Agenzia Italiana
per la Gioventù

Ajuntament d'Alzira

idea

EUROPEAN
YOUTH
PRESS

ENGAGE AND
REPORT

Engage & Report
Toolkit

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1.

Background & Presentation

Engage and Report: 2024 elections by young people is a ▪️ Erasmus+ funded project which seeks to ensure that young people have better access to reliable information, to support their ability to evaluate information critically and engage in participatory and constructive dialogue, to strengthen young people's democratic participation and autonomy, and to provide dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society.

Three main target groups are covered:

YOUNG PEOPLE
AGED 18-30

YOUTH WORKERS
AND
ORGANISATIONS

POLICYMAKERS
AND
DECISIONMAKERS

The project will produce the following outputs:

Toolkit of Participatory Methodologies for Youth Engagement

- Literature Review on Youth Participation and Participatory Methodologies
- NFE
- Tools developed over the activity

Youth-led participatory processes in each country

- A youth-led participatory process; cycle of consultations within the community that will serve to practise the developed tool and to allow for a more effective engagement and democratic participation of the citizens to the EU elections.
- Youth-friendly content about the European elections – This will be a result of the work of the Youth Reportesers that will support the participatory process by creating contents and youth friendly information about the EU elections.

Project partners

EUROBOX

EUROPEAN
YOUTH PRESS

CITY COUNCIL OF
ALZIRA

2.

Literature review

2.1
Hey You! Changemakers! Let's Talk Youth Participation

Did you ever feel like your voice should be heard loud and clear? If so, you're in the right place, because you're about to discover what youth participation is, the impact it can have, and how you can have a say in it all.

This handbook isn't about jargon and boring stuff. Let's get straight into it!

2.2
What's Youth Participation All About?

Youth participation means putting you, the young people, right in the driver's seat. It's not just about showing up – it's about having a say in stuff that affects all people's lives, and making sure your voices are heard loud and clear, in other words, it's about having a direct line to the decisions that impact your schools, your communities, and even bigger things like policies and laws.

Youth participation is similar to joining a big brainstorming session where everyone's ideas count—no matter your age—alongside the "not so young". It's not just about talking, it's about having real power to shape things. Whether it's suggesting improvements to your school environment or getting your thoughts on what policies should be in place, youth participation gives you a real shot at making change happen.
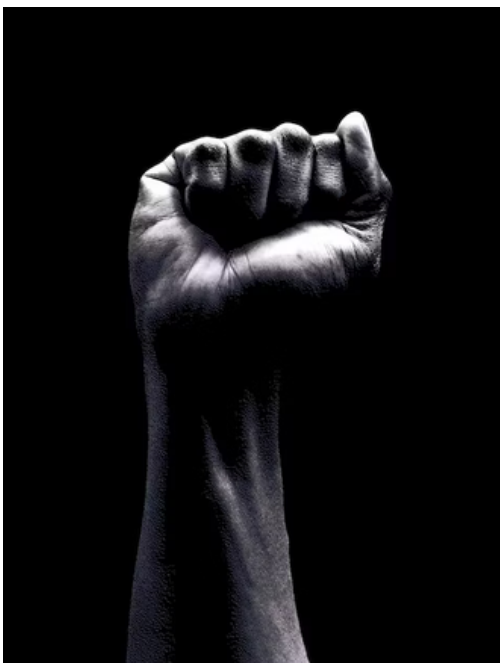
So, let's picture this whole thing like a web of concepts.

At the center is "**empowerment**." That's like giving you the tools and confidence to step up and take charge. You're not just watching from the sidelines —you're the star player on the field. Your buddies from all walks of life are also with you, because "**inclusivity**" is the name of the game. No one's left out; everybody's invited to share their unique ideas and get crazy-awesome results.

Youth participation isn't just about talking, it's about learning, too. You're not just telling your ideas; you're also gaining skills like problem-solving and teamwork.

Don't forget about the "not so young". They've got some wisdom to share, and you've got fresh ideas to bring to the table —"**intergenerational dialogue**". They guide you, and you bring in the new wave of thinking. Together, you're an unstoppable force of good ideas.

Youth participation isn't just a buzzword; it's your ticket to making a difference, being heard, and learning skills that'll rock your world. It's like your voice in action, shaping the world around you. And you, as young people in Europe and youth workers, are the ones who can kick-start this change, making your mark and showing the world what youth power is all about. Ready to rock the participation game?

2.3
Unveiling The Magic: The Theoretical Foundations of Youth Participation

As has been said, your participation can be a game-changer. Here're the the main characters of the theoretical world.

Empowerment: You're the Hero of Your Story

Picture this: you're not just a sidekick; you're the superhero of your own story, a decision-maker, the problem-solver, and the driving force behind change. When you're empowered, you're not waiting for someone else to make things happen – you're taking the reins and making your mark.

Case Study: "Youth-Led Community Projects"

Imagine a group of young people in a neighborhood who decide to tackle a local issue – e.g. littering in a park. They don't just complain; they take action. They organise clean-up events, raise awareness through social media campaigns, and even collaborate with local authorities to install more trash bins. Their empowerment isn't just about picking up trash; it is about taking charge, making decisions, and seeing the tangible impact of their efforts on their community.

Social Capital: It's All About Connections

Ever heard the saying, "It's not what you know, it's who you know"? That's the heart of social capital theory. It's like having a network of allies, friends, and mentors who've got your back. When you're part of a supportive community, you've got access to knowledge, opportunities, and resources that can fuel your participation journey.

Case Study: "Youth Networking Event"

Picture a youth networking event where young people from various backgrounds come together. They share stories, exchange ideas, and build connections. Through these interactions, they discover mentors who guide them in their personal and professional journeys. Those connections become bridges to opportunities – internships, job offers, and collaborative projects. Social capital here isn't just about knowing people; it's about leveraging those relationships for growth and success

Critical Pedagogy: Question Everything

Try to think of a world where asking "why" is encouraged, and curiosity is your compass. Critical pedagogy is like putting on a pair of glasses that lets you see things from different angles. You're not just following the crowd; you're asking questions, challenging norms, and reshaping the way things are done.

Case Study: "Youth-Led Campaign for Sustainable Fashion"

Imagine a group of young activists who are passionate about the environmental impact of fast fashion. They don't just accept the status quo; they dig deeper. They do some research, analyse, and question the industry's practices. Then, armed with their findings, they launch a campaign to raise awareness about sustainable fashion choices. Their critical approach isn't just about following trends; it is about challenging norms and encouraging others to think twice about their choices.
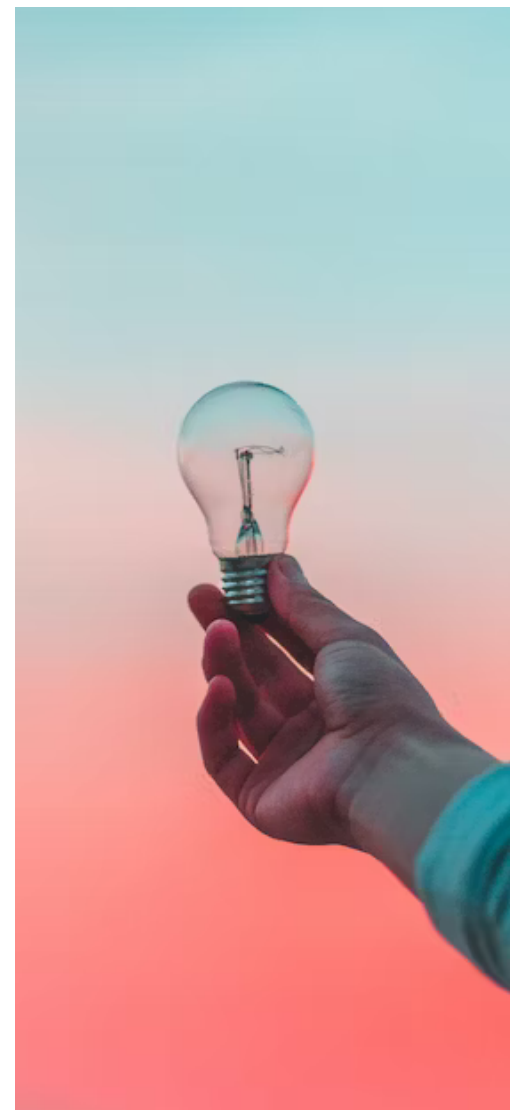
Youth Voice: Speak Up and Shine

Ever felt like your voice was just background noise? Well, the youth voice theory turns up the volume. It's about recognising that your voice – your thoughts, ideas, and opinions – matters. When you're heard, you're not just adding to the conversation; you're shaping it and making sure your unique perspective shines through.

Case Study: "Youth Advisory Board"

Think of a city council that established a youth advisory board made up of young people from different neighborhoods. These young advisors don't just sit in meetings; they actively participate, sharing their insights on matters that affect their peers. Their input isn't just heard; it's valued, leading to policy changes that reflect the needs and preferences of the youth population.

Participatory Action Research: Learning Through Action

Think of this theory as a journey of discovery. Participatory action research means learning by doing. You're not just sitting in a classroom; you're out there, in the real world, gathering information, solving problems, and creating change based on what you uncover.

Case Study: "Youth-Led Health Education Project"

Consider a group of students concerned about the lack of accurate health information in their school. Instead of just complaining, they conduct surveys and interviews to understand their peers' needs. Armed with data, they develop educational workshops on topics like mental health, nutrition, and sexual health.

These theories aren't just fancy words to impress people. They're the foundation that makes youth participation meaningful. They're why your involvement matters, why your ideas count, and why your energy is a force to be reckoned with. Each theory adds a layer of purpose to your participation journey, showing you that you're not just tagging along – you're a crucial player in shaping the world around you.

These theories prove that you're not just along for the ride – you're driving the car, steering it towards change, and making history as you go. Get ready to take these theories and infuse them with your passion, creativity, and drive to create a world where your participation isn't just valued; it's celebrated.

2.4
European Policies Boosting Youth Participation: Let's Get Empowered!

In the dynamic landscape of Europe, where the energy of young people drives change, specific policies and strategies have emerged to champion youth participation. Let's take a deeper dive into the transformative impact of the European Youth Goals, the European Youth Strategy, and the innovative Youth Participation Strategy developed by Salto.

European Youth Goals: Fueled by the Voices of Youth

The European Youth Goals are a set of ambitious targets created based on the input of young people from across the continent. These 11 goals address critical areas such as quality education, employment opportunities, and environmental sustainability.

They function as a guiding light for policies and initiatives that shape the lives of young Europeans. They emphasise the significance of participation, inclusion, and well-being. By placing youth at the center of the conversation, these goals pave the way for informed decision-making and policies that resonate with the needs and desires of young individuals.

European Youth Strategy: Transforming Goals into Action

Imagine a road map that navigates the path from vision to reality. The European Youth Strategy is precisely that – a framework that transforms the European Youth Goals into tangible actions. This strategy rests on 3 action words - ENGAGE, CONNECT, EMPOWER - and outlines key priorities that member states can adopt to empower young people and ensure their active engagement in society.

The strategy places a spotlight on participation, inclusion, and equality. It encourages member states to create opportunities for youth to voice their opinions, contribute to decision-making processes, and influence policies. By recognizing the potential of young individuals as drivers of innovation and social progress, the European Youth Strategy is fostering an environment where youth participation is not just valued, but integral to Europe's future.

Salto's Youth Participation Strategy: A Blueprint for Empowerment

Now, let's turn our attention to the transformative approach taken by Salto, an organisation dedicated to enhancing youth participation. Their Youth Participation Strategy is like a treasure trove of wisdom, providing a roadmap for youth workers, organizations, and young people themselves.

Salto's strategy is built on core principles, one of which is creating safe and inclusive spaces for young individuals to express themselves freely. It encourages partnerships between youth and adults, recognising that collaboration leads to holistic and impactful results. The strategy also emphasizes the importance of education and training, equipping young people with the skills and confidence needed to participate effectively.

The European Youth Goals, the European Youth Strategy, and Salto's Youth Participation Strategy reflect the commitment of European institutions and organizations to empower young individuals as active citizens who shape their communities and societies.

These frameworks amplify the voices of young people, ensuring that their perspectives are not only heard but integrated into policy-making processes. They encourage innovative approaches to participation, enabling youth to lead projects, initiate discussions, and create solutions that address pressing challenges.

These policies and strategies are more than just words on paper – they're beacons of empowerment, guiding young people toward impactful action. With this frameworks, Europe is forging a path where the energy, creativity, and passion of its youth are celebrated and harnessed for the greater good.

As you step into the realm of youth participation, remember that these frameworks are not limitations but invitations to dream, create, and shape the world around you. Your participation is not just a contribution; it's a transformational force that shapes the future of Europe and beyond. Embrace these strategies, amplify your voice, and become a driving force in the movement for positive change.

2.5
Exploring the Playbook: Diverse Participatory Methodologies for Youth Engagement

Alright, time to roll up our sleeves and dive into the exciting world of participatory methodologies! Think of these as different game strategies, each designed to get young people actively involved, thinking critically, and making a real impact.

Participatory methods (PMs) include a range of activities with a common thread: enabling ordinary people to play an active and influential part in decisions which affect their lives. This means that people are not just listened to, but also heard; and that their voices shape outcomes.
Researchers, community members, activists and citizens all can use PMs. Because respect for local knowledge and experience is paramount, the result is interventions that reflect local realities, often leading to better supported and longer lasting social change.

Here is a list of some interesting types of participatory methods:

Liberating Structures. These could be thought of as simple yet powerful techniques that make groups work better together. They boost teamwork and trust, and they're super easy to learn. Plus, they make everyone in the group feel like they're really part of the action. These structures are like a breath of fresh air, shaking up the old ways of doing things that felt too controlling.

Getting Everyone Involved. Here you can find Participedia - A global network and crowdsourcing platform for researchers, educators, practitioners, policymakers, activists, and anyone interested in public participation and democratic innovations - a collection of more formalised Participatory Methodologies – it's like a big bag of tricks that helps everyone join in and have their say. Whether it's games, discussions, citizens' assemblies, or brainstorming sessions, these methods make sure everyone's voice is heard.

Sparking New Ideas. These techniques are like secret tools that startups and innovative groups use. But guess what? You can totally use them too to get your group excited and working together on awesome ideas. It's like adding a touch of innovation magic to your teamwork.

Each participatory methodology is like a unique instrument in a band – they work best when played together. The diversity of methods means you can choose the ones that resonate with you, your strengths, and your goals. Whether you're a natural leader, a creative thinker, or a problem-solver, there's a method that fits your style.

Embrace these methodologies, experiment with them, and find the ones that resonate with your unique strengths and interests. Remember, you're not just a participant; you're a player in the game of change, and these methods are your toolkit for making a lasting impact. So go ahead – pick your method, rally your passion, and get ready to play your part in shaping a brighter future!

2.6

Youth Power in Action: Unleashing Participation with Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps

There are two amazing European programs, Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps, that are all about empowering you to make a difference, learn, and grow.

Erasmus+ Youth: Adventures in Learning and Connecting

Think of it as a giant playground for learning and adventure. It's like a platform that offers you the chance to explore new cultures, make friends from different corners of Europe, and develop skills that'll come in handy for life. Whether it's youth exchanges, training courses, or volunteering projects, Erasmus+ Youth is all about broadening your horizons, boosting your confidence, and turning you into a true global citizen.

Imagine being part of a youth exchange where you're not just learning about a new culture – you're living it, exchanging ideas with peers from other countries, and working together on projects that tackle real issues. But there's more! Erasmus+ Youth also presents the Youth Participation Activities project. This is where you take the lead in designing and implementing projects that focus on youth engagement, creating spaces for dialogue, and making a positive impact on your community.

European Solidarity Corps: Making a Difference, Together

ESC is like a hub of opportunities for you to roll up your sleeves and get involved in projects that matter. From supporting local communities to contributing to environmental initiatives, ESC gives you a chance to be part of something bigger than yourself.

Imagine spending a few months volunteering in a rural village, helping locals with important projects. Or picture yourself working with an organization that fights for equality and social justice. The European Solidarity Corps is your ticket to being a force for good, making lasting connections, and leaving a positive mark on the world. And guess what? Inside this program, there's something called Local Solidarity Projects. These are projects initiated by young individuals like you, designed to address local challenges, support vulnerable groups, and create positive change right in your own backyard.

Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps are more than just programs; they're your platforms for action and growth. They're designed to empower you with skills, experiences, and connections that can transform your journey.

Youth participation isn't just a catchphrase here – it's the driving force behind these programs. Erasmus+ Youth and ESC believe in your potential to change lives, build bridges, and create a more inclusive and united Europe. They're here to show that you're not just the leaders of tomorrow; you're the leaders of today.

2.7
Participation: The Evolution of Democracy in the European Union

In the dynamic landscape of Europe, where the energy of young people drives change, specific policies and strategies have emerged to champion youth participation. Let's take a deeper dive into the transformative impact of the European Youth Goals, the European Youth Strategy, and the innovative Youth Participation Strategy developed by Salto.

Throughout its journey, the European Union has witnessed the dynamic evolution of participation, transforming from a mere collaboration of states to a vibrant tapestry of engaged citizens. The roots of participation can be traced back to the post-World War II era when the European Coal and Steel Community laid the groundwork for cooperation among nations. However, it wasn't until the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 that the term "European citizenship" was officially introduced, granting citizens the right to vote and stand in municipal and European Parliament elections in their host countries. This monumental step marked the Union's commitment to strengthening the democratic fabric by directly involving its citizens.

Over the years, the EU has embraced mechanisms to amplify participation further. The establishment of the European Citizens' Initiative in 2012 empowered citizens to propose legislative changes, bridging the gap between grassroots ideas and policy formulation. Moreover, the biennial European Youth Event provided a platform for young individuals to voice their aspirations and engage with policymakers. These developments represent a profound shift from a traditional intergovernmental approach to a more inclusive and participatory form of governance. Today, participation is not just a privilege; it's a right that galvanizes citizens to actively shape the Union's present and future. As the EU continues to weave participation into its democratic tapestry, it ensures that the voices of its citizens are not only heard but play a pivotal role in defining the course of Europe.

And the last experiment has proved a very promising concept for participation:

We are talking about the Conference on the Future of Europe, a grand stage where European citizens joined hands to shape the continent's destiny. Picture this: people from all walks of life, coming together to brainstorm, discuss, and dream up a better Europe. It's like a brainstorming session on steroids, with the goal of making the European Union even more awesome.

Now, let's be real – every big idea has its hiccups. One challenge of the Conference on the Future of Europe is turning those big dreams into real action. You see, gathering ideas and visions is just the start; the real magic happens when those ideas hit the ground as actual policies and changes. It's like going from scribbles on a napkin to a masterpiece on a canvas – it's quite the journey.

Imagine a group chat with thousands of people from different countries and backgrounds – that's what the conference can feel like. And that's where another challenge comes in: finding common ground. Everyone's got their own thoughts and opinions, which is awesome, but blending all those voices into something that everyone can agree on isn't exactly a walk in the park. Sometimes, this balancing act between diverse views can slow things down or lead to watered-down ideas.

Lastly, making sure everyone gets a seat at the table can be a puzzle too. The conference aims to be inclusive, but it can be tough to ensure that all voices – especially those less heard – get a fair chance to speak up. Think of it like organizing a huge party where everyone's invited – you've got to make sure everyone feels comfortable joining in.

The Conference on the Future of Europe has been a fantastic journey into the realm of possibilities. It's like a giant canvas where ideas are splashed and visions are shared. But, as with any masterpiece, it needs careful strokes to turn imagination into reality.

It is a start... but we need more. And the European Parliament is pushing for it.

In several resolutions, Parliament has stressed the importance of strengthening citizens' participatory mechanisms. Most recently, in 2021, Parliament supported regular participatory processes where citizens could influence annual political and legislative priorities, developing specific proposals and discussing institutional matters. According to Parliament, these should be inclusive, open, deliberate, transnational, transparent, non-partisan, accountable, effective, visible and engaging.

Participation mechanisms could include a wide range of tools that are complementary, such as citizens' assemblies, citizens' initiatives, public consultations and citizens' dialogues. Parliament stressed the need 'to facilitate public participation in wider political debates and equip citizens with the opportunity to influence political outcomes', and that this bottom-up approach should complement representative democracy. Parliament also considered that citizen engagement should be structured so as to respond to citizens' expectations.

On the specific point of involving young citizens, the Joint Declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe recognised the contribution of 'young Europeans playing a central role in shaping the future of the European project'. It also called for specific events to be dedicated to young people, to ensure the Conference had a long-lasting impact. In its 2020 resolution, Parliament proposed the creation of two youth 'agoras' (forums), to be specifically dedicated to young people, because they represent the future of Europe. This proposal was ultimately not retained. However, Parliament's focus on young Europeans did serve to make their involvement in the Conference a reality, since one-third of the citizens' panels' members are young people aged between 16 and 25. In 2021, Parliament once again stressed the importance of young people's active participation in shaping the future of the European project.

EXTRA
Citizens' Assembly: How to Organise One

A Citizens' Assembly is a representative group of citizens who are selected at random from the population to learn about, deliberate upon, and make recommendations in relation to a particular issue or set of issues. They are becoming more and more popular, as citizens' Assemblies have the potential to signal real public opinion on policy issues. The Irish Citizens' Assembly's ruling on the 8th Amendment to the Constitution (decriminalization of abortion) was thought to be overly-liberal, but was confirmed when the public voted in favour during the referendum. Because the Assembly accurately captured public opinion almost a year before the issue went to popular vote, the method is a valuable way for politicians to gauge public opinion and to proper action before a decision is made. One of the most interesting successes of the Conference on the Future of Europe was in fact related to the participation of a variegate group of citizens in these assemblies.

Here is a small breakdown that could help you to organise one:

A. Preparing for Assembly:

Define the Issue: Identify the specific topic or issue the citizens' assembly will address. It should be a relevant and complex matter that requires public input for decision-making.

Set Objectives and Scope: Clearly outline the goals and expected outcomes of the assembly. Define the boundaries of discussion and decision-making to provide participants with a clear focus.

Determine Assembly Size and Composition: Decide on the number of participants and ensure a diverse representation of the population. This diversity should reflect various demographics, ensuring an inclusive and well-rounded discussion.

B. Selecting Participants:

Random Sampling Process: Use a random sampling method to select participants from the broader population. This helps prevent bias and ensures a representative cross-section of society.

Ensuring Diversity and Representative*ness*: Pay attention to demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and geographic location to ensure that the assembly reflects the diversity of the population.

C. Facilitating Deliberation:

Education and Information: Provide participants with balanced and accurate information on the issue at hand. This might include expert presentations, materials, and resources that cover different perspectives.

Structured Deliberation Process: Design a structured process that allows participants to engage in informed discussions. This may involve small group discussions, plenary sessions, and open dialogues.

Facilitator Role: Trained facilitators guide the deliberation process, ensuring that discussions remain respectful, productive, and focused on the issue at hand.

D. Formulating Recommendations:

Small Group Discussions: Break participants into smaller groups to facilitate more in-depth conversations and idea-sharing.

Synthesizing Key Points: Collect and synthesize the main ideas, concerns, and suggestions generated during the small group discussions.

Drafting Recommendations: Use the synthesized input to draft clear and actionable recommendations that address the issue comprehensively.

E. Presenting Recommendations:

Public Presentation: Provide participants with an opportunity to present their recommendations to the public, decision-makers, and stakeholders.

Q&A and Feedback: Allow for questions, feedback, and clarifications from the public and decision-makers to ensure that the recommendations are well-understood and supported.

F. Follow-Up and Implementation:

Government Response: Government officials and decision-makers should respond to the recommendations, outlining how they intend to address them.
Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms to monitor the implementation of recommendations and evaluate their impact over time.

Ensuring Accountability: Hold decision-makers accountable for following through on the recommendations and report back to the citizens' assembly and the public on progress.

3.

Non-formal and informal education

3.1
# Main differences between Formal, Non-formal and Informal Learning, and their definitions

Between Formal, Informal and Non-formal Learning there are some differences. First of all, traditionally, the distinction takes into account three main characteristics: "whether the learning involves objectives, whether it is intentional and whether it leads to a qualification" (Werquin 2008, 143). For example, learning in a formal setting assumes objectives and intentionality, while informal learning does not.

Defining the different kinds of learning

The first kind of learning we define is informal learning. Informal learning takes place in everyday life during normal activities: in the family, at work, with peers and during our free time. It is based on individuals, who are the key actors of this kind of education. There is no certification whatsoever and it does not lead to a qualification. It has no structure nor any regulation, it is not intentional and is unpredictable. It can often be characterized as learning by doing. In the youth sector, informal learning has an important role for example in peer group discussions, in voluntary activities and in a variety of other situations.

The second one, formal learning takes place in institutions such as school, university and learning centers. The key actors are teachers and students, who actively take part in the learning process. At the end of the course of studies a certain kind of qualification is given to the participants. Therefore, this kind of learning is intentional and structured.

And the last kind is non-formal learning. Non-formal learning takes place in centers and during education trainings and cultural exchanges. The key actors are the trainers/leaders and participants, who get to be in a constant exchange of skills and knowledge. A certification is not guaranteed, and is based on a program which has been structured and organized by the trainers with feedback from participants.
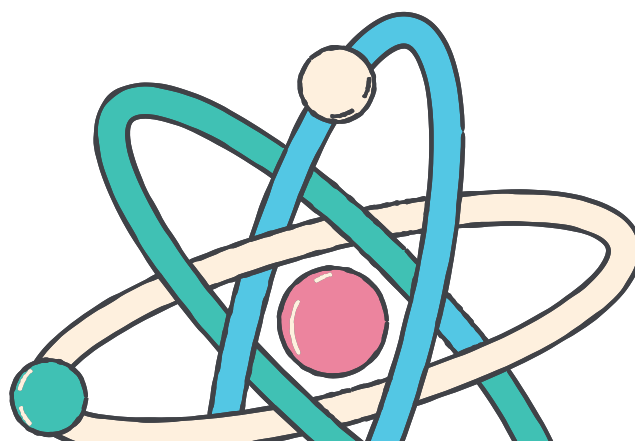
3.2
Diving deeper in Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning (NFL from now on) can take place across a much broader range of contexts than formal learning, while having results worthy of assessment and validation. Therefore, the objectives of NFL can vary a lot, "unlike in formal learning where learning objectives are spelled out and where the process to reach these objectives is formalized" (ibid, 144).

There are two main characteristics of NFL to keep in mind: the participative and learner-centered approach; and the fact that it is oriented to improving personal skills - in particular those of young people.

The participative and learner-centered approach

NFL refers to learning which takes place through learning activities and with some form of learning support. It is carried out by learners themselves on a voluntary basis and is therefore closely linked to young people's needs, aspirations and interests. NFL is embedded in planned activities not always explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contain an important learning element.

NFL is intentional from the learner's point of view, and its strength resides in the fact that the "learner" is in the center of the teaching process. It is not compulsory, which means that the individual wants to learn or is drawn towards learning by another type of motivation, in which he/she is continuously stimulated. The approach is personalized, focused on clear needs. It is flexible, but follows certain learning objectives. This motivates and at the same time empowers the learner.

Having flexible and varied themes, NFL suggests to its participants diverse and attractive activities, according to their interests, particular skills and aspirations. In this way, it contributes to enlarging and enriching the general culture of those involved, facilitating intercultural learning, tolerance, supporting disadvantaged categories and offering the possibility of discovering and exploiting diverse capacities and talents.

Therefore, experiential learning is a key element, since the participants are involved directly and actively, and the competencies they already have represent an important ingredient with the help of which they can learn from each other, peer to peer.

Oriented to improving personal skills

The focus of NFL is on improving the competencies level and especially on personal development, acquiring life skills and becoming an active citizen. In addition to that, it leads to the development of a new set of competencies that can be easily transferred to the labor market.

NFL enables young people to acquire essential competencies that contribute to their personal and socio-educational development and foster their active participation in society, thereby - amongst others - improving their employment prospects. Such learning experiences have also a strong potential to improve the attainment in formal education and training as well as to address young NEETs (i.e. young people not in employment, education or training) or young people with fewer opportunities and combat social exclusion.

NFL is presented as a way of improving the efficiency of the labor market through increasing the mobility of workers; the visibility of skills, knowledge and competences; the opportunities for immigrants etc." (Werquin 2008, 143). It may also provide more flexible ways of certification for adult learners who have a poor record of formal education and have problems re-entering the education system or finding better employment.

Other than young people, NFL addresses people of all ages. According to different national contexts, it can cover educational programmes meant at adult literacy, basic education for those who dropped out of school, improving life skills, improving performances at work, as well as general culture.

3.3
Assessment and certificates: the 8 key competences and the Youthpass tool

Behind NFL, lifelong learning stands as rationale, and steps have been taken to offer tools to give it some recognition. In 2006, for example, the Council of the European Union adopted a Resolution on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field, which led, among others, to the implementation of Youthpass.

In 2009, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) published the "European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning", aiming to "support this process by identifying the main challenges facing policy-makers and practitioners and - to a certain degree - pointing to possible ways to respond".

Other EU initiatives such as the European reference framework for key competences (2006) and the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2008) have integrated the issue of NFL recognition and linked it to the broader aims of lifelong learning and the knowledge society.

Quality indicators of validation practices

The validation of learning outcomes means there is a confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard.

There are 8 key competencies which make it possible to validate the learning outcomes:

1. Reliability: The validation process must lead to trusted results. If the settings for learning and validation vary greatly, then the process of validation must allow for these differences; should the process be repeated then the outcome must be the same.

2. Validity: The evidence documented for an individual must be directly related to the standards being used for validation. The evidence must not be allowed to shift the understanding of the standards.

3. Safety, security and confidentiality: Initial and continuing engagement with the validation process from identification through to certification must not be compromised by the lack of trust and consequential deterioration in motivation to proceed.

4. Standards/referential: These are the basis of measuring learning outcomes; they must exist in a clear and unambiguous form that has the confidence of the key stakeholders. The standards are also an 'organizer' for the documentation phase. Without standards the validation process cannot pass the identification of the learning stage.

5. Sustainability: Validation processes can be resources intensive, especially for individuals who present themselves for validation. Trust in validation also depends on the time the process has been operating and the way it is known and understood in communities. Thus sustainability is a key consideration.

6. Visibility/transparency: The way the assessment and validation process operates must generate trust for the judgements to have meaning. Transparency and visibility of the validation is one of the fundamental features supporting trust. The transparency of using established standards is particularly important.

7. Fitness for purpose: There are many methods for judging the level and sufficiency of evidence of learning. Not only should any chosen method be suited to the form of the learning but methods in combination should create a sensitive and trustworthy toolbox of methods of assessing learning.

8. Cost-efficiency: It is generally the case that validation processes for non-formal and informal learning do not have the benefit of large scale application (large cohorts of learning being assessed in similar ways). Therefore economies of scale are limited and costs need to be measured in relation to the expected returns to the stakeholders concerned.

The Youthpass

Youthpass is a European recognition instrument for identifying and documenting learning outcomes that are acquired in projects supported by the EU youth programmes, under the Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps programmes. As a tool, a process and a strategy, it fosters recognition and validation of learning in youth work.

Youthpass helps to document and recognise learning outcomes from youth work and solidarity activities. It documents the development of competences, as well as to confirm participation and describe the respective project. An essential part of the initiative is attention to the planning of the learning process and reflection upon the participants' personal learning outcomes.

The main ideas behind Youthpass are: to enhance reflection on learning and competence development in youth work; receive greater recognition of youth work throughout Europe; support the employability of young people and youth workers; and promote active participation of young people. Therefore, the Youthpass tool aims at fostering the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning in the European youth field.

3.4
Examples of methods in non-formal learning

NFL may take different shapes and forms, but its activities are always based on: active participation and self-reflection, that is deciding on what and how learners are going to learn about and taking full part in the activity; interactive inputs: in other words, activities become a product of the facilitator and participants together, contributing to it with their experiences and knowledge; experiential nature, for example using exercises such as simulations and role-plays; and cooperation, or working and discussing together with respect.

NFL methodologies are varied, participatory and learner-centered, including a mix of individual and group learning and encourage people to learn from each other. The result is a form of education in active citizenship, as it implies the development of a strong sense of sharing of responsibilities and results among participants.

Another fundamental aspect of NFL is the intercultural dimension. By taking part in the activities, participants become more aware about the added value that diversity can bring about at all levels of society. Diversity and tolerance are emphasized as fundamental values of social life, and the entire approach is based on the fact that direct experience is more important than theory. Therefore, when people participating in a training process are directly involved through direct experience, it becomes much easier for them to understand the situations and topics addressed.

NFL methods

In NFL strict boundaries are few, and almost any activity can be used for learning purposes and can be suggested: laboratories, seminars, roleplays or simulations, roundtables, creation of posters, outdoor activities, or video showings. Methods might also be a mixture of different solutions, combined to create a new method. However, a sort of map can be traced to divide methods and activities in categories.

1. Facilitator-centered: the decisions of all methods and activity development are taken by facilitators with little or no feedback from the group;

2. Participant-centered: on the contrary, the decisions on how to carry out activities and on the methods to implement, as well as the responsibility for the outcome of the sessions fall to the participating group.

Clearly, these categories represent extreme approaches,useful to make examples, but most of the time activities contain elements of both categories. Some of the most commonly used methods can be described as follows.

Simulations

Simulations are replicas of real-life situations in which participants take a specific role and engage in a specific situation for a certain period of time. Different scenarios can be simulated: a government meeting, a protest or manifestation, an entrepreneurial initiative, an event, eccetera.

Through the engagement in concrete situations represented in a protected context, participants may acquire a better understanding of theoretical concepts, of different points of view and different reactions. The learning benefits of using simulations refer to the acquisition of professional skills such as: strategies and decision making skills, dialogue and communication skills, public speaking skills.

Furthermore, simulations may help participants in gaining deeper understanding, respect and appreciation for a certain cause and increasing their trust and motivation to take action in real life as well.

Case studies

Case studies are a method based on group or individual thinking about specific situations. They generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context, and reflecting on real-life situations itself may be helpful to generate hypotheses and identify possible solutions.

Depending on the goal they are meant to fulfill, case studies can be fact-driven and deductive where there is a correct answer, or they can be context driven where multiple solutions are possible.

Problem solving

Problem solving is the process of defining a problem, identifying its root cause, prioritizing and selecting potential solutions, and implementing the chosen solution. Through the identification and the definition of a specific problem, learners are stimulated to analyze and elaborate the received information and to identify possible solutions, at the same time while monitoring results.

There's no one-size-fits-all problem-solving process, and it's a unique methodology that aligns short- and long-term objectives with the resources at one's disposal. Many paradigms center problem solving as a pathway for achieving one's goals faster and smarter.

Role playing

Role play exercises give learners the opportunity to assume specific roles or act out a given situation. These roles can be performed by individual learners, in pairs, or in groups which can play out a more complex scenario. Other learners or trainers are "observers" of the participants' behavior.

Role plays engage learners in real-life situations or scenarios that can be "stressful, unfamiliar, complex, or controversial" which require them to examine personal feelings toward others and their circumstances. Unlike simulations and games which often are planned, structured activities and can last over a long period of time, role play exercises "are usually short, spontaneous presentations", or they can be prearranged research assignments.

Role playing may contribute to foster learners' motivation and engagement. Furthermore, the interpretation of the different roles and the restitution of the observations might help interiorize specific contents, especially relational-type ones.

4.

Engage & Report methodologies

ENGAGE
Tools from Alzira

The methodology/**approach** Alzira brings forward covers three main aspects based on past experience in terms of engaging local young people:

1. **Liaising with local authorities** and engaging them with young people
2. **Learning by doing & Peer Learning.** Young people learn about the European Union and the participants take part in a learning path by developing their abilities and learning new skills, especially that of empathy, as that person has to walk in the shoes of a politican or media reporter (particularly during activity 2). They learn from local authorities + among themselves.
3. **Event organisation & Communication skills**. The activities provide them with new abilities in terms of delivering presentations, delivering speeches before audiences, etc., handing out surveys, etc.

To put in place all this abilities and aspects, a series of activities have been designed.

The three main pillars

LIASING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES	LEARNING BY DOING AND PEER LEARNING	EVENT ORGANISATION & COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Local govt officials will be contacted in all activities

Participants will be given material and guidelines on how to talk in front of audiences

Learning with active participation

1. School Ambassadors

Become a school ambassador by delivering short presentations about the EU and the EU Parliament elections and composition, and why it is important to vote.
This will serve as a preamble of the subsequent activities.

2. Oxford-style debate about the European Parliament and the successes and failures of the EU

An Oxford-style debate in which 4 of the 5 participants represent the for and against positions about the European Parliament and the successes and failures of the EU. The remaining participant acts as a moderator and gives a bit of context before the debate.

Up to 1 minute each intervention.

Before the debate, participants will be given a few guidelines on how to deliver speeches and communicate before audiences.

- **Participant 1** & **2. Government.**
- **Participant 3** & **4. Opposition**

Then the **population** (audience) - students - choose the stance they agree with.

- Estimated duration of activity: 1 hour.

This approach builds on a previous experience IDEA worked on: YOUth for EU. Within this **CERV project**, there were a series of meetings where one activity was that of an Oxford-style debate.

3. A Coffee with the Mayor - Podcast

After the debate, a session is held with the mayor and a few political actors together with the 5 participating youth.

During this 30min session, the youth will talk and dialogue with the mayor and other members of the local govt. about the upcoming elections to the European Parliament. Not only that, but they will also have the chance to ask more personal questions such as how the politicians got involved in politics, what's their stance towards the EU, etc.

The overarching topic will be to foster participation by youth in the EU elections and not voting to a particular party.

It will be then produced reels and short videos to be posted on the accounts. Can be subtitled.

4. Training + Contest

A few weeks before the elections, the 5 participating youth in the Bologna training will deliver themselves a 1 hour online training for people aged 18 to 30 where they'll explain what they have learnt and some important things about the EU. After that, they will use the Factile learning platform to perform a c
ontest and the members of the winner team will be awarded with some gifts.

A total of € 1,000 to spend.

So, to sum up...

The approach incorporates three main pillars:
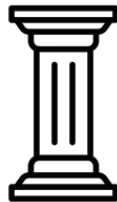
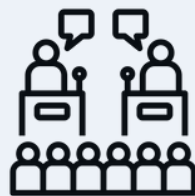| LIASING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES | LEARNING BY DOING AND PEER LEARNING | EVENT ORGANISATION & COMMUNICATION SKILLS |

These three pillars are covered by three different activites over a span of 6 months

SCHOOL AMBASSADORS

OXFORD STYLE DEBATE

A COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR

TRAINING AND CONTEST

REPORT
Tools from EYP: Busting Election Myths in the EU 2024 Elections

Introduction

Welcome to the Engage and Report participatory tool curated by the European Youth Press. Our mission is to engage and empower young individuals to become effective reporters on the EU 2024 elections, even if they aren't professional journalists. This tool combines technology, creativity, and a commitment to accuracy that will serve to increase youth participation and engagement.

The journey of a Youth Reporter

Becoming a youth reporter isn't just about writing news; it's about finding your voice and making a difference. Our journey follows five key stages.

1. Choosing your reporting stream

After completing our training in Bologna, you'll embark on your reporting journey by choosing your preferred reporting stream: video, audio, or text.
This choice is your opportunity to express yourself creatively and effectively.

- Video Reporting: If you opt for video reporting, you'll have access to workshops on using Descript, a versatile multimedia editing tool. This tool will empower you to create visually engaging videos that captivate your audience.
- Audio Reporting: Those who choose audio reporting will have the opportunity to master Descript for audio production. You'll produce captivating audio content that resonates with your listeners.
- Text Reporting: For text reporting enthusiasts, Medium provides a platform to reach a broad online audience. This platform will enable you to craft compelling articles that convey your message effectively.

Stage 2: Unveiling Election Myths Among Youth

Your mission begins with myth-busting research among your peers. Engage with other young people to uncover the common misconceptions and myths surrounding the EU 2024 elections. This involves:

Hosting informal discussions and surveys among your peers to understand their perspectives and misconceptions.

Actively participating in online forums and social media platforms where election-related discussions occur.

Proactively reaching out to experts, politicians, and organizations to gather information and validate or debunk myths.

Collaborating with local schools and youth organizations to conduct interviews and gather insights from a diverse range of young voters.

3. In-Depth Exploration

Armed with insights from your peers, delve deeper into the election myths you've identified. Engage in extensive research, consult credible sources, and fact-check rigorously. This step ensures that your reporting is not only informative but also accurate. We encourage you to proactively seek resources and guidance to navigate this process effectively.

4. Creating Impactful Content

Now comes the creative part: content creation. Once you've collected the myths, it's time to create content that busts these myths. Utilize the skills acquired during our training in Bologna to craft compelling content:

Podcasts: Record and share engaging podcast episodes where you discuss and debunk election myths.

Social Media Videos: Produce short and shareable videos for social media platforms to reach a wider audience.

Medium Medium Blogs: Write insightful articles on Medium that provide evidence-based information and counter the myths.

5. Engaging Your Peers

Your reporting journey culminates in engagement.

Actively connect with your target audience, foster discussions on social media, and encourage meaningful debates via:

- Myth-Busting Polls: Create engaging myth-busting polls on platforms like Instagram or Twitter. Craft simple questions related to common election myths and invite your peers to vote. Alongside each poll option, provide a brief explanation to educate participants. Share the poll results and insights afterward, sparking curiosity and encouraging discussion.
- Myth Debunking Challenges: Launch a "Myth Debunking Challenge" on social media. Encourage your peers to pick a common election myth, research it, and create short videos or posts debunking the myth in a fun and creative way. Share these challenge entries and reward the most informative and creative contributions.

These creative and straightforward activities will not only engage your peers effectively but also make myth-busting a fun and interactive experience for everyone involved.

Conclusion

To sum up, the "Engage and Report" participatory tool by the European Youth Press empowers young individuals to become effective reporters on the EU 2024 elections, regardless of their professional journalism background. This journey includes choosing a reporting stream, unveiling election myths among youth, conducting in-depth research, creating impactful content, and engaging peers through creative activities. It's about finding your voice and expressing your views confidently. By participating in the Engage and Report Youth Reporter stream program, you are not just reporting; you are making a positive impact on your generation's understanding of the EU 2024 elections. Let's bust those myths and empower informed voting decisions.

making a positive impact

expressing your views confidently

finding your voice

engaging peers through creative activities

Busting Election Myths

1 — choosing a reporting stream

2 — unveiling election myths

3 — conducting in-depth research

4 — creating impactful content

5

6

7

8
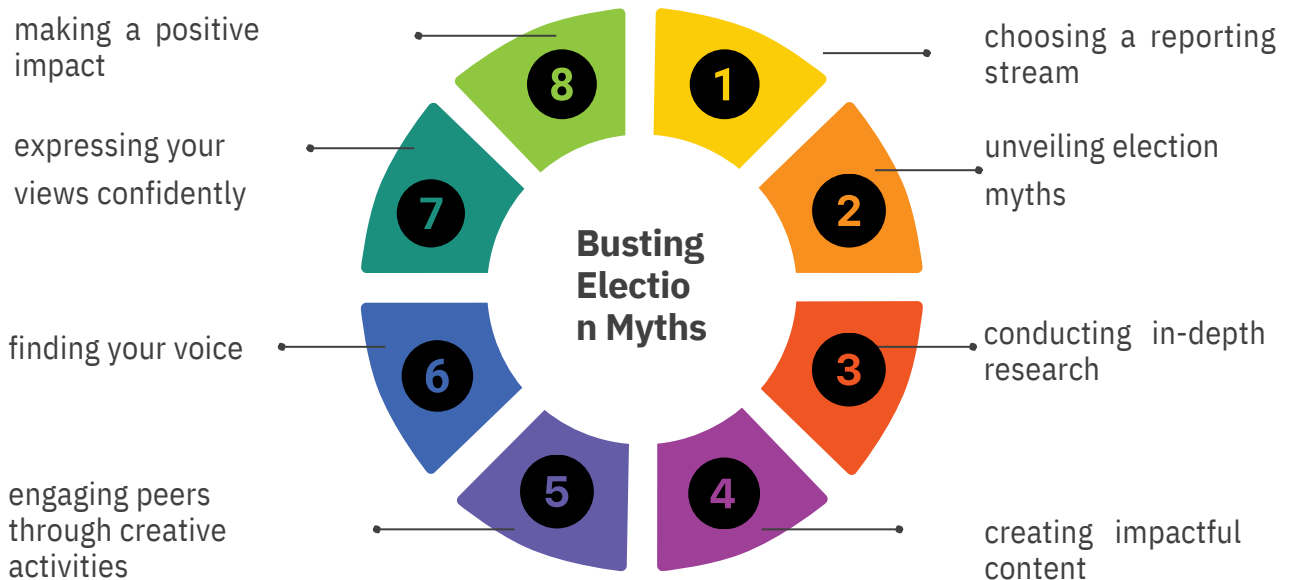
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ENGAGE AND
REPORT

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Ajuntament d'Alzira

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