dēmos* (“people”) and *kratos* (“rule”) in the middle of the 5th century BC to denote the political systems then existing in some Greek city-states, notably Athens. Therefore, democracy is literally “a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system”.

The Democratic Values Component refers to recognition, promotion and safeguarding of important democratic and European values such as human rights, democracy and intercultural understanding. Democratic values refer to the basic principles of democratic governance. It means all the ideas or beliefs that make a society fair, including respect for **Human Rights, democratic decision-making, freedom of speech, equality before the law, social justice, gender equality, respect for diversity and intercultural dialogue**, among others... Basically, all people should be treated fairly in both the benefits and the obligations of society.

We have to make democracy a public property and raise awareness of youth to believe and stand out for democracy. There are a lot of activities that youth workers can do to create awareness and reflection on democratic values and why is democracy important for youth and in their daily lives. But first, some definitions of the pillars of democracy are needed:

Keyword	Definition
<b>Democratic Decision Making</b>	A process of making a decision that is fair, where everyone involved has an equal say. For example: voting or reaching a consensus through discussion where everybody has a say.
<b>Representative Government</b>	A government where elected representatives speak and make decisions on behalf of the people they represent when proposing, debating, and passing laws (legislation).
<b>Accountable Government</b>	A government that anyone may question or criticize and ask that they explain their actions and decisions. They are therefore responsible (and accountable) to the people.
<b>Freedom of Speech</b>	Being able to say or write what you think about the government or about any other subject or social issue, as long as you don't break the law, endanger people or make false allegations.
<b>Equality Before the Law</b>	Everyone is equal under the law. This means nobody should be treated differently from anybody else because of their race, ethnicity, country of origin, age, gender, marital status or disability, political or religious beliefs.
<b>Social Justice</b>	Everyone has equal opportunity and a 'fair go'. There is mutual respect, tolerance and fair play. There is justice in the distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges (i.e. it is fair).
<b>Equality for Women and Men</b>	Men and women have equal rights. Jobs and professions are open equally to men and women.
<b>Respect for Human Rights</b>	Human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. Each individual is entitled to human rights. Human rights are always and everywhere applicable, including at times of conflict or crisis. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages.
<b>Intercultural Learning and dialogue</b>	Intercultural learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills that support the ability of learners to both understand culture and interact with people from cultures different from their own. Intercultural dialogue is to learn to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging

In the creation and implementation of any activity aimed to work on these topics, it is important to create beforehand a «democratic environment», where young participants feel that they had the chance to have their ideas heard and treated as important, make a fair decision as a group where everyone was treated equally, treated with respect and tolerance and felt comfortable to speak their own mind. Democracy is a moment-to-moment experience.

For more details on how the Values dimension relates to the relationship between Human Rights and Democracy, as well as, how Intercultural Understanding represents a key notion in today's democracy, make sure to check Annex 2.

In summary, the four components of Active Citizenship are the ones that make active participation in society quantifiable. However, it is important to treat all four as interacting and interdependent pieces of the same Active Citizenship puzzle.

It is true that there is a very fine line between them and exactly pointing where one component ends and another begins is very difficult. In spite of this, what usually helps identify the component we focus on is the aim of our activity. Do we aim at getting involved in the decision-making process? Do we aim at informing youngsters about a certain topic or holding the authorities accountable? Do we aim at bringing the community closer, regardless of the political stage at the moment?

By asking ourselves such questions related to what each component mainly focuses on, it becomes easier to make a distinction. For example, a social campaign that aims at motivating youngsters to go and cast their vote in elections is more focused on the Political Life Component, while an intercultural evening that involves recently arrived refugees or the minorities in a community is more focused on Community Life Component. In the same manner, a workshop about how to monitor the activity of the local authorities or how to get involved in the public debates hosted by the City Council are more focused on Civil Society Component, while a workshop that informs youngsters about their rights, as citizens or as human beings, in general, is more focused on the Values Component.

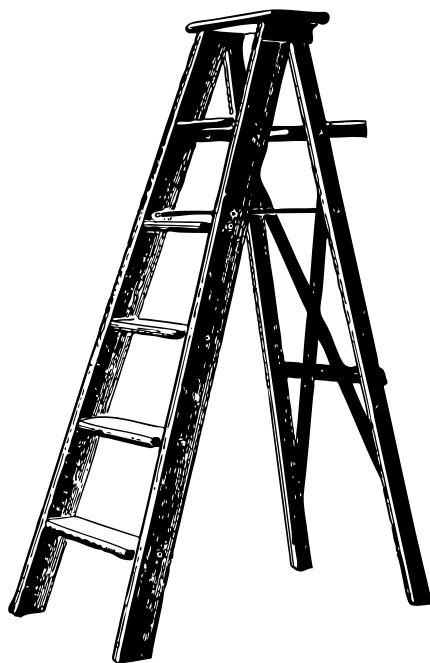
At the same time, note that there can be more than one component in the main focus. The social campaign for voting is also focused on the Civil Society Component, while the intercultural dinner can also be focused on the Values Component. As stated above, the components are neither conflicting, nor separate parts of Active Citizenship, they go hand in hand. Just as all elements of society interact, so do the components. However, since the world has too many problems to all be fixed at once, so it goes with Active Citizenship. Although it might be tempting to try and touch on all components at once, it is safer and wiser, depending on the resources, to focus on one, maybe two, and trust our participants on the others.



## YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Just as a ladder, the involvement of young people in activities can have different levels based on Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation, each of them closer to a higher degree of participation and some common forms we see in society do not reflect at all youth's participation. We need to take this into account when designing or planning about the codesign of activities with youth.

### ROGER HART'S LADDER OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION



Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making

Rung 7: Young people lead and initiate action

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

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

Rung 3: Young people tokenized\*

Rung 2: Young people are decoration\*

Rung 1: Young people are manipulated\*

\*Hart explains that the last three rungs are non-participation.

**8. Young people-initiated, shared decisions with adults.** This happens when projects or programs are initiated by young people and decision-making is shared between young people and adults. These projects empower young people while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by youth/adult partnerships.

**7. Young people-initiated and directed.** This step is when young people initiate and direct a project or program. Adults are involved only in a supportive role. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by youth-led activism.

**6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people.** Occurs when projects or programs are initiated by adults but the decision-making is shared with the young people. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by participatory action research.

**5. Consulted and informed.** Happens when young people give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults. The young people are informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of the decisions made by adults. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by youth advisory councils.

**4. Assigned but informed.** This is where young people are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by community youth boards.

**3. Tokenism.** When young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate. This rung of the ladder reflects adultism.

**2. Decoration.** Happens when young people are used to help or "bolster" a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by young people. This rung of the ladder reflects "adultism" (prejudice or discrimination against young people as a group).

**1. Manipulation.** Happens where adults use young people to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by young people. This rung of the ladder reflects adultism.

It is important to remember that tokenism, decoration and manipulation are not examples of youth participation although they are very used in today's society. When preparing an activity, we need to ask ourselves if we as youth workers are promoting a meaningful participation; which level is the activity on or should be on; and what do we need to do to move to the right level of the ladder.

Now that we have a better understanding of what Active Citizenship is and what we will focus on, as well as the way in which we can involve young people, it is time to start planning how to change the world, one event at a time. More on that in the next chapters. Youth Workers assemble!



# 2# CONNECTING THE DOTS

Before going further, perhaps we should remind all of you out there that change doesn't happen overnight. It takes time and effort and sometimes is not even celebrated properly. Thus, before getting to work, bear in mind that you should be realistic. We know, it can be quite a drag to go through all the finding the aim, finding the appropriate methods process. However, there are simpler ways of doing it, while still covering all the important aspects and having an impact on the participants.

Therefore, in this chapter we will explore the theory behind the practice and offer you all the necessary tools to plan an amazing activity. We can't promise it will turn the world back around in its tracks, as we said earlier, change is time consuming. However, it doesn't mean you can't start slowly building change and using your resources wisely. With this in mind, here we go!

## THE RED THREAD METHOD

A very common and rather practical approach of planning includes answering 5 very simple questions: Why?, Who?, When?, Where? and How?. By answering these rather simple questions, in using what we will call from now on "The Red Thread Method", you will successfully plan all important aspects of your activity in no time. Moreover, you will have "a red thread" that connects all main points of your activity and will make it easier not to get lost in the unexpected. Let's get to work!

### **WHY? - Identifying the issue**

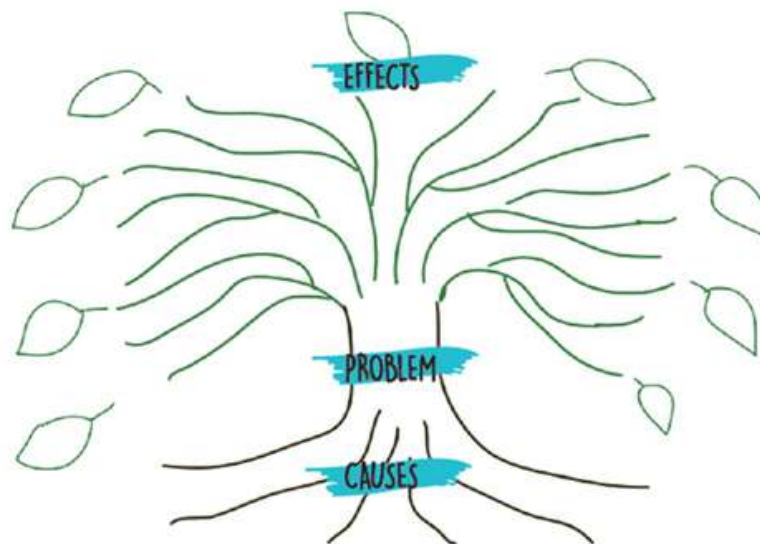
The world today has many issues and all of utmost urgency. However, one cannot save everybody and solve all the problems of society. Therefore, before designing your event, you should identify that one issue, dare we say, that one cause of the issue or that one effect that the issue has, that you want to improve or influence.

The Problem Tree is an efficient tool of identifying the issue you want to tackle. Problem tree is a tool used to deepen the understanding of a specific issue. You analyze an issue (the trunk of the tree) looking at its causes (the roots) and its consequences (the branches). A problem tree can help you see the complexity of any issue and define your main focus point. There is often more than one cause to an issue as well as many more consequences (EAF The manual, 2019, 19).

Here is how to use the tool:

- Write the issue you want to analyze in the middle of the tree trunk;
- Identify as many direct causes (roots) of this issue as possible by writing them under the tree trunk;
- Develop each of the roots by finding secondary causes. Ask why this cause exists and you will find a secondary cause. Continue the "why" chain until you feel like you have found the principal root cause or you see interconnections between them;
- Now define the direct consequences of the problem that can be seen already and have evidence to it. Ask which further effects these consequences can bring and link secondary consequences. Continue the chain until you have found the last evident effects (EAF The manual, 2019, 19).

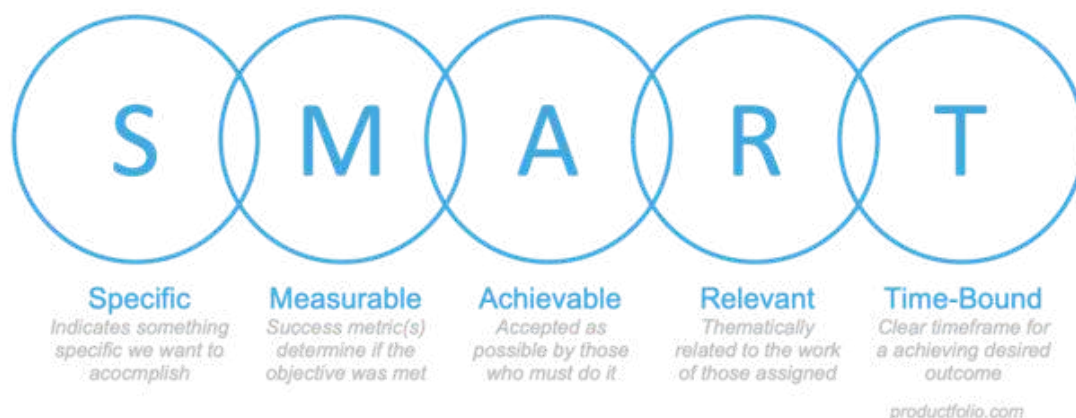




After your problem tree is full with roots and branches, it is time to choose your focus. This step allows concentrating on something concrete and doable. This way you avoid talking about a big issue and give yourself a possibility to find concrete evidence to a narrower topic. The problem tree exercise is useful to gain an overview of all the implicated areas of your main topic. It assists you in choosing the main points of your plan or activity and see where you can affect change. You can determine the first lines of the strategy and the methods you want to employ. Using the insight offered by the Problem tree you can formulate more efficiently your aim and objectives.

The aim represents the most general focus of the project. It should include what you want to do (ex: raise awareness, educate behaviour etc.), who is the target group (ex: young people between 14 and 25 y/o, primary school students etc.), the issue you will touch upon (ex: elections, climate change, refugees, gender inequality etc.) and a deadline or period of time (ex: until March.2022, for the next 5 months etc.).

Once you've decided on the aim, it is time to design the small steps that will help you reach your aim: the objectives. For formulating the objectives, we suggest using the SMART method:



Here is an example: implementing a workshop on the election system in Romania in 5 different classes with young people between 14 and 18 years old from 5 different schools before 31 December 2022. As you can see, this objective is very specific (implement a workshop) and there are indicators that we can measure (the number of classes and schools). We can assume it is achievable and relevant if we aim at raising awareness about the importance of voting. Lastly, it is time-bound as there is a given deadline: 31st December 2022.

Indeed, deciding on your aim and objectives involves knowing or at least having a clue about the answer to the other questions as well. Therefore, we suggest you start with the problem tree because it will offer insight for all 5 questions, not just the issue. Once you've decided on the aspect you want to improve or influence, you can brainstorm the other questions and then get to planning. In the end, you can always come back and change as new information comes up, before creating the final plan.

## WHO? - Target group

Once you have decided on your topic, it's time to gather the team. Sort of an Avengers assemble! Here, you decide what best suits your topic and your aim. Do you need someone with experience? There will be more than one role to distribute? Will there be a need for someone with social media skills or advocacy experience? Can young people be part of your team? And so on...these and many others are questions you should answer when assembling your project team.

Although we have included this step here, there is a possibility you already have your team or you will assemble your team later into the planning process. That works great as well!

However, if you don't foresee a team, we suggest gathering one, once you've decided on the topic, as new people bring new insights and teamwork is always much more exciting.

On the other hand, you will also have to decide to which people does this issues address? Who is influenced by this or sufferers because of this? Selecting a target group is one of the vital topics. Choosing the inappropriate group type or having inappropriate content with the selected group may result in failure of your event or strategy. For that matter, understanding the definition of the target group is essential. Depending on the nature of your activity or strategy, a target group can be described as the main audience which the idea or message is addressed to or the group with whom you want to convey the message (EAF The manual, 2019, 14).

While designing your activity, event or campaign, you should take into consideration which is the most effective communication channel to reach the target group and what kind of message would be effective to draw their attention and either call them to action or invite them to think about the issue.

With this in mind, here are some additional questions that can help you identify your target group, as well as, what is the best way to reach them and what kind of content you should aim for:

- What does this group know/not know?
- What does this group want to hear/say?
- What can I invite them to do (e.g. reconsider their attitude, promote a change in legislation, join an event)?
- How should it be formulated (e.g. friendly, demanding, official, fun, provoking, short and catchy or well elaborated and in-depth)?
- What would be the best way to reach them (e.g. through social media, newsletter, public interaction, website update or an article in the local newspaper)?
- What will make them stop to listen to what you have to say (e.g. writing a too long or difficult message, being too official, not being able to show that you know whom you are talking to)?
- How will you know that they have got the message (e.g. they register to an event, take part in a discussion, reply to a questionnaire, use the hashtag, upload a picture)?

Now that we're halfway there and these two questions go hand in hand, most of the time, here are some examples of problem trees, along with aims, objectives and target groups created by youth workers that participated in our training:





### **WHEN & WHERE? - Time and place**

In this step you have to decide the time or timeline of your action and where it will take place. Is there a major national/international event that can be connected to your action? What time do you think is needed for the participants to fully understand your topic? Do you need a closed or an open space? How many people should the space fit? Does it have the technology you require? etc.

### **HOW? - Methods**

This question in particular aims at helping you identify what is the best way to tackle the issue(s) you have chosen. It refers to what method(s) you should employ. However, since there is already a lot of information available online regarding different methods and how to use them, in this subchapter we will focus on Educational Escape Rooms as a method to promote learning.

Escape Rooms are live action team based games where players discover clues, solve puzzles, and accomplish tasks in one or more rooms in order to accomplish a specific goal (usually escaping from the room) in a limited amount of time. Escape rooms require teamwork, communication, and delegation as well as critical thinking, attention to detail, and lateral thinking. They are accessible to a wide age range of players and do not favour any gender; in fact, the most successful teams are those that are made up of players with a variety of experiences, skills, background knowledge, and physical abilities (Nicholson, S., 2016, 1).

Now you may wonder, ok and what does this have to do with education? Well, a lot actually. We all know how tedious learning can become when the topic or the teacher doesn't catch our interest. In addition, studies have shown that with the evolution of the internet and social media, our attention span has decreased to around 3 to 5 minutes. And as Tik Tok grows in popularity, we see people responding more and more to video content rather than text and images. If this applies to adults, you can imagine how things are with young people.

However, apart from the attractivity of the challenge, what makes Escape Rooms so great as an addition to any educational process is the active and experiential learning they imply. Educational Escape Rooms transfer the ownership of learning from the instructor to the student, making it easy to observe how learners approach problem solving, learning new things and applying their knowledge. During an Educational Escape Room the whole environment which is connected to the education need is created, as well as, a safe space to explore concepts and ideas. On an experiential level, the player is directly in the game, not controlling the avatar, which means less barriers between player and experience (Escape to your Future, 2022).

Indeed, it is difficult to turn some serious topics into Escape Rooms, as well as, to touch on all aspects of an issue, while designing the Escape Room. There are many aspects to consider when creating an Educational Escape Room, from the storyline, to the puzzles and the debriefing. And we said in the previous paragraph, best way to learn is by doing, so dive deeper into the concept of Educational Escape Rooms and get your neurons to work in trying to design one yourself: [https://youtu.be/XVQ8Ot\\_QyLQ](https://youtu.be/XVQ8Ot_QyLQ)



On the other hand, although Educational Escape Rooms imply active involvement of the learner in the process, the actual learning happens after experiencing the game. Then why should I bother with an Escape Room? you might wonder. Well, on the one hand, for all of those amazing benefits of the learning process that we told you about earlier. On the other hand, for the fun of it. Who doesn't love a good game, right?

The debriefing done after escaping from the room is where the actual learning and educational process happens. You see, it's difficult for anyone to try and solve a challenge and focus on the clues, while at the same time trying to understand what they are supposed to learn from this. Hence, the puzzles used during the game usually represent keywords or key numbers combinations, and not only, whose purpose will be explained afterwards. It is not the experience in itself that educates people, it is the reflection on the experience that does. Hence, explaining the meaning of all those puzzles and keywords in the debriefing section will allow participants to connect the dots and grasp at the deeper meanings of an important issue. At the same time, you can be sure they will remember not only the aspect you tried to educate them on, but fun memories from playing the game with other participants. Let's not forget that socializing with peers is an important aspect for young people.

We hope you will try your skills and knowledge at playing and designing an Educational Escape Room. However, since we know that most often than not, time is short and for some, this might not be exactly their desired challenge, we provide also some Educational Escape Rooms developed by the teams of this project on different social issues, related to Active Citizenship. Please check the Secret Code Escape Box Toolkit available for download and feel free to use them and share them.





## FLOW OF AN ACTIVITY

Pfiu, we're almost there. Good work on finding everything you need for the activity till here. Now it's time to put it on paper.

### *The map to a successful activity*

The easiest way to do it, is to think of your event or activity as an essay...you know, that thing teachers always nag you about. We promise this "essay" will be much more fun though.

Firstly, as in any good essay, you should start with an introduction. This period of introduction should involve:

- Presentations of the team/facilitator;
- Administrative info, if there is any regarding meals, the venue etc.
- Rules;
- Today's agenda in short;
- Ice-breakers & Get-to-know games.

Of course, this doesn't mean that if something administrative comes up you can't say it during the event or if you would like to create the rules with the help of the group, you shouldn't proceed as such. As we said, these are merely guidelines and what we found works in general. However, we suggest keeping the introduction short, depending on your time span for the activity, from 5 to a maximum of 20 minutes.

Before moving on, however, we should take a moment to discuss the role of the trainer or the facilitator. The definition of facilitation is "to make it easy". The trainer, as a facilitator, has the responsibility to plan, guide and manage a group, ensuring that the group objectives are met effectively. It's not about offering the right answers, it is about questioning, in order to guide the group in the discussion to achieve a conclusion. To facilitate effectively, the facilitator must be objective and take a neutral stance, stepping back from its personal point of view and focus on the group process.

To bring the group to a successful conclusion, and achievement of the desired outcome, the facilitator has to:

- Create a safe and trustful learning environment, providing physical, emotional, and intellectual security for the group, a space for sharing, thinking, growing and learning;
- Design and plan the group process, selecting the learning tools that best fit the dynamics of that group;
- Guide the group, ensuring that:
  - Participants have a good level of self-awareness and motivation;
  - Participants achieve a mutual understanding about the desired outcome;
  - There is effective participation of all members and that contributions are considered and included in the discussion;
  - There is an atmosphere of self-reliance among the group;
  - Participants take shared responsibility for the outcome.
- Monitor, assess and summarize the outcomes and impact of the activities performed by the group.

As we move into the body of the activity, we should keep this in mind. This is the longest and most time consuming part, as well as the one where the trainer's role as a facilitator of the learning process is vital. Here you should present complex information, have teamwork exercises and individual work, if needed, as well as, most games and interaction between participants. Whether we talk of Educational Escape Rooms or another kind of method, this is when the active and experiential learning is happening.

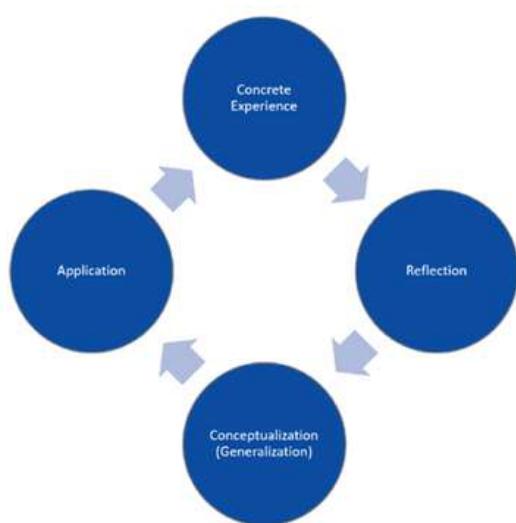
Last but not least, is the concluding stage of the activity. Here you should have review exercises, depending on the nature of your content, or debriefing, some conclusions of the day and feedback. As the introductory stage, this shouldn't take too much time either, but since debriefing and feedback are important parts, we suggest keeping it from 10 to a maximum of 30 minutes to make sure these parts are included. In case of longer activities, feel free to extend the time span.

## Debriefing & Feedback

The debriefing is the most important part of any activity that is based on the principles of Non-Formal Education. Without reflecting upon the experience, it may quickly be forgotten or its learning potential lost. It is from the feelings and thoughts emerging from this reflection that generalizations or concepts can be generated. And it is generalizations which enable new situations to be tackled effectively.

Similarly, if it is intended that behaviour should be changed by learning, it is not enough simply to learn new concepts and develop new generalizations. This learning must be tested out in new situations. The learner must make the link between theory and action by planning for that action, carrying it out, and then reflecting upon it, relating what happens back to the theory.

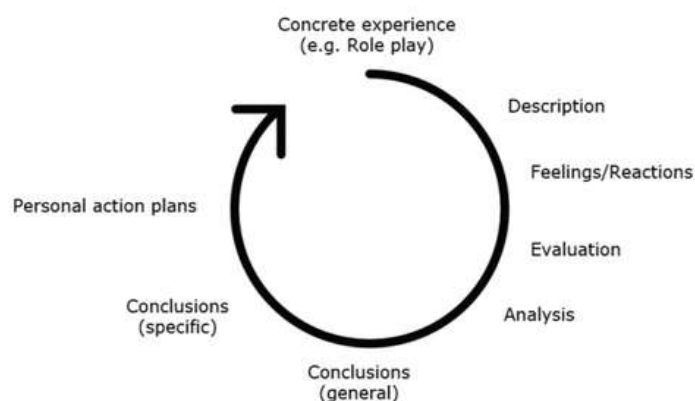
It is not enough just to do, and neither is it enough just to think. Nor is it enough simply to do and think. Learning from experience or Experiential Learning must involve links between the doing and the thinking. It involves four stages which follow each other in a cycle, as in the following diagram:



The terms used here as labels for the four stages come from Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, and placed in this sequence they form the experiential learning cycle.

- **Concrete Experience:** is where the learner actively experiences an activity such as a lab session or field work.
- **Reflection:** is when the learner consciously reflects back on that experience.
- **Conceptualization (Generalization):** is when the learner attempts to conceptualize a theory or model of what is observed.
- **Application:** is when the learner is trying to plan how to test a model or theory or plan for a forthcoming experience.

One of the most challenging stages is what happens after learning experiences and how learning points can be drawn out through structured reflection. The diagram below relates the stages of a full structured debriefing to the stages of the experiential learning cycle:



**Description:** What happened? Don't make judgements yet or try to draw conclusions; simply describe.

**Feelings/reactions:** What were your reactions and feelings? Again, don't move on to analyzing these yet.

**Evaluation:** What was good or bad about the experience? Make value judgments.

**Analysis:** What sense can you make of the situation? Bring in ideas from outside the experience to help you. What was really going on? Were different people's experiences similar or different in important ways?

**Conclusions (general):** What can be concluded, in a general sense, from these experiences and the analyses you have undertaken?

**Conclusions (specific):** What can be concluded about your own specific, unique, personal; situation or way of working?

**Personal action plans:** What are you going to do differently in this type of situation next time? What steps are you going to take on the basis of what you have learnt?

In a nutshell, after each activity be sure to connect the "body" (physical experience and movement), "heart" (attitudes and feelings involved) and "mind" (rational theory). It is crucial that each participant has the time to reflect on the learning experience and leaves with a personal action plan for the future.

### **Follow-up Activities**

Finishing the main experience, successful training events always integrate follow-up activities after the training to provide further support, skill development, and continuous improvement to promote change!

Important considerations to prepare, create and implement a follow-up activity:

- During the training, give the learners time to reflect on their learnings. For example, each participant can have their own journal and daily reflection questions to work individually.
- Gather useful feedback in an organized manner to help with future follow-up activities design. Evaluation is often considered as taking place at four different levels (the "Kirkpatrick levels"). The further down you go in the evaluation process, the more valid the evaluation:
  - "Reaction": What does the learner feel? (oral/written feed-back, open and close ended questions)
  - "Learning": What facts, knowledge and experiences did he gain? (observation, plans, exercises etc.)
  - "Transfer": What skills did he develop? What new information can he use in his life?
  - "Results or effectiveness": Did the learner apply the new skills to his life and what results were achieved?  
[Follow-up phase]
- Involve youth in the design of relevant follow-up actions to apply, improve, develop and reinforce learning attained in the near future. Create a virtual community for the group to keep in touch and share materials and ideas.
- Give youth a certificate like youthpass as a tangible proof of the learning experience.
- Examples of Follow-up on Trainings:
  - Ask each participant to email you a brief summary of the three most important points they learned in the training. Let a few weeks pass and then email the responses to the group, along with any additional feedback that has occurred in the meantime. This will give you an opportunity to reinforce what was learned a second time.
  - A week after the training, ask participants what new skill or technique they have tried based on the materials covered in the training. When appropriate, post the anecdotes in a virtual community. Be sure to solicit feedback as to what worked well, what did not go as smoothly, and what additional training is needed.
  - At the close of the training, ask each participant to commit to trying 1-3 new skills from the program. Ask them to write them down, and let them know that the group will get back together to follow up and discuss techniques tried. Next, schedule a follow-up session.
  - You can organize a "keep on doing" session. To do this, you could invite your participants to exchange what they have done after the training (e.g. a year after the training has taken place). Let them tell whether the training was useful or not useful for their life.

To sum up, it is part of the facilitator/trainer/youth worker role to bring the group to a successful conclusion, and achievement of the desired outcome. Follow-up activities can be a valuable tool to extend the impact of the experience.

# 3# TRAINING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Now that you have all the information, here are some guidelines to implementing the program as a training/seminar. They are suggestions of activities that youth workers in this project have already tried and you can use to touch on the content of the training to enable both young people or people involved in the education of youth to design and implement their own Active Citizenship events and activities.

As this program was designed as a 3-day training/seminar, the activities and content are shared over the span of 3 days with 4 working sessions per day of around 90 minutes with breaks or lunch breaks between them. However, depending on your circumstances and what you think is relevant to your aim, feel free to tweak the activities and adjust your schedule. At the same time, you will notice participants are asked to work in the same teams for the whole 3 days. If you will find yourself working with an international group, you can start with international teams and work your way to national and even local teams, depending on what the participants should do after the training. As we stated before, adapt the guidelines and the content to your needs. In fewer words, let's see how the training should look.

## DAY 1

### SESSION 1

Energizer: Energy

Intro

Get-to-know 1: Labelling

Rules of the tribe

Team-building: City Scavenger Hunt

### SESSION 2

Energizer: Count & Shake

Get-to-know 2: Speed dating

Active Citizenship Bingo

### SESSION 3

Energizer: Atoms & Molecules

Teamwork: Active Citizenship 101

### SESSION 4

Energizer: Take my place!

Active Citizenship Components

The Red Thread Method PART 1

Feedback of the day

## DAY 2

### SESSION 1+2

Energizer: 2 truths, 1 lie

The Red Thread Method PART 2

### SESSION 3+4

Energizer: Keep the distance!

The Red Thread Method PART 3

Feedback of the day

## DAY 3

### SESSION 1+2

Energizer: Passing ball

Guide to local activities PART 1

### SESSION 3+4

Energizer: Princes and princesses

Guide to local activities PART 2

Concluding of the training



## SESSION 1 | 90'

! We suggest kicking off each session with an *energizer*. You will find some suggestions here, but feel free to adapt or replace them with your own.

### *Energizer: Energy*

The participants and the trainer stand in a circle. The trainer pretends to gather an energy ball from air and passes it to the next participant on the right by clapping in his/her direction. The participant takes the energy ball by clapping in the trainer's direction and then turns to the next participant on the right and passes the energy-ball by clapping. The participants keep on taking and passing the energy ball until it reaches the trainer. That is the end of one turn. The trainer gathers a ball and passes it again. The game is played again but with a faster pace. To make it more fun and get the participants to focus, the trainer can pass more balls one after the other and make the game have a very fast pace. The game ends when the trainer believes participants have successfully passed all the energy-balls back.

### *Intro:*

We suggest a general description of the organisation hosting the event and of the Change Makers Academy program, as well as, of the trainer and the organising team. You should also include a short summary of the days and what are the aims of the training.

D  
A  
Y  
1

### *Get-to-know 1: Labelling*

Participants have to create a personalized "label" with their name. They are offered coloured paper, glue, scissors and any other materials you believe they may need to make the "labels" (which will serve as name tags) as interesting and personalized as possible.

After each participant has designed his/hers "label", they should walk around the room and talk in pairs to introduce themselves to the others and talk a little about their "label". This will ensure all participants get to meet each other and get an idea about the people they will work with during this training.

### *Rules of the tribe:*

In this exercise, participants should work in pairs or small groups and decide on some rules everyone, including them, should follow for the duration of the training to ensure a welcoming, non-discriminatory and safe environment. After they finish working in groups, all ideas should be collected and concluded in about 5 to 10 rules that everyone agrees on and will follow for the remainder of the training. They should be written down and displayed in the training room.

### *Team building: City Scavenger Hunt*

For the participants to get to know each other even better and to encourage cooperation, we suggest this fun team-building exercise. Split the participants in more or less equal teams and send them out to explore the city. This will also help them get familiar with the surroundings. Feel free to create your own scavenger hunt or adapt an online model. If you're not in a city, feel free to create or adapt a nature scavenger hunt. At the same time, feel free to use any other team building exercise you may believe is more fit to your participants. Here you can find what was used in our training.

## SESSION 2 | 90'

### *Energizer: Count & Shake*

Have some fun counting backwards from 10 with the participants while shaking each hand and each foot. You can choose to shake only the hands or the feet, depending on what you believe to be necessary.

D  
A  
Y  
1

### *Get-to-know 2: Speed dating*

Although a get to know exercise, this speed dating activity should be used to find out about the participants expectations, fears and strengths. They should sit on two rows facing each other. Each round should last several minutes and when the time is up, one row moves to the right so that participants that didn't move should face another person now.

The game goes on until participants face the same person as in the beginning. For each round, they should discuss with the person they are facing the following questions:

- What are your expectations of this training?

...

SESSION 2 | 90'

- What are you confident about regarding this training?
- What concerns you about this training?

After the game is done, allow participants several minutes to write their answers to these questions on post its and display them on a flipchart sheet split in 3: expectations, strengths and fears. Display the flipchart sheet in the training room after reading some of the answers.

*Active Citizenship Bingo:*

Participants have to ask who is the person who has already done, has happened to them or identifies with what is written. That person has to sign the colleague's sheet. The first to complete the board yells bingo. Here is an example of Bingo Board:

I voted in the last municipal elections	I have already been to the Assembly of the Republic in PT or to the EU Parliament	I participated in a demonstration	I have already signed a petition
I volunteer regularly	I have participated in an international ERASMUS+ event	I have already done a good deed for my local community	I've been fooled by fake news
I have suffered some form of discrimination	I am interested in European politics and European institutions	I apply the 4Rs in my daily life (reduce, reuse, recycle and "redistribute")	I am familiar with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

D  
A  
Y  
1

SESSION 3 | 90'

*Energizer: Atoms & Molecules*

This is a fun way of splitting the participants into teams. It is known that the higher the temperature the faster atoms move and the colder it is the slower they move. Participants will turn into atoms for this exercise and have some fun by making them run around at crazy temperatures such as 100 degrees or walk very very slowly at -150 degrees. To make teams, ask them to group in molecules (for example: molecules of 4). When you have balanced teams, end the game and move on to the next exercise.

*Teamwork: Active Citizenship 101*

Firstly, have a short brainstorming exercise and ask participants to tell what is the first word they think of when they hear *Active Citizenship*. Write down their answers. Afterwards, tell them about the next teamwork exercise. Each team will have to answer one of the following questions regarding the concept of Active Citizenship:

- What are the traits of an active citizen?
- What can be considered an Active Citizenship Action?
- What are the tools of an active citizen?
- What is Active Citizenship for you?

They should write their answers and conclusions on a flipchart. After the time is up, each team will present their conclusions to the whole group and other participants can add to the knowledge. The flipcharts should be displayed in the training room. Draw some conclusions and present the definition of Active Citizenship. We suggest referring to The State of Art of Active Citizenship Report as well as, the first chapters of this program, to complete your research and gather information.

D  
A  
Y  
1



## SESSION 4 | 90'

### *Energizer: Take my place!*

Participants sit on chairs in a big circle. There is one person in the middle who is standing up. The participants who are seated have to switch places only by making eye contact. The person who is standing has to try and take someone's place to sit down. When that happens, the participant with no seat tries to take someone else's place and so on. Stop the game when you consider participants are energized.

### *Active Citizenship Components*

Present the model of the four components of Active Citizenship. Split the participants in four teams. Each team gets a component and has to research what it means and come up with some examples of actions and activities that could be considered focused on that certain component. Ask them to write down their conclusions of flipcharts. When the time is up, each team will share their conclusions with the whole group.

**D** After each presentation, reflect on the interrelationship between the components. Refer participants to the  
**A** report for extra reading and make sure to offer extra explanations. This is a particularly difficult aspect to  
**Y** grasp at. You should display the flipcharts in the training room.

! An energizer might be needed after this exercise

**1**

### *The Red Thread Method PART 1:*

Introduce the method to the participants and explain what each question refers to. Guide participants through answering the first question: WHY? - Identifying the issue. We suggest referring back to Chapter 2 for the next sessions.

Present the Problem Tree method and how to identify and select an issue. Split participants and teams and ask them to design their own problem trees. If time allows, ask them to choose what part of the identified issue they want to focus on. However, if time is short, this can be done the next day.

### *Feedback of the day:*

Ask participants to share their thoughts on the day: what went well? And what should be improved? It can be done in any way you believe fit for your group: write on post its, talk about it, teamwork etc.

## SESSION 1+2 | 90'+90'

! We suggest a short reflection exercise at the beginning of the day to review the previous day and make smoother transitions.

### *Energizer: 2 truths, 1 lie*

Participants work in pairs or small groups. Each of them has to say three statements about themselves. The rest of the group has to guess which of the statements is a lie.

### *The Red Thread Method PART 2:*

**D** Review the Problem Trees designed in the previous day. Present the rest of the process for answering the  
**A** first question: designing the aim, making SMART objectives.

**Y** Guide participants through the second question as well: WHO? - target group, as it is necessary to be able  
**2** to complete the aim and the objectives.

Afterwards, split participants in the same teams as in the previous day and ask them to refer back to the problem tree, choose the aspect of the identified issue they would like to focus on, as well as to identify the target group they would like to address to and to design the aim and the objectives for a future activity/event.

When the time is up, each team should share their work with the whole group. The other teams can give feedback.

! Include 15' for a break when you consider necessary or allow participants to take this break whenever they feel like it during working time.

## SESSION 3+4 | 90'+90'

D  
A  
Y  
2

### *Energizer: Keep the distance!*

Ask participants to think of the two people they like most in the whole group. Afterwards, tell participants they have to stand up and dance while the music is playing while keeping an equal distance at all times of these two people. Stop the game when you think participants feel energized.

### *The Red Thread Method PART 3:*

In this part, guide the participants through answering the remaining of the questions: WHEN & WHERE? - Time and place and HOW? - Methods. Pay special attention to the HOW?.

Brainstorm with the participants or select beforehand, some methods you believe are appropriate for implementing active citizenship activities. Split the participants in teams and ask each team to research and present one of these methods as originally as possible.

After the team presentations, introduce the Educational Escape Rooms method. As this program is focused on using escape rooms as educational tools, we suggest dedicating the remainder of these sessions to playing the Escape Rooms included in the program to allow participants to get a better grasp at the method.

We suggest referring back to Chapter 2 for information on this subject and for the escape rooms' materials and explanations.

! Include 15' for a break when you consider necessary or allow participants to take this break whenever they feel like it during working time.

### *Feedback of the day:*

Gather the participants and ask them to share their thoughts on the day: what went well? And what should be improved?. It can be done in any way you believe fit for your group: write on post its, talk about it, teamwork etc.

## SESSION 1+2 | 90'+90'

D  
A  
Y  
3

!! We suggest a short reflection exercise at the beginning of the day to review the previous day and make smoother transitions.

### *Energizer: Passing ball*

Participants stand/sit in a ring and have their hands behind their backs and pass a ball between each other, a person in the middle should guess where the ball is.

### *Guide to local activities PART 1:*

Present the flow of an activity. We suggest referring back to Chapter 2 for information on this topic.

Split participants in the teams from previous days and ask them to choose a method and to design a first draft of the flow of their activity based on their aim and objectives. When the time is up, each team should share their work with the whole group. The other teams can give feedback. For this, you can also redo the teams and ask participants to present their activity in their new team.

! Include 15' for a break when you consider necessary or allow participants to take this break whenever they feel like it during working time.

*Energizer: Princes and princesses*

Half of the participants sit on a chair in a circle, the other half stand behind one of the other participants who sit on the chair. The people on the chairs are princesses and the people behind are princes. One prince does not have a princess on his/her chair and wants to get one by blinking to a princess or saying their name, the princess should move to that chair unless their prince grabs them first.

*Guide to local activities PART 2:*

**D** The remainder of these sessions is dedicated to completing the plans for the activities designed by the participants. You can use the activities presented in Chapter 3 as examples or give participants access to  
**A** Chapter 3 for extra reading.

**Y** In case the group has a faster pace and most of the plans are ready, the time can be used by the teams to test their activities with the participants in the training.

**3**

! Include 15' for a break when you consider necessary or allow participants to take this break whenever they feel like it during working time.

*Concluding of the training:*

Conclude all activities and draw some final remarks with the participants. Fill them in regarding future plans and the following steps to be followed after the training.

Take care of any administrative steps regarding the end of the training: feedback questionnaire, logistical arrangements etc.



# CONCLUSION

Perhaps we should remind all of you out there that change doesn't happen overnight. It takes time and effort and sometimes is not even celebrated properly. Thus, before getting to work, bear in mind that you should be realistic. We know, it can be quite a drag to go through all the finding the aim, finding the appropriate methods process. However, there are simpler ways of doing it, while still covering all the important aspects and having an impact on the participants. On Annex 1 you can check some examples of practical outcomes from the implementation of Secret Code Change Makers Academy.

It's been a long run but here we are. Finally, it's time for conclusions. Hurray!!! :) However, we will not take this time to summarize each chapter, you can always go back to the body of contents or through each chapter for this.

In contrast, we would like to take the time (actually space) for conclusions to remind you that change takes time and energy, as well as teamwork and a vision for a better world. We know, it's a lot of effort and sometimes it will not be worth it, and the world would seem like it'd rather burn itself than improve. But don't give up! And we think this is the most important piece of advice that we can give you...you know, apart from the expertise...Take a break if needed, stop for a while, find another way to approach the issue or/and another team, talk to the President if necessary...whatever works. But **DON'T GIVE UP!**

And by this we mean don't give up on believing that there is still some hope left for the improvement of our world and that you can make a change and help the world take another step towards being a better and more accepting place.

In the end, and we promise this is where the program ends as well, what makes a Change Maker a real change maker is the undying belief that change can happen and it will happen when people take action.

Great! Now that you're ready, let's go and change the world! After a nap of course, because this has been quite an extensive reading :) May the odds be always in your favour!



# REFERENCES

*Civil society* - Kenny, Michael. "civil society". Encyclopedia Britannica, 25 May. 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/civil-society>. Accessed 17 May 2022

Montiel, C., Radziszewski, S., Prilleltensky, I., & Houle, J. (2021). Fostering positive communities: A scoping review of community-level positive psychology interventions. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.720793>

Prilleltensky, I. (2014). Wellness as fairness. In A. C. Michalos, (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research* (7188-7122). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020JC0005>

[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eeas\\_annual\\_report\\_humanity\\_2021\\_web.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eeas_annual_report_humanity_2021_web.pdf)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1465116515608957>

<https://www.trainerslibrary.org/young-peoples-interest-in-politics-in-eu-representative-democracy-and-other-ways-of-participation/>

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14080-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

[https://youth.europa.eu/strategy/european-youth-goals\\_pt](https://youth.europa.eu/strategy/european-youth-goals_pt)

[https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/policy/documents/perception-behaviours\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/policy/documents/perception-behaviours_en.pdf)

<https://advocatesforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Youth-Activist-Toolkit.pdf>

<https://shokkinint.wixsite.com/activistfactory/the-project>