

PROMOTING THE DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES





Project Number: 101089825





Project Partners



Fundación Manos Tendidas (FMT), Spain



Aproximar, Cooperativa de Solidariedade Social CRL (APX), Portugal



Kūrybinės Ateities Idėjos (KAI), Lithuania



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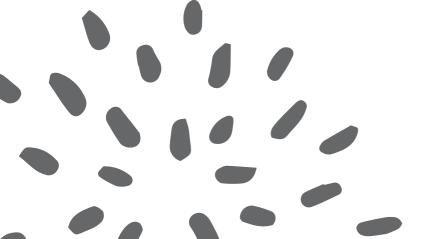
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Project Summary

The European Project <u>Extraordinary Citizens</u> (Project number: 101089825) intends to raise awareness and improve inclusive democratic participation of young people with intellectual and physical disabilities. This is because, young people with disabilities - intellectual or physical - are often excluded from important political, economic, cultural and social processes. In order to tackle this issue, the Project will promote the active role of young disabled people at different levels: local, national, and international. The partnership includes organisations from Spain, Portugal, Lithuania, Greece and France. All the participating organisations have expertise in youth, research, training and active civic participation.

In order to achieve the Project's mission, the consortium will go through a set of activities that aim to empower these young people and the organisations that work with them. During the development and implementation of the Project, we intend to achieve the following main results:

- Conduct a study on democratic participation and rights for young people with intellectual disabilities in our partner countries.
- Provide top-notch training on democratic participation so that young people with intellectual disabilities feel empowered to make a difference.
- Create a range of exciting opportunities for young people with intellectual disabilities. They'll be able to put their training into practice by engaging in dialogue with their peers, local/regional/national youth forums, and public representatives.





Training Programme

The Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities training program aims to provide individuals with disabilities with tools and knowledge to feel more confident in all democratic processes, thereby increasing their participation.

To achieve this, six training modules were developed:

- 1. Human and Civil Rights of People with Disabilities
- 2. Democracy and Democratic Participation of People with Disabilities
- 3. The Main European Democratic Values
- 4. A Voice in the Decision-Making Process
- 5. Relationships and Socio-emotional Learning
- 6. Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities

Module 1 is dedicated to fostering a comprehensive understanding of human and civil rights specifically tailored to individuals with disabilities. It delves into the complex matrix of international, European and national legal frameworks that exist to safeguard the rights of young people facing disabilities. Within this context, it is also committed to unearthing both the common challenges and good practices in guaranteeing the democratic rights of young people with disabilities.

This module aims to equip participants with the knowledge and insights needed to advocate for inclusivity and equal opportunities within society, and it is divided into three major chapters:

- 1. Introduction to Human and Civil Rights
- 2. International and National Legal Framework
- 3. Challenges and Good Practices

Module 2 reflects on democracy and emphasises the importance of participation in the political life, especially for those who have disabilities.

The module is divided into four main chapters:

- 1. Democracy
- 2. Democratic Participation in the Political Life
- 3. International Human Rights Standards on the Right to Vote
- 4. Obstacles to Disabled People Participating in Politics





Module 3 intends to explain and analyse the creation and development of the main European democratic values. This will be done by going through the main events and treaties that have characterised the development of the European Union as we know it today. After this, the module will expose all the values which have been created during the development of the EU and which serve as a foundation of the EU.

So, this module is divided into three main parts:

- 1. The Main European Democratic Treaties
- 2. The Main European Democratic Values
- 3. The European Priorities

Module 4 focuses on the importance of having your own voice, providing tools so that young people can work on making conscious and informed decisions. This capacity is fundamental for people with disabilities to be able to participate in democratic and social life autonomously, valuing their abilities, interests, and opinions, which contributes to their self-esteem and quality of life.

This module is divided into five major chapters, the last being more practical as a set of tools are made available that will allow young people to go through all phases of the decision-making process:

- 1. Types of Decisions and Phases of Decision-Making Process
- 2. Importance of Having a Voice and Making Your Own Choices
- 3. Personal Competences and Self-Determination
- 4. Strategies for Decision-Making
- 5. How to Make Good Decisions

The purpose of the **module 5** is to increase the social and emotional competences of young people with intellectual, psychosocial, and developmental disorders in communication.

This module focuses on the importance of emotional-social education, introduces management, communication styles, and different times of conflict and it is divided into three main sections:

- 1. Development of Social-Emotional Competencies
- 2. Communication Styles
- 3. Conflict Management





At the end of each of the five modules, is it possible to find a questionnaire to assess whether the competences have been effectively acquired, as well as two session plans (of an hour and a half each) so that professionals working with (and for) these young people can effectively implement the proposed content.

Module 6 differs from the previous ones in that it is more practical. It describes various activities related to the previous five chapters, the aim of which is to work collaboratively on the democratic participation of people with disabilities.

Each of the modules has two activities, some of which can be carried out in the classroom and others which require outings and visits abroad.

MODULE 1 HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES





Learning Objectives & Outcomes





OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- To provide an understanding of human rights and civil rights for people with disabilities.
- To explore the international, European, and national legal frameworks protecting the rights of young people with disabilities.
- To identify common challenges and good practices in guaranteeing the democratic rights of young people with disabilities.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand the significance of human rights and civil rights for people with disabilities.
- Be familiar with international and European regulations protecting the rights of young people with disabilities.
- Identify common trends and challenges in partner countries' legal frameworks.
- Recognise the importance of equal participation in the democratic process for young people with disabilities.

KEYWORDS

Human Rights, Civil Rights, Disabilities, International Regulations, European Regulations, National Legislation, Challenges, Good Practices



Introduction



In contemporary societies, the pursuit of justice, equality, and fundamental freedoms is integral to fostering inclusive communities. Within this broader framework, the focus on human and civil rights holds paramount significance, and it becomes even more crucial when considering the rights of individuals with disabilities. This module aims to unravel the layers of human and civil rights as they pertain to people with disabilities, delving into international, European, and national legal frameworks, challenges faced, and exemplary practices that pave the way for a more equitable society. In the landscape of democratic participation, it is imperative to ensure that every voice is not only acknowledged but actively included.

More specifically, for people with disabilities, this journey has been marked by a continual struggle to overcome barriers—physical, attitudinal, and systemic—that impede their full participation in society. The module includes a variety of international agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to illuminate the rights that form the bedrock of a just and inclusive society. Additionally, beyond the legal discourse, understanding the practical implications of these rights in various facets of life—education, employment, and political participation—is crucial. The multifaceted nature of disabilities requires a nuanced exploration, recognising the diverse challenges faced by individuals with physical, intellectual, or psychosocial disabilities. As we navigate through the content of this module, our focus remains on fostering an environment of respect, dignity, and inclusion, by analysing both good practices and social barriers. The relevance of this module is magnified by the need to equip young people with intellectual and physical disabilities with the tools to understand their rights.

By fostering an environment where these rights are understood, respected, and actively promoted, we contribute to the dismantling of barriers that hinder inclusivity. Such discussions not only empower individuals with disabilities to assert their rights but also challenge societal norms and structures that perpetuate discrimination.

Disclaimer:

This module contains content primarily sourced from the project Extraordinary Citizens, titled "Study Report on the Situation of Democratic Participation of Young People with Intellectual and Physical Disabilities". The information presented herein is based on the findings and analysis documented in the aforementioned report.







1. Introduction to Human and Civil Rights



The civil and human rights of individuals with disabilities, be they intellectual, psychosocial, or physical in nature, are fundamentally identical to those enjoyed by the broader population. Nevertheless, these rights are frequently impeded by a range of barriers, leading to difficulties in their full realisation. These obstacles encompass issues such as physical accessibility, discriminatory practices, inadequate provision of accommodations, and limited access to essential information.

Defining Human and Civil Rights

Human Rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that every individual is entitled to simply by being human. They include the right to life, liberty, equality, and dignity, and are enshrined in international agreements and national laws. These rights are universal, inalienable, and indivisible, meaning they apply to all people, cannot be taken away, and are interconnected (UDHR, n.d.).

- The "Right to life" signifies that no one, including the government, has the authority to attempt to terminate your existence. Additionally, it implies that the government has a responsibility to enact laws that ensure your safety and, in specific situations, to intervene in order to protect your life if it is in jeopardy.
- The "Right to freedom" ensures your entitlement to personal liberty. This implies that you should not be subjected to confinement or detention without valid justification.
- The "Right to equality and dignity" asserts that everyone is equal under the law and is entitled to impartial protection by the law, free from any form of discrimination (United Nations, n.d.).

Civil Rights are a subset of human rights that pertain to an individual's legal rights and privileges within a specific jurisdiction. Civil rights protect individuals from discrimination and encompass rights such as the right to vote, a fair trial, and freedom of expression. These rights are crucial for ensuring equal participation in society (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).





Understanding the Rights of People with Disabilities

Rights of People with Disabilities: People with disabilities, whether intellectual, psychosocial, or physical, have the same human rights as anyone else. However, due to various barriers, they often face challenges in fully exercising these rights. These challenges can include physical accessibility, discrimination, lack of accommodations, and limited access to information. Below there are specific examples from different European countries.

Disability Rights Framework: International and national laws recognise the unique needs and rights of people with disabilities. These laws aim to eliminate discrimination, promote inclusion, and ensure equal opportunities. Key legal frameworks include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and national disability rights legislation.

The Importance of Democratic Participation for People with Disabilities

Democratic Participation: Democratic participation refers to the active involvement of individuals in the decision-making processes of their country or community. It encompasses the right to vote, the right to express opinions, and the right to stand for public office. Active participation is essential for a functioning democracy.

Barriers to Participation: People with disabilities often encounter barriers that hinder their democratic participation. These barriers can be physical, such as inaccessible polling stations, or attitudinal, such as stigma and stereotypes. Overcoming these barriers is crucial to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have a voice in shaping their societies.

Inclusivity and Representation: Democratic participation by people with disabilities is not only a matter of rights but also a means to achieve better representation and policies that address their specific needs. Inclusive participation contributes to more diverse and equitable democracies (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).





This module sets the stage for understanding why the rights of people with disabilities are essential and how democratic participation plays a pivotal role in ensuring these rights are upheld. The subsequent sections will delve into the legal frameworks and practical tools that support and enhance these rights. In this section, we have introduced the fundamental concepts of human and civil rights, explained their significance in the context of people with disabilities, and emphasised the importance of democratic participation. Understanding these foundational principles is essential for trainers and young people with disabilities as they embark on the journey towards active citizenship and participation in democracy.





2. International and National Legal Frameworks



The protection of human rights, including those of people with disabilities, is a global endeavour. Various international treaties and conventions establish a framework for the recognition and safeguarding of these rights on a worldwide scale. These agreements are ratified by countries to demonstrate their commitment to upholding human rights.

Overview of International Treaties and Conventions

Key International Instruments:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, this foundational document outlines fundamental human rights principles, including equality, dignity, and non-discrimination.
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): Adopted in 2006, the CRPD is a landmark treaty that specifically addresses the rights of people with disabilities. It reaffirms that individuals with disabilities enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Other important international legislation:

- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
- The European Convention on Human Rights
- The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
- · The Political Rights of Persons with Disabilities: A Democratic Issue
- The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- White Paper on the Future of Europe
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane and/or Degrading Treatment/Punishment





Examination of National Legislations in Partner Countries

Each partner country within the EXTRA-C project (Greece, Lithuania, Spain, France, and Portugal) has its national legislation addressing the rights of people with disabilities. These laws are critical for translating international commitments into practical protections at the local level.

While international agreements provide a broad framework, national laws and regulations vary from country to country. This diversity reflects the unique societal and legal contexts in which these rights are embedded. Nevertheless, there are **common trends** that emerge in the national legal documents of the partner countries:

- In a general sense, all countries are committed to ensuring the realisation of the democratic rights of people with disabilities (guaranteed by laws, regulations, legal procedures, etc.).
- National legislation corresponds to international law (a coherent strategy for ensuring democratic rights is maintained, with national legal instruments in compliance with international directives).
- Emphasis is placed on the independence of persons with disabilities (independent participation in the political life of the country, independent voting, etc.).
- Discrimination on the grounds of disability is prohibited (no obstruction of participation in the country's political process, no restrictions or artificial hindrance in seeking information, free expression of ideas).
- Inclusion and participation in the political life of the country is encouraged.
- In guaranteeing the democratic rights of persons with disabilities, emphasis is placed on ensuring that the rights of other social groups are not infringed.
- Ensuring the principles of privacy and confidentiality.





Comparing International and National Regulations

Coherence with International Standards: One common trend among partner countries is their commitment to ensuring the democratic rights of people with disabilities. National legislation is designed to align with international directives, demonstrating a coherent strategy for safeguarding these rights.

Emphasis on Independence: Many national laws emphasise the importance of independence for individuals with disabilities. This includes independent participation in political life, voting without assistance, and the free expression of ideas. These provisions aim to reduce dependence on others and promote equal participation.

Anti-Discrimination Measures: Across partner countries, discrimination based on disability is explicitly prohibited. This includes ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not obstructed from participating in political processes and that they have access to information and support needed for full participation.

Inclusion and Participation: National legal frameworks also encourage the inclusion and active participation of people with disabilities in political life. This involves creating opportunities for them to engage in political discussions, contribute to policy debates, and hold public office.

Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality: Another common theme is the importance of respecting the privacy and confidentiality of individuals with disabilities while ensuring their democratic rights are upheld.

CRPD Articles: Within the CRPD, several articles directly pertain to the rights of people with disabilities in democratic processes. For example, Article 29 states that every state must ensure political rights to people with disabilities and the opportunity to exercise them on an equal basis with the rest of the citizens. It also obligates to safeguard the right and opportunity of disabled people to vote and to be elected. Furthermore, it states that voting procedures, facilities, and materials must be appropriate, accessible, and easy to understand and use. It emphasises the importance that disabled people must have the right to vote secretly in elections and public referendums without intimidation, as well as to stand for elections, to hold office and perform all public functions at all levels of government, and providing them with access to assistive and up-to-date technologies if necessary. As a consequence, the possibility of people with disabilities being considered voters to freely express their will must be ensured. For this purpose, if necessary and at their request, another person chosen by a disabled individual should be allowed to assist the disabled person during the voting process.





Additional National Provisions: In addition to aligning with international standards, partner countries may have unique provisions in their national laws that offer further protections or support for people with disabilities in democratic participation.

Understanding the international and national legal frameworks is crucial for trainers and young people with disabilities. It provides a basis for advocacy and ensures that participants are aware of their rights and the mechanisms in place to protect them.

In this section, we have explored the international and national legal frameworks that underpin the rights of people with disabilities. Recognising the alignment between international and national regulations is essential for trainers and participants to navigate the legal landscape and advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities in democratic processes.

In conclusion, there is a good understanding among governments and the public in the partner countries of the need to guarantee the democratic rights of persons with disabilities. However, the ongoing challenges and problems that still exist encourage a discussion on what more can be done to ensure that the theoretical guarantee of the democratic rights of persons with disabilities is fulfilled in practice without limitations and reservations.

Human rights are respected in the international context and in every democratic country. Legal documents indicate that a support system has been created and it must be followed to ensure the implementation of democratic rights of all persons, but disabled persons often become the epicenter of violations of these rights, and disability is the object of the causes of violations. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is currently the most important international legal instrument related to people with disabilities. Article 29 of the Convention states that countrys must ensure political rights for people with disabilities and the opportunity to exercise them on an equal basis with other persons and obligates them to ensure the right and opportunity of people with disabilities to vote and be elected, ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and could be easily understood and used.







3. Challenges and Good Practices



In this chapter, we delve into the multifaceted challenges encountered by individuals with disabilities in partner countries. Our exploration encompasses issues of discrimination and the impediments that hinder their full participation. Furthermore, we'll thoroughly analyse best practices and real-life case studies that exemplify ongoing endeavors to safeguard democratic rights and dismantle these barriers. Grasping the intricacies of these challenges and the corresponding solutions is of paramount importance for both trainers and participants, as it serves as a crucial foundation for advancing the cause of inclusive democratic participation.

Discrimination and Barriers

Physical Barriers: Physical accessibility remains a significant barrier for many people with disabilities. Inadequate infrastructure, such as inaccessible polling stations, can prevent them from participating in elections.

Attitudinal Barriers: Stigma, stereotypes, and societal attitudes can create attitudinal barriers that discourage people with disabilities from engaging in political processes or seeking public office.

Communication Barriers: Limited access to information in accessible formats and a lack of support for communication needs can hinder effective participation in political discussions.









Challenges Faced by People with Disabilities in Different Countries

Spain

<u>Abuse of Power:</u> People with disabilities in Spain face challenges related to the abuse of power by public authorities. This abuse can manifest as discrimination or neglect, hindering their ability to fully exercise their rights.

<u>Double Discrimination:</u> In some cases, individuals with disabilities experience double discrimination based on both their disability and gender, compounding the obstacles they face.

Portugal

<u>Discrimination:</u> Discrimination based on disability remains a challenge in Portugal. People with disabilities may encounter unequal treatment in various aspects of life, including education and employment.

<u>Lack of Data:</u> There is a lack of comprehensive data on the population with disabilities in Portugal, making it difficult to identify and address inequalities experienced by these individuals.

Lithuania

<u>Accessibility Issues:</u> Physical accessibility to voting places can be a significant challenge for people with physical disabilities in Lithuania. Inadequate infrastructure can limit their ability to exercise their right to vote.

<u>Inaccessible Information:</u> Information related to elections is often not adapted for persons with differing disabilities, creating barriers to accessing critical information.







<u>Limited Adaptation</u>: France faces challenges in adapting its processes to enable people with disabilities to participate independently in democratic processes. Accessibility remains a concern.

<u>Use of Sign Language</u>: While sign language is used as a tool, it is not always recognised as a first language, potentially limiting communication options for individuals with hearing impairments.

<u>Insufficient Government Actions</u>: Some government decisions may not go far enough in guaranteeing the democratic rights of persons with disabilities, leaving gaps in protection and support.



<u>Focus on Physical Disabilities:</u> Greek laws tend to focus more on persons with physical disabilities, potentially leaving out those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities.

<u>Quality of Education:</u> Education on democratic rights is not consistently of sufficient quality, comprehensive, or continuous. This can impact the ability of young people with disabilities to fully understand and exercise their rights.

<u>Discrimination:</u> Discrimination against people with disabilities, including restrictions on participation in democratic processes, remains a challenge in Greece.

Good Practices in Ensuring Democratic Rights

Across Spain, Portugal, Lithuania, France, and Greece, various organizations and entities are actively engaged in promoting the active citizenship and democratic rights of young people with intellectual and physical disabilities. These initiatives serve as inspiring examples of inclusion, empowerment, and advocacy for individuals with disabilities.





Spain

- CEDID Centro Español de Documentación e Investigación sobre Discapacidad
 (Spanish Center for Documentation and Research on Disability): Located in Madrid,
 CEDID is an advisory centre dedicated to advancing scientific knowledge on disability.
 It actively collects and shares relevant publications, legislative information, and event
 agendas, fostering awareness and understanding of disability-related issues.
- Acceso a la Justicia para Personas con Discapacidad Intelectual (Access to Justice for People with Intellectual Disabilities): This Madrid-based project, led by A LA PAR Foundation, offers essential support to individuals with intellectual disabilities who have experienced abuse or maltreatment. It provides assessment, psychotherapy, legal guidance, and shelter for victims, actively working towards justice and protection.
- Proyecto El Poder de las Personas (The Power of the People Project): Asociación
 Plena Inclusión in Madrid empowers individuals with disabilities to advocate for their
 rights. Through seminars, presentations, and political advocacy, the project
 encourages active participation and engagement in the democratic process.

Portugal

- *myPart*: Operating in Lisbon, the myPart project aims to enhance the citizenship competencies and political awareness of people with intellectual disabilities. It actively involves the target group in the development of educational materials and recommendations to promote inclusive civic participation.
- Inclusão ON (In.ON): Based in Braga, this project focuses on "Civic Participation and Democratic Living." It facilitates the participation of young people with and without disabilities in workshops that encourage inclusivity, solidarity, and a sense of belonging.
- Sim, Somos Capazes (Yes, We Are Capable): Located in Canelas Vila Nova de Gaia, this social innovation project empowers young individuals with special talents to pursue entrepreneurial, cultural, and leisure projects, allowing them to realize their aspirations.





France

- **Handi-Droits:** It is a website, which provides an opportunity to ask questions on issues related to access to rights, disability, or a caregiver's situation.
- Starting Block: Located in Pantin, Starting-Block is a youth association and resource
 centre that promotes civic engagement and awareness among young people. It also
 focuses on the voluntary commitment of people with disabilities and the adaptation
 of educational tools for accessibility.
- **Ecoutez-voir**: In Nantes, the Valentin Haüy Association's "Ecoutez-voir" initiative provides information and support to visually impaired individuals through audio content, helping them access knowledge and stay connected to the world.

Lithuania

- **Mes-NeKitokie** (We are not different): In Klaipeda, this youth talk show series addresses discrimination and promotes unity among various societal minorities. It provides a platform for representatives of different communities to share their experiences and discuss solutions.
- DIALOGAS (DIALOGUE): Apeiron Theater in Klaipeda engages in creative methods, including theatre, to address discrimination, civil and human rights, and the experiences of marginalized groups. It encourages young people to speak out and advocate for their rights.
- Convention On The Rights Of The Disabled: In Klaipeda, this initiative focuses on raising awareness and understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ensuring that information is accessible to people with disabilities.







- Hop-On Inclusion: In Greece, this initiative operates as a Disability Awareness Hub
 that promotes inclusion and offers online learning tools for disability awareness and
 behavioural change. It connects people and organizations to create a more inclusive
 society.
- K.E.A/A.M.E.A. Employability Support & Vocational Training Centre: Based in Athens, this centre provides a wide range of services to support the employability and professional development of people with disabilities. It focuses on skill-building, integration, and personal development.
- Creating employment opportunities for young people with disabilities: This initiative
 in Greece, supported by UNICEF Greece, Junior Achievement Greece & Junior
 Achievement Europe, and NN Group, aims to create job opportunities for young
 people with disabilities, emphasizing independence and professional growth. It
 supports projects like Synergy Snacks, empowering young individuals with disabilities
 to become active members of the workforce.

These good practices represent diverse initiatives and strategies from different countries, all working towards the common goal of promoting the active citizenship and democratic rights of young people with intellectual and physical disabilities. They serve as valuable examples of how various stakeholders can contribute to creating inclusive and empowering environments for individuals with disabilities.





Case Studies and Real-Life Examples

Spain: A case study from Spain can illustrate the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, including instances of abuse of power and double discrimination. It can also showcase advocacy efforts and initiatives aimed at addressing these issues.

Portugal: Real-life examples from Portugal can highlight instances of discrimination based on disability and efforts to combat it, as well as initiatives to gather more comprehensive data on the disabled population.

Lithuania: Case studies from Lithuania can provide insights into accessibility issues and practical solutions, including efforts to make voting places more accessible and provide information in accessible formats.

France: Examples from France can shed light on the struggles of individuals with disabilities in participating independently in democratic processes and initiatives to improve accessibility and support.

Greece: Real-life experiences from Greece can illustrate the impact of limited education on democratic rights and highlight efforts to enhance education quality and inclusion.

In this section, we have explored the challenges faced by people with disabilities in partner countries, including discrimination and barriers to participation. We've also examined good practices and case studies that showcase efforts to ensure democratic rights are upheld and barriers are overcome. Understanding these challenges and solutions is essential for trainers and participants in promoting inclusive democratic participation.





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Quiz



Read the following questions and select the correct answer.

- 1. Human rights are universal, inalienable, and indivisible, and they apply to all individuals regardless of their background.
- a) True
- b) False
- 2. Which international treaty specifically addresses the rights of people with disabilities?
- a) Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- b) European Convention on Human Rights
- c) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- d) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- 3. Discrimination based on disability is prohibited in all partner countries, ensuring that people with disabilities have equal access to political participation.
- a) True
- b) False
- 4. What is one common challenge faced by people with disabilities in Lithuania, as mentioned in the report?
- a) Lack of interest in politics
- b) Limited access to healthcare
- c) Inaccessible voting places for people with physical disabilities
- d) Low voter turnout among young people with disabilities
- 5. Simplified language, visual aids, and storytelling are effective strategies for promoting critical thinking and understanding among young people with intellectual disabilities.
- a) True
- b) False





Quiz Solutions

- 1. a) True
- 2. c) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- 3. a) True
- 4. c) Inaccessible voting places for people with physical disabilities
- 5. a) True



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Session Plans



Training designation: Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities

Module: Human Rights & Civil Rights of People with Disabilities

Trainer:

Session n.: 1

Duration: 1h45m

Date:

Main objectives:

- To provide an understanding of human rights and civil rights for people with disabilities.
- To explore the international, European, and national legal frameworks protecting the rights of young people with disabilities.

Learning outcomes:

- Understand the significance of human rights and civil rights for people with disabilities.
- Be familiar with international and European regulations protecting the rights of young people with disabilities.
- Identify common trends and challenges in partner countries' legal frameworks.
- Recognise the importance of equal participation in the democratic process for young people with disabilities.

Methods: Active Participation

Contents: Human Rights, Civil Rights, National and International Regulations, Challenges and Good practices







Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials
10 min.	Introduction: Welcome participants and introduce the session's objectives. You can use an ice-breaking activity. Explain the importance of understanding human and civil rights for people with disabilities.	• PPT
	Theoretical Part: Review the theoretical part of the module related to human and civil rights for people with disabilities	• PPT
15 min.	Activity 1: Use simple language and visual aids (pictures) to explain key concepts Encourage participants to ask questions for clarification.	• Pictures (You can find them below)
15 min.	Break	-
20 min.	Introduction to the International Legislation by analising the theoretical concepts.	• PPT
35 min.	Activity 2: Human Rights for All In a big group, watch the videos and discuss them.	• <u>Video 1</u>
		• <u>Vídeo 2</u>
		• Projector
10 min.	Conclusion & Discussion	• PPT
Assessment methods: Attendance Sheet		





Photos for Activity 1















Description of Activity 2

Human Rights for All

Objective: Explore human rights issues faced by people with disabilities through an interactive video session, prompting participants to identify rights violations, barriers, and propose solutions.

Activity Description: Introduce the activity by emphasising the importance of understanding and advocating for the human rights of people with disabilities. Play the video, ensuring it includes various scenarios depicting rights violations and barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. Pause the video before each proposed solution and discuss.

Ask the participants the following questions:

- a) Which specific right is not respected in this scenario?
- b) What is the barrier preventing the realization of this right?
- c) What solution would you suggest to overcome this barrier?

Allow sufficient time for participants to discuss and respond to each set of questions. After discussing all scenarios, facilitate a 10-minute group discussion to share insights, common themes, and potential actions for promoting human rights.

Facilitator Guide: Ensure a respectful and inclusive atmosphere during discussions. Encourage participants to think critically about rights violations and potential solutions.

Adaptability: Provide support for participants who may need assistance in understanding scenarios. Be flexible with the video format, allowing for verbal discussions or alternative ways of presenting scenarios.

Videos:

- Unlimited: Removing Barriers
- We need to talk about disability





Training designation: Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities	
Module: Human Rights & Civil Rights of People with Disabilities	Trainer:

Main objectives:

Session n.: 2

• To explore the international, European, and national legal frameworks protecting the rights of young people with disabilities.

Duration: 1h45m

Date:

• To identify common challenges and good practices in guaranteeing the democratic rights of young people with disabilities.

Learning outcomes:

- Understand the significance of human rights and civil rights for people with disabilities.
- Be familiar with international and European regulations protecting the rights of young people with disabilities.
- Identify common trends and challenges in partner countries' legal frameworks.
- Recognise the importance of equal participation in the democratic process for young people with disabilities.

Methods: Active Participation

Contents: Human Rights, Civil Rights, National and International Regulations, Challenges and Good practices





Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials
10 min.	Introduction: Welcome participants and briefly review the key points from the previous session. You can use an ice-breaking activity. Explain the objectives of this session and its focus on legal frameworks, challenges, and good practices	• PPT
35 min.	Exploring the theoretical part of National Legislation, Barriers & Good Practices (Active Participation & Questions)	• PPT
15 min.	Break	-
	35 min. Activity 3: "I Want to Live Like" Indivual activity.	• Template sheet with sections "I want to live like"
35 min.		GlueMarkersMagazines for those who prefer drawing.
10 min.	Conclusion: Summarise the key takeaways from the sessions. Emphasise the role of legal frameworks and practical tools in promoting the rights of people with disabilities.	• PPT
Assessment methods: Attendance Sheet		





Description of Activity 3

"I Want to Live Like..."

Objective: Explore barriers and good practices related to human and civil rights for youth with disabilities.

Activity Description: Begin by explaining the purpose of the activity – understanding personal aspirations and identifying barriers and support needed.

Distribute the template sheets and art supplies, emphasising that participants can choose to write or draw based on their preference.

In the "I want to live like..." section, participants should glue a picture representing their aspirations and complete the adjacent sections.

Allow 20 minutes for participants to complete the templates. After completion, initiate a 15-minute group discussion to share insights, focusing on the identified barriers and support needs.

Facilitator Guide: Encourage open and respectful communication. Prompt participants to reflect on both personal and systemic barriers. Guide discussions towards identifying potential good practices to address barriers. Emphasise the importance of adaptability, ensuring everyone can express themselves in the way they feel most comfortable.

Adaptability: Support participants in choosing between writing and drawing. Provide additional resources for those who may need assistance in articulating their thoughts. Be open to various forms of expression, fostering an inclusive environment.





I want to live like this:

Glue pic	cture here.
What stands in the way?	What support do I need?
- N	AME

Reference: https://hpod.law.harvard.edu/pdf/we-have-human-rights.pdf_





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List of International Documents:

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Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-personswith-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html

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DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES





Learning Objectives & Outcomes





OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- Clarify the concept of democracy and democratic political participation.
- Provide the participants of the legal instruments (international and European) safeguarding their equal participation in the process, as well as the main obstacles they tend to face while exercising their democratic rights.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understanding the concept of democracy and democratic political participation.
- Acquiring a deeper understanding of the international and European instruments which protect their right to actively participate in the political process.
- Understanding the main obstacles that people with disabilities face in exercising their democratic rights.

KEYWORDS

Democracy, Democratic participation, Vote, Equality, Barriers, Good practices, Inclusion.



Introduction



M2

Living in a democracy means having the possibily to participate in political life, whether that be through running for office, joining a political party, or keeping up with political events in the media. When given the chance, people with disabilities are eager participants who are active citizens. However, obstacles in the form of laws, regulations, institutions, and accessibility issues may still hinder individuals from voting.

The United Nations and the European Union work to ensure that all individuals with disabilities are fully included in order to foster democratic societies in which every citizen can fully contribute. The UN encourages persons with impairments to participate in politics through its Convention on the Rights of Persons with impairments.

The EU guarantees each and every person the right to vote and run for office in elections for the European Parliament as well as the right to vote and run for office in municipal elections in its Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU and its Member States have committed to enacting these rights as part of the European Commission's 2021–2030 plan for the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Also, as the 2024 European elections draw near, the European Union is reaffirming its commitment to ensuring the equitable participation of individuals with disabilities in this significant European political event.



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1. Democracy



The term "democracy" originates from the Greek words "demos," meaning people, and "kratos," meaning power. Hence, democracy can be viewed as "power of the people," a system of governance dependent on the collective will of the populace. Amid the diverse global models of democratic government, it becomes clearer to define democracy by what it is not. It stands in contrast to autocracy or dictatorship, characterized by single-person rule, and differs from oligarchy, where a small societal segment holds power. Ideally, democracy transcends a mere "rule of the majority," ensuring that the interests of minorities are not disregarded. In essence, democracy, in theory, represents government for all people, aligning with their collective "will" (Council of Europe, n.d.).

Democracy involves two key principles - individual autonomy and equality. The first means that individuals should not be bound by regulations imposed by external forces. People ought to have the capacity to govern their own lives, within reasonable limits and the second principles defends that all individuals should enjoy an equal chance to shape the decisions that impact society (Council of Europe, n.d.).

Living in a democracy in Europe means being part of a system where citizens have the right to participate in political processes, express their opinions, and enjoy certain fundamental rights. Europe has a variety of democratic systems, as each country may have its own form of government, but many European nations share common democratic values. The main processes associated with democracy are: elections, rule of law, citizen participation, protection of rights. Elections represent the responsibility of both citizens and elected officials and their accountability (Lercef, 2019). Citizens are responsible for making informed decisions, participating in the democratic process, and respecting the rights of others. Elected officials are responsible for representing the interests of their constituents and making decisions that align with the public good.

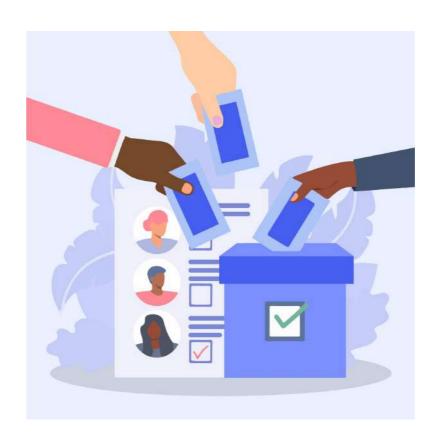
Democracy in Europe typically functions through a representative system where citizens elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf. This can happen at various levels, from local to national and European levels. In a democracy citizens have rights but also obligations. Rights such as freedom of speech, assembly, and religion. They also have the right to vote and participate in the political process. Obligations because citizens are expected to abide by the law, pay taxes, and fulfil civic duties. Jury duty, military service (in some countries), and other responsibilities may be part of civic obligations.





World War II played a significant role in shaping the political landscape in Europe and influencing the preference for democratic governance. The war, which lasted from 1939 to 1945, was characterised by widespread destruction, loss of life, and the atrocities committed by authoritarian regimes. The choice for democracy in Europe is rooted in values of individual freedoms, human rights, and the desire for representative governance, as we will explain in the module 3. It provides a framework for peaceful coexistence, pluralism, and the protection of citizens' rights.

In summary, living in a democracy in Europe involves active citizen participation, protection of individual rights, and the existence of accountable and representative governance.







2. Democratic Participation in the (M2) **Political Life**

The European Union (EU-27) has 87 million persons aged 15 and older with disabilities, or 24% of the population in this age group, according to the most recent figures from Eurostat and the European Commission. Given that people are more likely to develop disabilities as they become older-48.5% of people with disabilities are 65 and older, compared to 17.9% of people in the 16-65 age group—this share is projected to rise as the population ages (Lercef 2019).

People with impairments have the same rights as other EU residents to actively participate in all facets of life, including politics. However, these people frequently encounter a number of obstacles that hinder their day-to-day activities, as reported by FRA (2014) which revealed that people with intellectual disabilities are often some of the most isolated and excluded from political and social life. They are frequently prevented from exercising their right to participate in politics by discriminatory legal, administrative, and/or procedural restrictions as well as inaccessible processes and/or information.

In fact, and according to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (United Nations, 1948).

The ability to participate in political processes and the right to do so are crucial elements of democratic systems and active citizenship. Every citizen's freedom to participate, including those with disabilities, is fundamental to what it means to live in a democratic society.

The International Day of Democracy is celebrated on 15th September and the theme of 2023 was "Empowering Next Generations", focusing "on young people's essential role in advancing democracy and ensuring that their voices are included in the decisions that have a profound impact on their world" (United Nation, 2023). The aim of this day is to provide a report on the state of democracy in the world, as it is a tangible reality that benefits everyone, globally, hinges on the active involvement and backing of the international community, national governing bodies, civil society, and individual citizens.





Did you know?

The notion of political engagement includes the pursuit of particular goals, which typically involve influencing political judgments made at various levels of the political system. Additionally, it typically encompasses voluntarily taking part in political activities.

The two most important and direct ways to participate in politics are via casting a ballot and running for office. The ability to register as a candidate, run for office, and hold office are all examples of political involvement in electoral processes, according to a 2011 position paper from Inclusion Europe, which calls the right to vote "the most emblematic symbol of citizenship".

Democary and Youth



Young people tend to demonstrate and participate democratically in ways other than the traditional ones, using social media to fight against injustice, discrimination and human rights violations; and to act for what they believe in.

ECOSOC Youth Forum is a youth platform where young people can voice their needs and concerns through informal dialogue with other stakeholders. The Forum represents the most institutionalized venue for youth participation in UN deliberations and is an important vehicle to mobilize young people for implementing the 2030 Agenda (United Union, n.d.).

Numerous young individuals actively participate in environmental or protest groups, advocating against war, corporate exploitation, or child labor. A pivotal avenue for youth involvement in community and political life lies at the local level. Here, they can hone an acute awareness of issues directly affecting them and those around them, facilitating a more immediate impact. Democracy extends beyond national or international realms; it must find its roots in our own communities.

Youth organizations serve as crucial platforms for young people to engage and exercise democratic principles. However, their significance hinges on their independence and adherence to democratic practices in their functioning.





3. International Human Rights Standards on the Right to Vote



Ensuring universal suffrage and the opportunity for individuals to participate in public affairs without discrimination is a fundamental principle enshrined in various international Human Rights instruments.

This chapter will delve into the standards set forth by prominent international bodies such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and the Council of Europe, highlighting their respective contributions and guidelines towards safeguarding and promoting these essential rights. Also try to explore the provisions, mechanisms, and jurisprudence established by these international entities to protect and promote the right to vote and to stand for election, shedding light on the significance and nuances within each framework while highlighting the collective efforts towards fostering inclusive and participatory democratic systems globally.

The United Nations

Several international human rights treaties include the right to political engagement, which includes the right to vote and run for office.

Everyone has the right to participate in their nation's government under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the UN General Assembly ratified in 1948 (Article 21). Article 25 of the 1966-adopted International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also mentions the right to vote.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), which has been adopted by the European Union and all of its Member States, also guarantees the rights of people with disabilities to political engagement. According to Article 29 of the CRPD, states must "guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others." This provision outlines the framework for the involvement of people with disabilities in political and public life. This includes the freedom to cast a ballot, run for office, hold public office, and engage in all other forms of public life at all levels of government.





The article emphasizes the necessity of making voting procedures and materials accessible and understandable, facilitating the use of new technologies to support people with disabilities, ensuring the expression of their free will, and providing assistance in casting a ballot by a person of their choice.

The article also makes reference to additional steps taken to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in public and political life without facing discrimination, such as joining non-governmental organizations (NGOs), associations, political parties, and groups that promote the representation of people with disabilities at the local, national, and international levels.

Council of Europe

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was ratified by the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1950. The European Court of Human Rights has interpreted Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention, which guarantees the right to free elections, to include both the right to vote and the right to run for office (Mathieu-Mohin and Clerfayt Belgium, 1987).

Several CoE texts, including Assembly Resolution 1642 (2009) on access to rights for people with disabilities and their full and active participation in society, Assembly Resolution 2039 (2015) on equality and inclusion for people with disabilities, and Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)14 to the Member States on the participation of people with disabilities, have emphasized the need to ensure full participation of people with disabilities in political and public life.

People with disabilities have the fundamental right to participate in political life, to vote, and to run for office, according to the CoE. Additionally, the CoE reaffirmed its dedication to fostering political involvement of people with disabilities in Assembly Resolution 2155 (2017), noting that it is a democratic issue and may aid in the eradication of stereotypes and the fight against discrimination.

A new strategy on the rights of people with disabilities for the period of 2017 to 2023, developed by CoE ContractingStates in collaboration with civil society and other partners, was accepted by the CoE on November 30, 2016. The major goal of this policy is to grant people with disabilities equality, dignity, and equal opportunity. To stimulate full participation in public and political life, it is necessary to support accessible political campaigns.





European Union

Articles 39(1) and 40 of the <u>Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union</u> (2000), as well as Article 20(2)(b) of the <u>Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union</u> (TFEU), provide the legal foundation for EU citizens' right to vote in European and municipal elections.

Articles 39(1) and 40 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights recognize that every EU citizen has the same rights as a citizen of that Member State to vote and run for office in municipal and European Parliament elections, respectively, in the Member State in which they reside (the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality within the scope of application of the Treaties).

Furthermore, Article 21(1) acknowledges the freedom from discrimination, especially that based on a disability. The right of people with disabilities to benefit from measures that protect their independence, social and occupational integration, and participation in community life is recognized and respected under Article 26 (Lercef 2017).

Article 20(2)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union is key in this context:

Citizens of the Union shall enjoy the rights and be subject to the duties provided for in the Treaties. They shall have, inter alia: the right to vote and stand as candidates in elections to the European Parliament and in municipal elections in their Member State of residence, under the same conditions as nationals of that State.

The aforementioned rights are further outlined in supplementary law and in Article 22 TFEU. In accordance with Council Directive 93/109/EC, EU nationals who reside in a Member State but are not citizens of that state may vote and run for office in European Parliament elections (Lercef 2017). Such procedures for voting and running for office in municipal elections are laid forth in Council Directive 94/80/EC.





4. Obstacles to Disabled People Participating in Politics



The 'disability gap' refers to the reality that disability significantly affects political involvement. A study based on data from the European Quality of Life Survey 2012 (EQLS) found that those with severe impairment had a lower likelihood of voting by eight percentage points than those without impairments. Additionally, the percentage of people reporting difficulty voting in elections rises with the severity of the handicap. The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) study from 2014 shows that there are still "significant challenges to the realization of the right to political participation for persons with disabilities". The FRA once again stated in 2019 that there had been little progress in a new research.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has identified various obstacles that prevent people with disabilities from participating in politics through election observation and legislative review. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) mentioned comparable obstacles in its informational report on "The real right of persons with disabilities to vote in European Parliament elections." Three key categories of hurdles prevent people with disabilities from participating in politics throughout the EU: accessibility, legal and administrative, and institutional.

Main Barriers to Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities

<u>Legal and administrative</u>

- · Guardianship or interdiction regimes resulting in legal disenfranchisement
- · Legal and administrative restrictions during naturalization procedures
- Lack of voting mechanisms for individuals living in institutions
- Inadequate remedies
- · Requirements to register to vote

<u>Accessibility</u>

- Physical barriers to polling stations
- Physical barriers that impede access to buildings where political activities take place
- Lack of reasonable accommodation
- Inaccessible voting information
- Lack of accessibility of websites concerning political activities
- An absence of standards and guidelines for measuring accessibility







Institutional barriers

- Insufficient political will
- Inadequate data
- Lack of gender mainstreaming
- Insufficient financial support to account for the additional resources that individuals with disabilities might need in order to campaign effectively

Legal and Administrative Barriers

Only six EU members specifically guarantee equal voting rights for everyone, regardless of "legal capacity": Austria, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, and Sweden. On the other hand, 14 Member States relate the right to political participation to the person's legal ability, frequently by automatically or almost automatically excluding people who fall under partial or whole guardianship regimes. According to the aforementioned EESCreport, as a result, 400 000 people with disabilities were refused the opportunity to cast a ballot in the 2019 European elections, which is against the CRPD (Waltz and Schippers, 2020).

The additional barriers that individuals with disabilities must overcome in order to access remedies and complaint channels in the event that their rights are denied are exacerbating this issue. Administrative criteria for naturalization may discriminate against people with certain disabilities. Obstacles to registering to vote, and a lack of voting options for people with disabilities residing in institutions are some of the administrative challenges that affect people with disabilities (Waltz and Schippers, 2020).

Accessibility Barriers

State parties must comply with Article 29 of the CRPD by making sure that "voting procedures, facilities, and materials are appropriate, accessible, and simple to understand and use." However, improving accessibility of voting procedures, facilities, and election materials continues to be a major concern in many Member States, since it affects not just technologies and information but also polling places and structures where political activities take place (Waltz and Schippers, 2020).





It is common throughout the EU for people with disabilities to be unable to participate in political life due to a lack of accessible information, communication, and facilitation measures. For instance, not all political campaign and election information is accessible to people with visual impairments (even in large print, plain text, easy-to-read formats, and sign language) (Waltz and Schippers, 2020). Similar to this, websites' accessibility is still a significant problem. People with impairments in eight Member States have extremely few informational resources, according to the EESC research.

The accessibility of polling places is frequently severely hampered, and there are frequently no clear signs. For instance, not all Member States have laws governing the accessibility of all public structures, including voting places.

Institutional Barriers

One aspect of these institutional impediments is a lack of political will to support and include voters who are underrepresented (Waltz and Schippers, 2020).

The challenges that people with disabilities face when attempting to participate in political life are made more difficult by deeply ingrained stereotypes and limited legal capacity regulations. The level of political participation of people with disabilities is also influenced by age and gender, which are linked to socioeconomic challenges.

Last but not least, certain EU Member States lack the necessary financial support to take into consideration the additional resources that people with disabilities may need in order to actively engage in political life. In order to include persons with disabilities, and in particular to ensure that they have the opportunity to run for office, it is important to increase support for and funding for their political engagement, according to the OSCE (Waltz and Schippers, 2020).









Good Practices of Democratic Participation

Despite the obstacles, there have been a number of EU-level initiatives to support disabled people's political involvement.

The 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities accepted the European Disability Forum's Manifesto on the European Elections 2019, which called for "fully accessible and inclusive European Elections."

The 2018 Commission recommendation on strengthening the European character and effective conduct of the 2019 European Parliament elections highlighted the need, among other things, to advance the voting rights of EU citizens residing in other Member States (so-called "mobile EU citizens"), of underrepresented groups, and of people with disabilities.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) requests that the 1976 Electoral Act be modified in light of the obstacles that were noted in its initial report in 2019. The EESC claims that clarification is required regarding the norms of universality, directness, and election secrecy based on Article 29 CRPD (see above) (Lercef, 2022). The EESC recommends Member States to remove the current obstacles and put in place standard voting procedures for people with impairments. The EESC also suggests making it illegal to deny someone their right to vote in elections for the European Parliament on the basis of their health or handicap.

It should be mandatory to provide accessible election and voting information to people with disabilities, as well as alternative modes of voting in the absence of accessible polling places. Additionally, it is important to promote the ability of people with impairments to cast autonomous ballots (Lercef, 2019). People who require extensive assistance, such as those who are visually impaired or have limited physical dexterity, should have the option to select an assistant of their choice. According to a different viewpoint, the EESC urges for the implementation of a new EU disability strategy to ensure that all individuals with disabilities can participate in national, regional, and municipal elections.

In its European disability strategy 2010-2020, the EU pledged to promote the exercise of EU citizens' electoral rights. However, as stated in Article 21(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and repeatedly reaffirmed by the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Parliament claims that in 2020, more than half of Member States denied the right to vote to people with mentally or intellectual disability (Lercef, 2022).





Quiz



Read the following questions and select the correct answer.

1. According to the European Union, how many people have a disability?

- a) 12 millions
- b) 84 millions
- c) 23 millions
- d) 100 millions

2. According to the WHO, Disability is:

- a) A health issue, to which medical solutions should be applied when possible.
- b) A society and environmentally defined issue, rather than a purely biological one.
- c) Neither purely biological nor social, but instead the interaction between health conditions and environmental and personal factors.

3. If a person in a wheelchair is unable to reach a ballot box and exercise the right to vote, it is because:

- a) The person's physical abilities prevent her/him from accessing the ballot box.
- b) Environmental barriers prevent them from reaching the ballot box.
- c) That person does not have the right to vote.

4. Equity and inclusion for persons with disabilities means equal...

- a) Opportunities
- b) Treatment
- c) Rights
- d) Participation
- e) All of the Above

5. The barriers people with disabilities face are primarily:

- a) Legal
- b) Administrative
- c) Accessibility
- d) Institutional
- e) All the above





Quiz Solutions

- 1. b) 84 millions
- 2. c) Neither purely biological nor social, but instead the interaction between health conditions and environmental and personal factors.
- 3. b) Environmental barriers prevent them from reaching the ballot box.
- 4. e) All of the Above
- 5. e) All the above





Session Plan



Training designation: Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities

Module: Democracy and Democratic Participation of people with disabilities

Trainer:

Session n.: 1 Durat

Duration: 1h30min

Date:

Main objectives: Educate and empower youth with disabilities about their rights and opportunities for active democratic participation while fostering an inclusive environment.

Learning outcomes:

Understanding of Rights: Participants will comprehend the rights of young people
with disabilities concerning democratic participation, referencing international
human rights instruments like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities (CRPD).

Methods: Expositive and active participation

Contents:

Rights and opportunities for pleople with disabilities





Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials
10min.	Welcome and icebreaker: Introduce yourself, explain the session's objectives, and encourage participants to introduce themselves briefly.	• PPT
25min.	Present information about the rights of young people with disabilities concerning democracy and democratic participation, referring to relevant international human rights instruments (e.g., UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - CRPD)	• PPT
20min.	Discuss the specific challenges faced by young people with disabilities in exercising their democratic rights (e.g., physical barriers, social stigma, lack of accessibility).	• PPT
20min.	Activity 1: Divide participants into smaller groups and provide scenarios or case studies related to barriers in democratic participation for individuals with disabilities. Each group brainstorms and develops actionable solutions to address these barriers, considering both short-term and long-term strategies.	FlipchartsPens
15min.	Showing the results of the working groups to other participants and discussing in plenary. Conclusions.	• PPT

Assessment methods: Attendance sheet





Training designation: Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities				
Module: Democracy and Democratic Participation of people with disabilities		Trainer:		
Session n.: 2	Duration: 1h30min		Date:	
Main objectives: To understand the significance of inclusive democratic practices and explore strategies to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities in the electoral process.				

Learning outcomes:

 Understanding of the challenges faced by people with disabilities in democratic participation, along with insights into potential strategies and actions that can be taken to ensure more inclusive and accessible electoral processes within the European Union.

Methods: Expositive and active participation

Contents:

• Good practices for democratic participation





Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials	
10min.	Ask participants to share their thoughts on what democratic participation means to them and why it's important.	• PPT	
25min.	Present the key points from the provided text regarding the obstacles faced by people with disabilities in exercising their voting rights within the EU. Q&A: Encourage participants to ask questions or share their own observations about the challenges outlined.	• PPT	
20min.	Activity 2: Discuss participation	Provided questionsFlipchartsPaperPens	
15min.	Activity 3: Best practices	Provided questionsFlipchartsPaperPens	
15min.	Activity 4: Inclusive voting	Provided questionsFlipchartsPaperPens	
5min.	Conclusion	• PPT	
Assessment methods: Attendance sheet			





Description of Activity 2

Discuss participation

Provide participants into smaller groups.

Provide discussion prompts:

- How do the obstacles mentioned impact the democratic participation of people with disabilities?
- What are the implications of denying voting rights based on health or disability?
- Brainstorm strategies to overcome these obstacles and ensure inclusive electoral practices.

Each group selects a spokesperson to share the group's ideas with the larger group.

Description of Activity 3

Best practices

Facilitate a presentation or discussion about the EU-level initiatives and recommendations aimed at improving the electoral process for people with disabilities. Discuss best practices from different Member States or organizations that promote inclusive voting.

Highlight successful cases or initiatives that have improved accessibility in elections for people with disabilities.

Description of Activity 4

Inclusive voting

Ask participants to individually brainstorm actionable steps or initiatives that could enhance the democratic participation of people with disabilities in their local context. Participants share their ideas in pairs or small groups.

Encourage participants to discuss how they might contribute to promoting inclusive voting practices in their communities or spheres of influence.







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THE MAIN EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC VALUES







Learning Objectives & Outcomes





OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- Explain the main European democratic values.
- Know the social, economic and environmental policies of the EU.
- Illustrate the historical moments and documents that have allowed the development and guarantee of democratic values in the EU.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understanding of the main democratic values of the EU.
- Understanding of the pillars and priorities underpinning the EU's democratic values.
- Knowledge of the historical moments that have been essential for the development of democratic values.
- Recognise the treaties, documents and subjects that have influenced the creation of democratic values.

KEYWORDS

European Union, Democracy, Values, Human Dignity, Freedom, Equality, Rule of Law, Human Rights, Treaties, Fundamental Rights.



Introduction



It is widely recognised at a global level that the European Union (EU) is an influential and relevant supranational organisation for the advancement of the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in the European continent. Indeed, it is no surprise that the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. This is because, since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, considered to be the founding document for an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe by establishing the European Economic Community (EEC), the EU's main priority has always been the assurance of peace, social and economic progress (Treaty of Rome, 2017). As a result, we can claim that the beginning of European democratic values laid their foundations as far as the 1950s and have seen an incredible expansion in the following decades through significant moments such as the Paris Summit of December 1974 that created the European Council; the Schengen Agreement of 1985 which would allow people to travel without having their passport checked at internal borders; or the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which paved the way for the Euro and created the EU citizenship.

Nevertheless, one of the most controversial but significant treaties of the EU has been the Lisbon Treaty of 2007. This is due to the fact that important and difficult changes have been made to the legal principles of the EU, to its institutions (Parliament, European Council, and European Commission), and to its democratic values. As this module analyses the main European democratic values, this Treaty is very meaningful, as the values on which the EU is currently based on have been laid out in Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty. This Treaty defines the values on which the European Union is founded: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and Human Rights. Thanks to these values, the EU has been able, since 1957, to ensure peace and stability for over 70 years, to create a single market, to guarantee citizens' rights and protections, and to provide high food and environmental standards.







Therefore, the European Union has been, and still is, a key player in the creation, implementation, and maintenance of fundamental rights and stability of the European continent and its citizens. Thus, this module deeply explores the EU's priorities and the European democratic values' characteristics, crucial moments, and achievements. This topic is very important as it comes at a time when the European community, but also the whole world, is experiencing multiple crises (societal, economic, and environmental), hence, it is crucial to know on which values our community is based on, in order to be able to tackle these crises in the best possible way and guarantee an equal and dignifying future to all citizens.

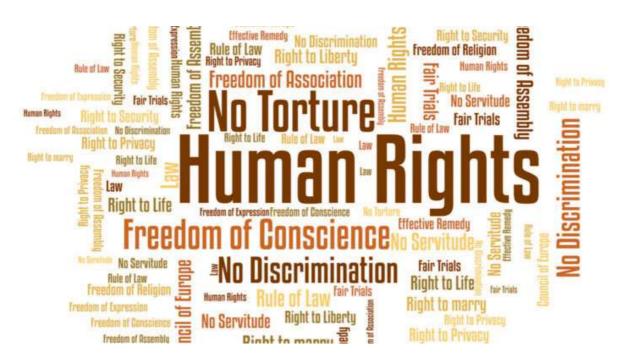


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1. The Main European Democratic Treaties



The Treaty of Rome (1957)

The first European democratic values appeared in 1957 when the Treaty of Rome was signed, and consequently founded the European Economic Community (EEC). This Treaty can be recognised as a radical change in European politics as it established for the first time the main European democratic values, which laid out the base for future treaties, such as the 2007 Lisbon Treaty. As a result, the Treaty of Rome (1957) can be considered as a revolutionary document because of the following reasons:

- 1. It created a common market based on the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital.
- 2. It laid the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe.
- 3. It ensured the economic and social progress of the member countries by joint action to eliminate trade and other barriers between them.
- 4. It aimed at improving their citizens' living and working conditions.
- 5. It ensured balanced trade and fair competition.
- 6. It reduced the economic and social differences between the EEC's various regions, therefore, a more equilibrated development.
- 7. It strengthened peace and liberty and called on other peoples of Europe who share this ideal to join them in these efforts.
- 8. It was based on the principles of the Declaration of Universal Human Rights of the United Nations (1948).

As a consequence, these elements have helped build up European values in the last 70 years, which have guaranteed some very important key achievements, such as a continent at peace, freedom for its citizens to live, study, or work anywhere in the EU, the world's biggest single market, and aid and development assistance for millions of people worldwide. The Treaty of Rome has been ratified and amended multiple times and it is now called the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Treaty of Rome, 2017).







IMAGE 1

The moment of signing the Treaty in Rome on the 25th March 1957. The Treaty was signed by 6 countries: Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg.







The Way to the Treaty of Lisbon (2007)

After the Treaty of Rome of 1957, there have been many other important treaties, agreements, and summits that have led to the European Union that we know today. The most significant historic events after 1957 are:

- The Paris Summit of December 1974, created the European Council where heads of state or government could discuss the political affairs of the EU. The first meeting would be held in Dublin in 1975.
- The Schengen Agreement in 1985, established the gradual elimination of border controls. Today, it allows people to travel without having their passports checked at internal borders. The implementation of the Schengen Agreement started in 1995.
- The Maastricht Treaty in 1992, created the economic and monetary union and set two new pillars: Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and cooperation in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). The European Council acquired a formal status in the Treaty of Maastricht. It is defined as providing the impetus and general political guidelines for the EU's development. The Maastricht Treaty also started the move towards the euro and launched the CFSP.



Once all these treaties had been ratified, the euro came into force, and the EU was experiencing enlargements with many new Member States joining the Union. The EU decided to develop its own Charter of Fundamental Rights in 2000, a document that listed all the freedoms, rights, and values that must be guaranteed to all citizens of the Union.





However, this Charter would not be legally binding until the Lisbon Treaty (2007) entered into force in 2009. Since then, all Member States of the EU are obliged to respect the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which is also reported in Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty. Indeed, the Lisbon Treaty not only transformed the EU as we currently know it by officially establishing the European Council as an EU institution, by creating a new role - the President of the European Council -, by making legislative procedures more efficient, democratic, and transparent, but also by highlighting the importance of the European democratic values by legalising the Charter of Fundamental Rights which protects and guarantees human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise the strong statement about the EU's values that can be found in the preamble of the Charter:

"Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality, and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security, and justice."







IMAGE 3
50th anniversary of the European

Union in the summer of 2007, in Berlin, Germany, with Angela Merkel and José Manuel Barroso.

As a result, it is undeniable that the legal recognition of the Charter of Fundamental Rights has been a very important step forward from the fundamental rights point of view, as there are currently multiple layers of rights protection in the European Union: the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and many more.







2. The Main European Democratic Values



For the German philosopher Wilhelm Windelband, value is everything that is emotionally, aesthetically, morally, socially or religiously relevant and that makes the world possible. It is possible to distinguish between being and ought to be, and the author argues that values belong to the order of ought to be. Therefore, values are not relative, as their validity is absolute. Values are normative ideals, to which consciences conform both in their being and in their knowledge (Sanchéz. A. 2005).

Human Dignity

Human dignity was first mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (UN) in 1948. The General Assembly of the UN, declared in Article 1 that:

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Therefore, it is widely accepted, at international level, that human dignity is something inalienable for all members of the human family, which constitutes the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. As mentioned before, since the constitution of the European Union, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the UN was taken as an example for the composition of the Treaty of Rome, later for the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and other official documents throughout the lifespan of the EU. Thus, it is of no surprise that human dignity is defined similarly in both cases by the UN and the EU, as the latter defines it as (EU, 2023):

"Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected, protected and constitutes the real basis of fundamental rights."

The Charter divides the section on dignity in various articles, the first one being the one that has just been mentioned. The next articles about dignity are about:

- Article 2: Right to life everyone has the right to life and no one shall be condemned to the death penalty, or executed.
- Article 3: Right to the integrity of the person everyone has the right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity.
- Article 4: Prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.







Article 5: Prohibition of slavery and forced labour - no one shall be held in slavery
or servitude; no one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour;
trafficking in human beings is prohibited.

Thus, at its most basic, the concept of human dignity is the belief that all people hold a special value that is tied solely to their humanity. Hence, the human dignity of a person has nothing to do with their class, race, gender, religion, abilities, or any other factor other than them being human.

Freedom

The concept of freedom is much more complicated than dignity as it comprehends various fields of understanding freedom. According to the EU (2023), freedom can be divided into two legal concepts:

- 1. **Freedom of movement** gives citizens the right to move and reside freely within the Union.
- 2. Individual freedoms such as respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

As a result, due to the complexity of the matter, the section about freedoms is divided into 14 articles. These are the following:

- Article 6: Right to liberty and security everyone has the right to liberty and security of person.
- Article 7: Respect for private and family life everyone has the right to respect for his or her private and family life, home and communications.
- Article 8: Protection of personal data everyone has the right to the protection of personal data concerning him or her; such data must be processed fairly for specified purposes on the basis of the consent of the person concerned.
- Article 9: Right to marry and right to found a family the right to marry and the right to found a family shall be guaranteed in accordance with national laws governing the exercise of these rights.
- Article 10: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to conscientious objection is recognised.





- Article 11: Freedom of expression and information everyone has the right to freedom of expression, to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. The freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected.
- Article 12: Freedom of assembly and of association everyone has the right to
 freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association at all levels, in
 particular in political, trade union and civic matters; political parties at Union level
 contribute to expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union.
- Article 13: Freedom of the arts and sciences the arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected.
- Article 14: Right to education everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training. This right includes the possibility to receive free compulsory education.
- Article 15: Freedom to choose an occupation and right to engage in work everyone has the right to engage in work and to pursue a freely chosen or accepted
 occupation. Every citizen of the Union has the freedom to seek employment, to
 work, to exercise the right of establishment and to provide services in any Member
 State.
- Article 16: Freedom to conduct business the freedom to conduct a business in accordance with Union law and national laws and practices is recognised.
- Article 17: Right to property everyone has the right to own, use, dispose of and bequeath his or her lawfully acquired possessions. The use of property may be regulated by law in so far as is necessary for the general interest.
- Article 18: Right to asylum.
- Article 19: Protection in the event of removal, expulsion or extradition.

So, what do we mean by freedom? Two points may be very useful in understanding this complicated concept:

- 1. Freedom of choice: the ability to choose this or that, selecting from various objects/values,
- 2. Freedom as constituting a basic right of a person: this freedom covers the freedom of expression to express reality as one sees it, the freedom of worship, and the freedom to follow a particular career or state of life. It constitutes a person's right to live out his life as he wants to.





Democracy

As for freedom, democracy is also a complex concept that incorporates many ideas, theories and values such as equality, solidarity, citizen's rights, rule of law, and justice. Indeed, in democracies all these approaches must be granted and protected, as they build up and defend this system of government. This is because, a state that considers itself to be democratic must provide an environment that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in which the freely expressed will of people is exercised. There are two types of democracies:

- **Direct democracy:** the people have the direct authority to deliberate and decide legislation.
- **Representative democracy:** the people choose, through periodic elections, governing officials to deliberate and decide legislation.

Currently, the dominant form of democracy is representative democracy, where citizens elect government officials to govern on their behalf such as in a parliamentary or presidential democracy.

In accordance with the EU, Europe's strength lies in its unity, and this unity is based on the shared European democratic values. Indeed, these values are:

- The commitment to fundamental human rights.
- The protection of a free and independent press.
- Upholding the rule of law and equality between women and men, rural and urban, young and old.
- All democracies must be worked on and renewed every single day, and this requires citizens to be empowered to speak up.

For this reason, the functioning of the EU is founded on representative democracy. A European citizen automatically enjoys political rights. Every adult EU citizen has the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in elections to the European Parliament. EU citizens have the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in their country of residence, or in their country of origin.





Equality

As seen in democracy, the principle of equality is also an important pillar of the European democratic values that ensures the equal treatment of all citizens by giving them an equal opportunity of active participation. It is also the idea that no one should be discriminated against because of the way a person was born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability. Historically, it has been demonstrated and recognised that certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race, sex, sexual orientation and disability have experienced discrimination, therefore, they have not been treated equally.

According to the EU, equality is about equal rights for all citizens before the law. The principle of equality between women and men underpins all European policies, it is the basis for European integration and it applies in all areas. For example, the principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The principle of equality can be also found in the Charter of Fundamental rights of the EU, which is divided into 7 articles:

- Article 20: Equality before the law everyone is equal before the law.
- Article 21: Non-discrimination any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.
- Article 22: Cultural, religious and linguistic diversity the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.
- Article 23: Equality between women and men equality between women and men
 must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. The principle of
 equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for
 specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex.
- Article 24: The rights of the child children shall have the right to such protection
 and care as is necessary for their well-being. They may express their views freely. In
 all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private
 institutions, the child's best interests must be a primary consideration.
- Article 25: The rights of the elderly the Union recognises and respects the rights
 of the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social
 and cultural life.
- Article 26: Integration of persons with disabilities the Union recognises and respects the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupation integration and participation in the life of the community.





Rule of Law

The rule of law is a system made up of laws, institutions, norms and community commitment that conveys four universal principles:

- 1. **Accountability** the government, public authorities and private actors are all held accountable under the law.
- 2. **Just law** the law is equally applied and it ensures human rights.
- 3. **Open government** the legislative processes are transparent, accessible, fair, and efficient.
- 4. Accessible and impartial justice justice is delivered by a competent, ethical, neutral and independent judicial body, who must have the adequate resources to help the communities they serve.

As a result, the EU is based on the rule of law. Every action taken by the EU is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its EU countries. Law and justice are upheld by an independent judiciary, the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU), which includes the European Court of Justice and the General Court. The Court has general jurisdiction over all areas of EU activity except where such jurisdiction is excluded by the treaties. The jurisdiction of the CJEU has expanded over the years as the EU's competences have expanded to new policy areas. Thus, these include human rights in line with the incorporation of the Charter of Human Rights into EU law in 2007 by the signing of the Lisbon Treaty.

Indeed, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU not only includes important principles and values such as dignity, freedom, equality, as it also has a relevant section about justice, divided into 4 articles:

- Article 47: Right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial Everyone whose rights and freedoms guaranteed by the law of the Union are violated has the right to an effective remedy before a tribunal in compliance with the conditions laid down in this Article. Everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal previously established by law. Everyone shall have the possibility of being advised, defended and represented. Legal aid shall be made available to those who lack sufficient resources in so far as such aid is necessary to ensure effective access to justice.
- Article 48: Presumption of innocence and right of defence Everyone who has been charged shall be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law. Respect for the rights of the defence of anyone who has been charged shall be guaranteed.





- Article 49: Principles of legality and proportionality of criminal offences and penalties - No one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence under national law or international law at the time when it was committed. The severity of penalties must not be disproportionate to the criminal offence.
- Article 50: Right not to be tried or punished twice in criminal proceedings for the same criminal offence.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU also includes a significant section about citizen's rights that are conveyed in the universal principles of the rule of law:

- Article 39: Right to vote and to stand as a candidate at elections to the European
 Parliament Every citizen of the Union has the right to vote and to stand as a
 candidate at elections to the European Parliament in the Member State in which he
 or she resides, under the same conditions as nationals of that State.
- Article 40: Right to vote and to stand as candidate at municipal elections Every
 citizen of the Union has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate at municipal
 elections in the Member State in which he or she resides under the same conditions
 as nationals of that State.
- Article 41: Right to good administration Every person has the right to have his or her affairs handled impartially, fairly and within a reasonable time by the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union.
- Article 42: Right of access to documents Any citizen of the Union, and any natural
 or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, has a right
 of access to documents of the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the
 Union, whatever their medium.
- Article 43: European Ombudsman Any citizen of the Union and any natural or legal
 person residing or having its registered office in a Member State has the right to
 refer to the European Ombudsman cases of maladministration in the activities of
 the institutions, bodies, offices or agencies of the Union, with the exception of the
 Court of Justice of the European Union acting in its judicial role.

As a consequence, the rule of law affects all citizens of a state. It is the foundation for communities of justice, opportunity, and peace, underpinning development, accountable government, and respect for fundamental rights. Research shows that rule of law correlates to higher economic growth, greater peace, more education, and improved health outcomes.





Human Rights

As seen throughout this module, human rights in the European Union are covered and protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights that is legally binding since the Lisbon Treaty entered in function in 2009. The Charter covers the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, the right to the protection of your personal data, and the right to get access to justice.







3. European Union Priorities



As every existing organisation, the European Union has its own priorities on which it bases its societal, economical and environmental policies. Before the start of each legislative term the heads of state/government of all EU members meet up in the form of the European Council in order to set up the official political priorities of the EU. These priorities might change over time due to different factors such as political elections or challenges and opportunities that the current global situation is facing. Yet, these priorities will always be based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) and on the European democratic values of the Lisbon Treaty (2007). Indeed, this can be seen in the strategic agenda for the EU 2019-2024 where the European Council has set out 4 main priorities areas:

- 1. Protecting citizens and freedoms according to the European Council (2019), Europe must be a place where people feel free and safe. As a consequence, the EU must defend the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens and protect them against existing and emerging threats.
- 2. **Developing a strong and vibrant economic base** in order to achieve this, the European Council is focusing on the competitiveness, prosperity, jobs and role on the global stage of the EU. This is why key points such as deepening the economic and monetary union and strengthening cohesion in the EU are very important.
- 3. Building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe the European Council agrees on the fact that Europe needs to step up its action to manage climate change, which is an 'existential threat'. It also needs to embrace technological evolution and globalisation while making sure that no-one is left behind.
- 4. Promoting European interests and values on the global stage in a world of increasing uncertainty, complexity and change, the EU needs to pursue a strategic course of action and increase its capacity to act autonomously to safeguard its interests, uphold its values and way of life, and help shape the global future.

The European Council is not the only European institution to have its strategic agenda, as also the European Commission (EC) establishes its priorities, which are also known as political guidelines. For its 5-year mandate, the current European Commission (2019-2024) established 6 political priorities that reflect the European democratic values and are also similar to the European Council's priorities.





- 1. The European Green Deal the EC agrees that the EU needs to be transformed into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy while preserving Europe's natural environment, tackling climate change and making Europe carbon-neutral and resource-efficient by 2050.
- 2. A Europe fit for the digital age the EC decided to embrace digital transformation by investing in businesses, research and innovation, reforming data protection, empowering people with the skills necessary for a new generation of technologies.
- 3. An economy that works for people for the current EC, strengthening the EU economy while securing jobs and reducing inequalities, supporting businesses, deepening the Economic and Monetary Union and completing the banking and capital markets union are some of the main aspects to be taken in serious consideration.
- 4. A stronger Europe in the world the EC agrees on strengthening the EU's voice on the world stage by improving its standing as a champion of strong, open and fair trade, multilateralism and a rules-based global order.
- 5. **Promoting our European way of life** the EC is convinced that upholding fundamental rights and the rule of law as a bastion of equality, tolerance and social fairness is the right way to guarantee equal rights to everyone globally.
- 6. A new push for European democracy strengthening Europe's democratic processes by deepening relations with the European Parliament and national parliaments, protecting EU democracy from external interference, ensuring transparency and integrity throughout the legislative process, as well as engaging more widely with Europeans in shaping the EU's future.





Quiz



Read the following questions and select the correct answer.

1. The Treaty of Rome has been based on which important document?

- a) The Maastricht Treaty
- b) The Treaty of Lisbon
- c) The Charter of Fundamental Rights
- d) The Universal Declaration on Human Rights of the United Nations

2. Why is the Lisbon Treaty so significant from the human rights point of view?

- a) It allowed people to move across borders without passport checks
- b) It gave legal value to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU
- c) It created the European Council
- d) It gave more power to the European Commission

3. According to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, the section about dignity forbids:

- a) The right to a person's integrity
- b) The right to seek employment
- c) The right to perform forced and compulsory labour
- d) The right to have a family

4. How does the EU divide the concept of freedom?

- a) Freedom of movement & individual freedom
- b) Freedom of choice & conceptual freedom
- c) Freedom of movement & freedom of choice
- d) Freedom of expression & freedom of assembly

5. What type of democracy is the European Union?

- a) Direct democracy
- b) Parliamentary democracy
- c) Representative democracy
- d) Constitutional democracy





Quiz Solutions

- 1. d) The Universal Declaration on Human Rights of the United Nations
- 2. b) It gave legal value to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the United Nations
- 3. c) The right to perform forced and compulsory labour
- 4. a) Freedom of movement & individual freedom
- 5. c) Representative democracy





Session Plan



Training designation: Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities

Module: The Main European Democratic Values **Trainer:**

Session n.: 1 Duration: 1h30min. Date:

Main objectives: To understand what is the European Union and its history.

Learning outcomes: Understanding the EU institutions and its history

Methods: Theoretical and expositive

Contents:

• Introduction to the topic

History of the European Union (Treaties)

Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials
15min.	Reception of trainees and review of the topics covered in the last session.	• PPT
30min.	Introduction to the topic	• PPT
	Treaty of Rome and the way to the Treaty of Lisbon	• PPT
45min.	Activity 1: History of the European Union (Treaties) Research in the media on the impact of the agreements on civil society.	InternetPC or smartphone for participantsNewspapersMagazines

Assessment methods: Attendance sheets







Training designation: Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities

Module: The Main European Democratic

Values

Trainer:

Session n.: 2 Duration: 1h30 Date:

Main objectives: To understand the values and priorities of the EU

Learning outcomes: Understanding of the EU values and its priorities

Methods: Theoretical and expositive

Contents:

Values of the European Union

• Priorities of the European Union

Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials
10min.	Reception of trainees and review of the topics covered in the last session.	• PPT
25min.	Explore and explain the EU Values	• PPT
30min.	Explanation of the EU Priorities	• PPT
25min.	Activity 2: Understanding of the EU values and its priorities Research national and international activists or influencer who promote the values promoted by the European Union.	InternetPC or smatphones for participants

Assessment methods: Attendance sheets





Description of Activity 1

History of the European Union (Treaties)

Start by introducing these keys questions to young people:

- How do you think the treaties have impacted on the lives of persons with disabilities?
- What kind of news or information has been reported in the media?

Next, the trainer forms a team (4-5 persons) to look for information about the presence of the treaties and their importance in the lives of persons with disabilities in the media (15min).

The groups share their findings and discuss their impressions of what they have found (10min).

Description of Activity 2

Understanding of the EU values and its priorities

Start by introducing these keys questions to young people:

- Which values caught your attention the most?
- What values do you think should be promoted today in social media?

Next, the trainer asks participants to look for activists or influencers on social media who promote the values discussed in the session (15min).

Once they have found them, they should introduce them to the rest of the group and share their profiles and actions for people with disabilities (10min).



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MODULE 4 A VOICE IN THE DECISIONMAKING PROCESS







Learning Objectives & Outcomes



1

OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- Understand the decision-making process and identify the types of decision and their implications.
- Understand the importance of having a voice and making your own decisions.
- Identify personal competencies for making your own decisions.
- Develop a sense of self-determination.
- Learn to structure the decision process to make good decisions.
- Know techniques and methods that facilitate effective decisionmaking.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

- What is the decision-making process and types of decisions.
- What is the importance of making their own decisions.
- How to identify personal competencies for making personal decisions.
- How to develop a sense of self-determination.
- What is important and necessary to make thoughtful decisions.
- Techniques and methods supporting young people with disabilities in the decision-making process.

KEYWORDS

Young people with disabilities; Decision-Making Process; Critical Thinking; Good decision



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Introduction



Throughout history, people with disabilities have been discriminated, marginalised, and mistreated because they were believed to be cursed or possessed by evil powers. Thanks to advances in medicine, it has been understood that disability is often linked to genetic factors or brain malformations. However, even today, individuals with disabilities are often perceived as weak, fragile, and inferior to other citizens, which significantly hinders their democratic participation in society and, consequently, their quality of life (Santos, 2014). Furthermore, such prejudiced views influence the decision-making of people with disabilities.

Making decisions is something we all do from the moment we are born, both subconsciously and without thinking about it – like when a child chooses to play with Legos instead of playing with a ball, or when an adult turns left instead of right on the way to work – and consciously and thoughtfully. There are simple decisions – like when we decide what to have for dinner – and more complex decisions that can impact our future – such as when we decide to change jobs or when we must vote and elect someone to represent us. For this reason, free and informed decision-making is a right that should be respected and guaranteed for all individuals, regardless of their age, health condition, culture, political or religious inclination.

However, it is common to observe the absence of participation and consideration for decision-making by people with disabilities. Such an occurrence is discriminatory, and in many European countries, it is prohibited to discriminate directly or indirectly against people based on disability. For this reason, it is important not only to raise awareness among the general population about the importance of ensuring the democratic rights and decision-making of people with disabilities but also to empower them with better skills to make their decisions and be heard.

So, this module focuses on empowering people with disabilities for conscious and informed decision-making.





1. Types of Decisions and Phases of Decision-Making Process



In general, decision-making is a strategy and process for selecting the most sensible solution from a set of alternatives to achieve the best outcome. There are two types of decision-making: **programmed (or small decision)** and **non-programmed (or big decision)**. Everyone makes programmed decisions daily, such as what to wear, what to eat, or what to do next weekend. Programmed decisions are related to routine and occur so frequently that we develop an automatic response where we do not have to think too much about the decision we want to make. On the other hand, non-programmed decisions involve more deliberation and reflection and require conscious thinking, information gathering, and careful consideration of alternatives (Decision Making, 2015). We will focus on the latter type of decision, non-programmed decision-making.

The literature suggests that the decision-making process consists of two phases: divergent and convergent. The first phase is characterised by creativity and exploration, where alternative solutions are generated. It is often associated with the emergence of intuitive or subconscious ideas. However, at some point, the process must converge towards a decision, leading to the convergent phase. In this phase, personality, and perceptions play an important role. If a person is comfortable with uncertainty and the situation is dynamic, the convergent phase may be delayed keeping options open until the last moment. However, if a person needs to make a quick decision or be seen as decisive and not hesitant, this phase should be as short as possible. The key is to find a balance where one remains open to new information that can impact the decision but without unnecessarily delaying the final decision. This balance can lead to a cycle and variation between divergent and convergent phases, making the overall process non-linear. This is particularly important and applicable in non-programmed decisions.



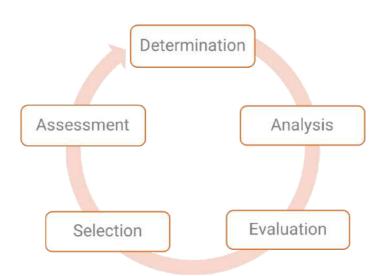






Add also that the decision-making process depends on many factors, such as the complexity of the problem, time pressure and the environment in which you find yourself (Turpin & Marais, 2004). To try to contextualise these factors, there are some steps that should be followed, which will lead to a better understanding of the problem and an effective decision for its resolution:

- **Determination**: Identify the personal vision and objectives you support, as well as the individual options available to help you achieve them.
- **Analysis**: Conduct research, gather important information, speak with individuals knowledgeable about the subject or familiar with the context to analyse the potential impact of each of the options.
- **Evaluation**: Through a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the existing options, it is possible to assess each action, considering the value and impact it may have for you and those around you. Identifying the advantages and disadvantages of each action can also help you evaluate each situation.
- **Selection**: Based on the data and information obtained through analysis and evaluation, you will now be able to make an informed decision and select an action that aligns with the objectives you initially defined.
- **Assessment**: After making a decision, you should examine the impacts of your actions in the short and long term to learn and refine the process for the next situation.







2. Importance of Having a Voice and Making Your Own Choices



Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (United Nations, 2006, p. 10) highlights the obligation of Member States to "provide access by persons with disabilities to the support they may require in exercising their legal capacity". Thus, an effort has been created to reinforce supported decision-making, as opposed to substitute decision-making (Then et al., 2018). Such a shift change becomes essential for the promotion of autonomy and the recognition of the independence of the disabled person. The aim of supported decision-making is to give people with intellectual disabilities the support they need and want to make decisions and communicate their choices (Browning et al., 2014).

The concept of supported decision-making varies between different contexts and there is still no exact definition. The literature refers to it as a process to support people in their decision-making, as a system that confers legal status, and as a way of bringing the will of the person with a disability to the centre of any decision-making process (Browning et al., 2014). In practical terms, supported decision-making refers to a person who assists the person with a disability "by collecting information, providing explanations, and helping the individual to have their decision-making autonomy respected", instead of making decisions for the person with a disability, even if it is believed to be in their "best interest" (Then et al., 2018, p. 64). In fact, it can be stated that all individuals, regardless of their age or physical and intellectual condition, use supported decision-making, as everyone has sought opinions from friends on a certain topic or asked for advice from a family member to help us make a decision.

However, it is important to understand the balance that needs to be struck so that this support from friends or family does not become suffocating for the person with a disability. Sometimes, the good intentions of supporting the young person with a disability translate into behaviours of overprotection or excessive mistrust, which distances them from accessing their rights.

For this reason, "one size does not fit all" and so solutions are different for each person. Supported decision-making is an ongoing process that involves scrutinising the person and working with them to identify the circumstances in which he/she needs assistance and devising an approach to provide the necessary support in the required amount and desired frequency (Campanella, n.d.).







What is important to emphasise is that everyone has the right to make choices and decisions, regardless of their physical or intellectual condition, age, social status or culture, and those decisions should be respected. However, it is evident that not all individuals with disabilities have those rights guaranteed. That is why it becomes necessary to train young people with disabilities to be responsible for their decision, encouraging them to look for the right information, ask for the necessary clarifications and speak with their own voice (National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making, 2023).

Respecting individual decision-making is ensuring the autonomy and self-determination of each person, as opposed to substitute decision-making or guardianship. Studies even reveal that depriving individuals of autonomous choice has negative effects on physical and mental health, ability to function, and well-being (Wright, 2010).

Decision-making is important because it allows us to have control over our lives, which makes us feel more empowered and confident, increasing the likelihood of achieving our goals. Moreover, when we make our own decisions, we do so at our own pace, at the right time for us, contributing to increased independence and individual responsibility.





3. Personal Competences and Self-Determination



There is not a magic recipe of soft skills to provide us with all the right answers. Each person has their individuality, and this should be respected. However, the literature points to some skills that can be trained and that contribute for the decision-making process and conflict resolution, including emotional intelligence, organisation, creativity, reasoning, or intuition (Herrity, 2023) (Table 1).

Emotional Intelligence	Is the ability to perceive, interpret, demonstrate, control, evaluate, and use emotions to communicate with and relate to others effectively and constructively.
Organisation	It helps to focus your time, reduce effort, and use resources efficiently and effectively on what matters most.
Creativity	It enables you to think about a task or problem in a new or different way, generating ideas to solve the problem or complete the task.
Reasoning	It is connected to critical thinking skills like analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, allowing you to become more aware of your thought process, making reflective thinking easier.
Intuition	It is about trusting your instincts, which arise from past experiences and the core values that drive you every day. The accumulation of experiences and the lessons learned from them influence your decision-making.

Table 1 Some examples of important skills contributing to the process of decision making (Herrity, 2023).





There are some tests available that can help people better understand which competencies them already possess and which ones may need further development, such as Personality Labs based on the Great Eight competencies model by Bartram.

Another crucial factor is self-determination. Self-determination is a trigger for all other competencies, as it allows us to have control over our lives, which keeps us motivated to make decisions in various areas of life. The literature suggests that people with greater self-determination are healthier, more independent, better adjusted, and better able to recognise and resist abuse, essential characteristics that influence life satisfaction and well-being (Khemka, Hickson, & Reynolds, 2005; O'Connor & Vallerand, 1994; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998; as cited in Campanella, n.d.).

Furthermore, supported decision-making has the potential to enhance the self-determination of individuals with disabilities, encouraging and empowering them for greater control over their lives, employment, and community integration, which translates into increased independence (Blanck & Martinis, 2015). Getzel and Thoma (2008, p. 78) add that self-determination is a "set of personal or interpersonal skills that include acceptance of a disability and how it affects learning, (...) having the determination to overcome obstacles that may be presented".



Click on the image to test your skills and find out which ones need more improvement.





4. Strategies for Decision-Making

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In a study conducted by Getzel and Thoma (2008), participants mentioned that there should be more efforts in developing strategies to teach young people with disabilities how to solve problems, identify resources, and make decisions. In this chapter, several strategies will be presented to address this need.

Have a vision

A decision is a commitment to a specific choice based on evidence regarding the costs and benefits associated with that choice (Churchland & Shadlen, 2015). This decision is influenced by the vision we have for the future. Everyone has a purpose they aspire to achieve over time. Having a vision about things allows us to set a path and map out the important information to reach the goals we set for ourselves.

Understanding the context

It is important to understand the environment or the context in which the decision-making process takes place. Successful approaches often involve a deliberate classification of individuals and situations (Turpin & Marais, 2004).

Packaging of information

Due to the volume and speed of content and information circulation nowadays, it is easy to become overwhelmed and unsure about what to focus on, making decision-making and communication more challenging. Therefore, packaging information in visually appealing and cognitively simpler formats can help organise information, facilitating the transmission of the intended message (Turpin & Marais, 2004).

Effectively communicating the message

It does not matter if you have a deep understanding of a subject if you are not able to express your opinion effectively or assertively convey your position. Communication plays a crucial role in decision-making. The message or decision should be clear to everyone. Therefore, in addition to using language appropriate to the context, you should listen to your interlocutor and pay attention to the body language you use.

Decision-making tools

Decision-making tools are approaches used for effective problem-solving or choice-making. These exercises and methods allow for a better understanding of the entire decision-making process and a close examination of the available options in each specific situation. This way, it becomes possible to make more informed and thoughtful decisions, and the consistent use of these tools can contribute to strengthening innate decision-making skills, making problem-solving and overcoming challenges more manageable. In the next chapter we will explore some of these tools that helped you in making a decision.

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5. How to Make Good Decisions



Making the right decision is not always easy, and it will not always be possible. Sometimes, the correct choice is not the easiest one, which can make the decision-making process challenging. However, based on what has been discussed, there are some steps and tools that can be adopted to make this process simpler and more efficient.

In general, making a good decision include understanding the problem, brainstorming solutions, evaluating different options, and communicating with others who are affected by the decision. These six steps will help you simplify each of these stages (MindTools, n.d. & UMassD, n.d.).

1. Understanding the Context and Gathering Information

To make a good decision requires a thorough understanding of the surrounding context and the origin of the problem or doubt. **Tool 1 "5WH Questions"** will help you gain new insights and deepen your understanding to have a more holistic view of the problem or situation on which you intend to make a decision, by answering the questions "Who?", "What?", "When?", "Where?", "Why?" and "How?".

To do this, you can reflect and seek real and up-to-date information from credible sources, avoiding social media, which often contain fake news. Additionally, this will help increase your knowledge about the subject, making you feel more confident in asking questions and engaging in thoughtful discussions with others.

Here are some topics that can inspire you for deeper reflection, training your positioning and decision-making regarding each issue:

- Lack of representation of people with disabilities in places of power in society;
- Difficulty of access to the job market for people with disabilities;
- Lack of incentives for the inclusion of young people with disabilities in sports practices;
- Defence of women's rights and gender equality;
- Lack of incentives for democratic participation in Europe by people with disabilities;
- Parents made a specific decision that will impact your life, without asking you.





5WH QUESTIONS

The 5WH questions help obtain deep insights, new perspectives, and information to understand the situation/problem holistically. The questions from the model help inspire and get started, but others may arise as well.

Problem to be solved:

What?	When?	Where?	Why?	How?
What do you already know about the problem?	When did the problem start?	Where does the problem occur?	Why is the problem important?	How could it be solved?
What would you like to know?	When are results expected?	Where did you hear about it?	Why did it occur?	How could this problem be an opportunity?
What are the assumptions that could be questioned?	When can the project be started?	Where have similar situations exist?	Why hasn't it been solved yet?	How to prevent it from happening again?
What ?	When	Where?	Why?	How ?
	What do you already know about the problem? What would you like to know? What are the assumptions that could be questioned?	What do you already know about the problem? When did the problem start? What would you like to know? When are results expected? What are the assumptions that could be questioned?	What do you already know about the problem start? Where does the problem occut? What would you like to know? When are results expected? Where did you hear about it? What are the assumptions that could be questioned? When can the project be started? Where have similar situations exist?	What do you already know about the problem start? Where does the problem Why is the problem important? occur? What would you like to know? When are results expected? Where did you hear about it? Why did it occur? What are the assumptions that could be questioned? When can the project be started? Where have similar situations with the project yet?









5WH QUESTIONS



Persona A

intends to enter the job



Persona B

However, once classes end, he goes straight home and does not engage in any sports, social, or leisure activities.



Persona C

and rely on the support of a







Personas that can be used as examples to help think through a problem.







2. Identify Potential Alternatives

With the gathering of information, you may likely come across more than one option that appears viable. For such a situation, you can use **Tool 2 "Solution Definition"**, which will allow you to think in detail about each of the possible solutions, identifying the objectives, their primary purpose, who will be involved, and what needs to be done to implement them. The questions that must be answered are the same as those in the previous tool, but now the focus is on the solution.

On the other hand, you may not be able to find solutions easily, although it is helpful to consider more than one possible scenario. For such cases, you can turn to **Tool 3 "Word Cloud"** allows you to arrange different keywords related to the problem in various sizes, colours, and relationships. Through its visual impact and organisation, new ideas that had not been considered before can potentially emerge.

It is also important to consider different timeframes, identifying solutions that allow you to make decisions based on your short-term and long-term objectives.

3. Explore your Options

After selecting a good set of realistic solutions, it is time to assess their feasibility, risks, and implications. For this, you will need a structured approach, using **Tool 4 "Decision Tree Analysis"**, which provides a visual representation of the solutions and potential outcomes when making a decision, allowing you to analyse them simultaneously. Using a decision tree is useful when there is uncertainty about the most advantageous action or when previous data is partial because it gives you space to reflect and analyse different solutions before implementing them (see example on page 99). However, decision trees do not display actual results; they only show patterns related to decisions and reveal predictive models that illustrate the probability of an event occurring in specific situations (Fonseca, 2022).

Start by stating the problem identified in step 1 and then create branches that represent each of the solutions found previously (step 2). Each solution will result in one or more specific outcomes (step 3) that stem from a set of decisions and their consequences.

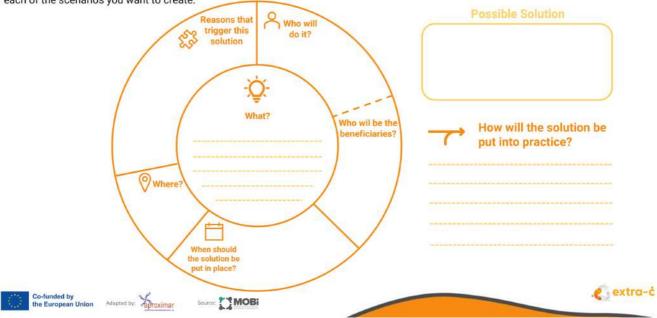




SOLUTION DEFINITION

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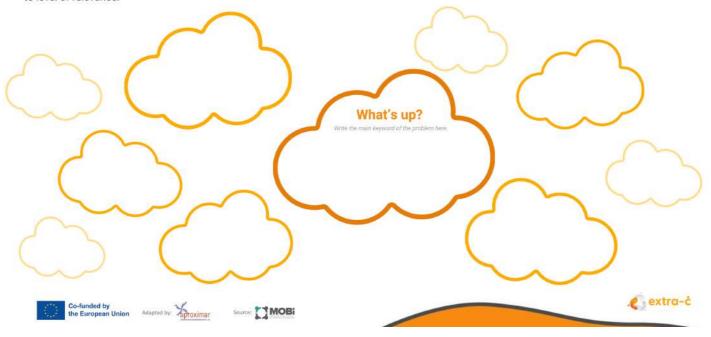
This tool allows you to reflect more extensively on each of the **solutions** you may find. To do so, you should answer the questions "what?", "why?", "when?", "when?", "when?", "when?", "when?", "when?", "when?", "when?", to have as many scenarios as possible to help you make an informed decision. Use this tool for each of the scenarios you want to create.



WORD CLOUD

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Word clouds is a method of information visualization that organizes keywords about the problem using different sizes or colors according to level of relevance.

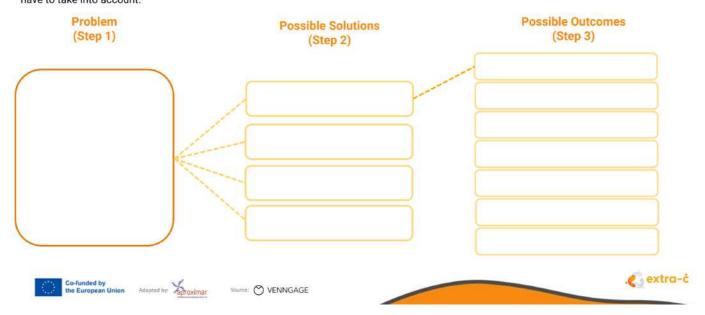






TREE DECISION ANALYSIS

Start by posing the problem or difficulty you identified in step 1. Then create enough lines according to the number of possible solutions you identified in step 2. Step 3 is to reflect on and analyse the possible outcomes that each solution could have, bearing in mind that there could be more than one outcome for each solution. These outcomes are the result of a series of decisions and their consequences that you will have to take into account.



TREE DECISION ANALYSIS (Example)

Start by posing the problem or difficulty you identified in step 1. Then create enough lines according to the number of possible solutions you identified in step 2. Step 3 is to reflect on and analyse the possible outcomes that each solution could have, bearing in mind that there could be more than one outcome for each solution. These outcomes are the result of a series of decisions and their consequences that you will have to take into account.



Example to make the tool "Tree Decision Analysis" easier to understand







4. Select the Best Solution

After identifying the possible outcomes, you will need to analyse them and choose the best option. This is not always an easy process, as it involves some consideration, but **Tool 5 "Priorities Definition"**, and **Tool 6 "2x2 Matrix"** can help you in this phase.

Tool 5, "Priorities Definition," allows you to analyse the different outcomes identified in step 3 according to certain criteria that can be defined by you, such as strategic relevance, time required, ease of implementation, the involvement of other stakeholders, or resource availability. The highest score will indicate the optimal outcome that you should take into consideration for solving the problem.

Tool 6, "2x2 Matrix" focuses on impact questions, meaning what impact each of the possible outcomes will have on you vs. what impact it will have on others. However, you can also use the matrix with different axes to obtain different results (for example, cheap vs. expensive or simple vs. complex).

It will be important to deconstruct your optimal outcome in stages and define concrete actions to take that will lead to its realisation. To help you with this task, you can use the **Tool 7 "Solution Path"**, which will allow you to concretely define the actions/steps you need to take to implement the solution you have defined to solve your problem.

5. Communicate your Decision and Take Action

After making a decision, you should communicate it to those involved in an informative and inspiring manner. Involve them in the implementation of the solution by explaining the reasons behind your decision. The more information you provide about the projected risks and benefits, the more likely people are to support you and help you achieve your goal. To do this, you should think about your speech and practice the best way to present your decision. **Tool 8 "Pitch"** will help you prepare your speech by prompting you to reflect on the best way to present the "What?" "Why?" and "How?" of your final decision.

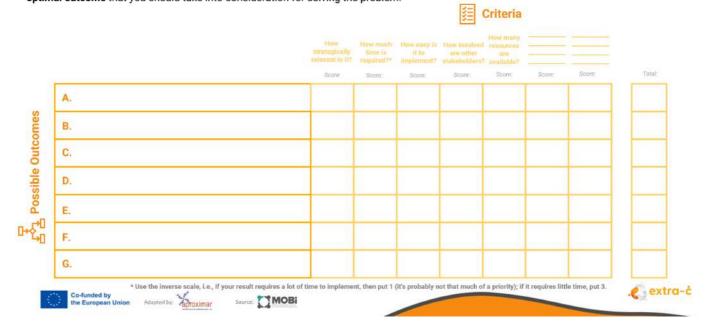




PRIORITIES DECISION

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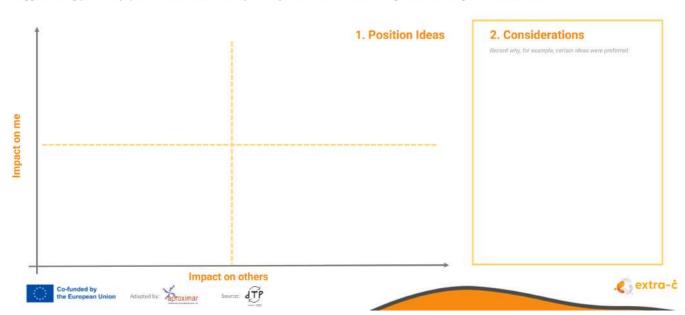
List the most relevant possible outcomes. Evaluate them according to the defined criteria, assigning a priority rating of 1 (low), 2 (medium), or 3 (high) for each outcome. Add up the points for all criteria to obtain a final score. The highest score will indicate the **optimal outcome** that you should take into consideration for solving the problem.



2x2 MATRIX

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You can choose to organize all your possible outcomes or just the ones that scored highest on the axes according to whether you consider them to have a greater or lesser impact on you, compared to a greater or lesser impact on others. You can write directly in the tool, but we suggest using post-its (1 post-it for each outcome) as they allow for easier rearrangement and organization of ideas.





SOLUTION PATH

After finding the optimal outcome, it is important to create small specific actions that will help you implement it and, thus, solve the problem. This is the path to the solution. Start by describing each one of the actions, identifying the stakeholders who should be involved and explaining how you imagine the action will unfold. After describing the first action, move on to the second, and so on until you have your possible solution fully planned, thus having the necessary path to the potential resolution of your problem.



PITCH

Structure a pitch around your final decision by writing down the issue that you wish to communicate "What", the reasons "Why" this particular aspect needs attention, and strategies on "How" you plan to resolve the issue.

















6. Review your Decision and its Consequences

Consider the outcomes of your decision and assess whether it effectively resolved the challenge/problem identified in step 1 and had the expected impact. To do this, you can start by analyzing the conclusion of the actions taken with Tool 7 "Solution Path", using **Tool 9 "Solution Evaluation"**.

If you find that your decision did not effectively meet the identified need, you may need to repeat the steps of the decision-making process, fine-tuning some details and varying some strategies. It may be helpful, for example, to gather more detailed information or contact different people to gain new insights that can lead to new solutions.

We also suggest using **Tool 10 "Dear Future Me"** as it allows you to reflect and project the needs and interests you may have in the future, which can contribute to creating a new scenario or perspective now. You can also save the letter and open it in 5 years, for example, to confirm what you had written and set new steps.



SOLUTION EVALUATION

This tool serves as an evaluation of the actions taken and allows you to assess satisfaction with the results and their impacts. To do this, you should write down the actions taken and evaluate them according to quality attributes on a scale of 1 (somewhat satisfies), 2 (satisfies), and 3 (strongly satisfies). In the end, sum up the scores to obtain a total for each action and understand which one achieved the best result.

	Action 1	Action 2	Action 3	Action 4	Action 5
Solves the problem?	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
Promotes the articipation of various artifies of society?	Saare	Score	Score	Scane	Score
s it feasible in time and esources?	Spore	Spare	Score	Score	Spore
as a big impact on me?	Scone	Score	Score	Score	Score
las a big impact on others?	Score	Score	Soore	Score	Score
oes it improve the evnocratic participation f people with disabilities?	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total

DEAR FUTURE ME

Write a letter to your future self in which you describe how you would like the situation to be regarding your democratic participation and the level of autonomy in your life. You can write about the needs and interests you anticipate for that stage of life and delve into a "magical solution" that you would like to exist in the future. Keep the letter and set a date to open it (for example, in 5 years).

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Quiz



Read the following questions and select the correct answer.

- 1. The decision-making process depends on several factors, namely the complexity of the problem, time pressure and the environment in which the person finds themselves.
- a) True
- b) False
- 2. What skills can be trained that help you make decisions?
- a) Creativity, reasoning, and intuition
- b) Organisation, creativity, reasoning, intuition, and stubbornness
- c) Emotional intelligence, organisation, creativity, reasoning, and intuition
- d) Emotional intelligence, organisation, creativity, selfishness, and intuition
- 3. Self-determination is not that important when it comes to making my own decisions, what is important is that I just follow what the people around me tell me.
- a) True
- b) False
- 4. The way I communicate my decision is not very important, if I am clear about my vision and the solution I want to implement.
- a) True
- b) False
- 5. Organises in the correct order the steps that must be taken to make a considered and conscious decision:

Select the best solution	Explore your options
Communicate your decision and take action	Review your decision and its consequences
Understanding the context and gathering information	Identify potential alternatives







Quiz Solutions

- 1.a) True
- 2.c) Emotional intelligence, organisation, creativity, reasoning, and intuition
- 3. b) False
- 4. b) False
- 5. 1 Understanding the context and gathering information;
 - 2 Identify potential alternatives
 - 3 Explore your options
 - 4 Select the best solution
 - 5 Communicate your decision and take action
 - 6 Review your decision and its consequences





Session Plans



Training designation: Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities				
Module: A Voice in the Decision-Making Process		Trainer:		
Session n.: 1 Duration: 1h30			Date:	

Main objectives:

- Understand the decision-making process and identify the types of decision and their implications.
- Understand the importance of having a voice and making your own decisions.
- Identify personal competencies for making your own decisions.
- Reflect about the process of making good decisions.

Learning outcomes:

- What is decision-making process and types of decisions.
- What is the importance of making their own decisions.
- How to identify personal competencies for making personal decisions.
- What is important and necessary to make thoughtful decisions.

Methods: Expositive and active participation

Contents:

- Discuss the types of decisions and phases of decision-making process.
- Importance of having a voice and making your own choices.
- Personal competences and self-determination.
- Strategies for decision-making.





Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials
10min.	Reception of trainees and introduction to the topic	• PPT
30min.	Presentation and discussion of the chapter 1. Activity 1: Discuss the two types of decision in a large group, giving concrete examples of each. Make a decision regarding one of the issues.	 PPT White sheets of paper Markers of different colours Pens/pencils
10min.	Presentation and discussion of the chapter 2.	• PPT
20min.	Presentation and discussion of the chapter 3. Activity 2: Carrying out the skills test from Personalities Lab. Participants are invited to share their results and a large group discussion opens.	PPTPersonalities Lab
20min.	Activity 3: 1. What do you think is necessary for making good decision? Using the mentimeter tool, create a word cloud in which participants must write down what they consider necessary to make good decisions. 2. Organise the ideas generated by the trainees and present chapter 4.	PPTMentimeter link

Assessment methods: Attendance sheet





Description of Activity 1

Present the following list of questions to the group:

- 1. Would you like to live in the countryside or in the city?
- 2. Do you prefer to live far away or right next door to your family?
- 3. Would you choose to live alone in your apartment or together with friends?
- 4. Would you like to go on a trip or stay comfortably at home for the next vacation?
- 5. Do you prefer to take a public bus or a taxi?
- 6. Would you rather go for a walk or a bike ride?
- 7. Would you prefer to work for someone else or create your own business?
- 8. Would you rather go to the theatre or to the cinema in the evening?
- 9. Would you like to learn new skills for a new job or go straight to work?
- 10. Do you prefer to learn a musical instrument or take a painting class?
- 11. Would you rather eat meat or vegetables today?
- 12. Would you like to invite your friends to your home or to meet them in the city?
- 13. Would you rather eat chocolate or biscuits?
- 14. Would you rather drink beer or water?
- 15. Do you prefer the heat or the cold?
- 16. Do you prefer to eat sweet or savoury things?
- 17. Would you rather go to the university or take a professional course?

In a large group, define the type of decisions that arise from the questions, as shown in the following table:

Programmed Decisions / Small Decisions	Non-programmed Decisions / Big Decisions





Then, ask young people to choose one issue from each group to reflect on and make a decision. To help with reflection, suggest that young people consider the following aspects:

- Think about knowledge or experience that I already have.
- Which information do I need?
- Whom can I ask for information in this situation?
- Where can I get the best support for this decision?
- Are there limitations in my decision and are these limitations acceptable for me?
- Are there similar limitations for everyone?

Invite young people to share their reasoning and final decision.





Training designation:	Promoting the	Democratic	Participation	of Young	People v	with
Disabilities						

Module: A Voice in the Decision-Making

Process

Trainer:

Session n.: 2

Duration: 2h

Date:

Main objectives:

- Learn to structure the decision process to make good decisions.
- Know techniques and methods that facilitate effective decision-making.

Learning outcomes:

- What is important and necessary to make thoughtful decisions;
- Techniques and methods supporting young people with disabilities in the decision-making process.

Methods: Expositive and active participation

Contents:

- · Review about strategies for decision-making
- How to make good decisions

Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials
15min.	Reception of trainees and review of the topics covered in the last session, especially the chapter 4.	• PPT
15min.	Analyse the 6 steps that help in making good decisions - Chapter 5.	• PPT





30min.	Divide the group into smaller groups of 2/3 people. These groups should remain the same until the end of the session. Activity 4: Define your vision and contextualise your challenge.	Tool 1 in A3 per groupPens and pencils
30min.	Activity 5: Find a best solution	Tool 5 in A3 per groupPens and pencils
30min.	Activity 6: Share your solution through your vision	Tool 8 in A3 per groupPens and pencils

Assessment methods: Attendance sheet





Description of Activity 4

Define your vision and contextualise your challenge

Choose a challenge/issue that concerns you and that you consider a cause you want to defend.

Here are some examples, but you may find others:

- Difficulty of access to the job market for people with disabilities
- Lack of incentives for the inclusion of young people with disabilities in sports practices
- · Defence of women's rights and gender equality
- · Lack of incentives for democratic participation in Europe by people with disabilities

Now, try to explore and define it better using **Tool 1 "5WH Questions"**.

Description of Activity 5

Find a best solution

Keep the result from Tool 1 close to you and focus on trying to answer these questions:

- What is your vision regarding it?
- In your opinion, what changes should occur for the problem to be solved?
- How the problem can be solved?

Write down the answer, and with these in mind, use **Tool 5 "Priorities Definition"** to find the most suitable solution.

Description of Activity 6

Share your solution through your vision

Prepare a speech to present your solution to the rest of the group, using **Tool 8 "Pitch"**. This speech should also highlight your vision and conviction. Do not forget to pay attention to body language and speaking style.

Each group should have 5 minutes maxim to present the pitch.

At the end, a large group discussion can be opened so that everyone can share their difficulties and give constructive input on how and what to improve.





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MODULE 5

RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING





Learning Objectives & Outcomes





OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- Improve social communication skills.
- · Get acquainted with communication styles.
- Improve conflict management competencies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES



- Knowledge of social and emotional skills will deepen.
- Will be more aware of existing personality differences in communication styles.
- Conflict management competencies will increase.

KEYWORDS

Self-conscious, Relations between, Self-control, Social awareness, Emotions, Feeling and expression, Communication, Communication Style, Conflict management.



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Introduction



The culture of communication does not depend on legal acts - first of all, one should start with the development of personality values. With due respect and sincerity, one should say to oneself that all people deserve equal social and emotional opportunities for communication. It is important to notice a person's abilities and personality, and only after recognise his/her disability.

A person with disabilities faces a negative attitude from society towards themselves, has low self-esteem and feels inadequate due to the very nature of the disability (physical/mental condition). Adapting people with disabilities to society is not just their problem or responsibility. Society is often not prepared to accept them as equal members and active people. Disability reminds people of their vulnerability and frightens those around them. Society's biggest problem is its inability to look at a disabled person objectively, without embarrassment or preconceptions.

The possibility of a disabled person living a full life in a community is conditioned by a mutual interaction: the willingness of other people to accept a different individual and the efforts of a disabled person to be active. The essential provision of integration is that a person with a disability must participate fully in the social activities of their community in order to live an active and integrated life. It is therefore very important to increase the communicative, social and emotional skills of people with disabilities, encouraging them to participate in the active life of society.

Successful integration into democratic society begins with counselling, understanding the principles of integration: accepting people with disabilities as equal members of the community, maintaining permanent social relationships, creating partnerships between the disabled person and other individuals, families, specialists and the wider community, creating equal educational conditions, developing opportunities for people with disabilities.





1. Development of Social-Emotional Competencies



Social emotional education is a process that involves the formation and development of knowledge, attitudes and beliefs related to the five key competences, and involves both individuals without disabilities and individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2019).

As a result of social-emotional education, positive attitudes towards society are strengthened, risky behaviours are reduced, a person's achievements and his participation in social activities are improved.

The development of soft competences is a process that involves the formation and development of knowledge, attitudes and beliefs related to the five main competencies, and both young individuals and adults participate in it (CASEL, 2002).

Social and Emotional Education				
Self-conscious	Responsible decision making	Relations between	Self-control	Social awareness
 Recognizing your emotions Accurate self-recognition Cultural intelligence Recognition of one's strengths, needs and values Confidence in your feelings Self-efficacy Growth mindset 	 Problem identification Analysis of the situation Problem solving Reflection Moral responsibility 	 Communication Social engagement Building relationships Collaborative work Conflict management Ability to seek help 	 Impulsivity control Stress management Discipline Self-motivation Perseverance Setting goals 	 Ability to see from another's perspective Empathy Recognition of diversity Respect for others

Table 1. Five domains of social and emotional competence (CASEL,2012)







Young people with disabilities are often not recognised as political actors, which prevents them from actively participating in the democratic process of their country and community. This makes it necessary to raise awareness among young people with disabilities so that they can participate more actively in the political process.

Therefore, it is important to discuss the following issues:

- Do you think that people with and without disabilities have equal opportunities to enjoy democratic rights?
- How do you define the civic participation of young people with disabilities in the democratic life of countries, in the community?
- Do young people with disabilities not have significant political representation?

It is very important to know our strengths and weaknesses when we participate in a democratic society. To do this, it's important to reflect on our knowledge and skills, as this will make us feel more confident.

In this part, we will discuss how our emotions and their management affect our participation in democratic life

Emotions

To understand the importance and connections of your emotions, as well as the knowledge and management of emotions, you must first understand what it is.

Emotions are biological reactions that coordinate an adaptive response to important opportunities and challenges. In other words, emotions can be described as the reaction of individuals to the environment around them, designed to maintain or change their connection with that environment (Saarni et al., 1998).

There are many different emotions that affect how we live and interact with others. Sometimes it can even seem like we are being controlled by these emotions. Our choices, decisions, actions and perceptions are influenced by the emotions we are experiencing at the time.

Psychologists have tried to identify the different types of emotions that people experience. Several different theories have been developed to categorize and explain the emotions that people feel.





In the 1970s, psychologist Paul Eckman identified six basic emotions that he claimed were universally experienced in all human cultures. His identified emotions were happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, and anger.

	Describing basic emotions (feeling and expression)
Happiness	A pleasant emotion, expressed in confidence, pride in oneself, feeling of love. Joy-inducing experiences or states: well-being, cheerfulness, admiration, prosperity, security, love. Joy is expressed in a smile and laughter.
Anger	Hostile emotional reaction to obstacles to the satisfaction of personality needs, the achievement of goals, violation of the boundaries of personality. Anger can be caused by a wide variety of factors: prohibition, insult, criticism, forcing you to do what you do not want, deception, disapproval. Anger can make you feel "on the verge", frown on the forehead, eyebrows.
Sadness	The emotion of spiritual suffering that arises from loss or lack of something. Varieties of sadness - boredom, disappointment, longing, despair, mourning. Sadness is always a passive emotion. Crying, lowered corners of the lips are characteristic of sadness.
Fear	It is an emotion that arises when you feel a real or imaginary danger. There is a reaction of adaptation to the environment. She prepares the body to save from danger. Fear is associated with tension, the desire to hide, a tense face.
Disgust	It is an emotion that arises when something stinks, does not taste, is contagious, or causes nausea figuratively. Disgust promotes a retreat from an object that causes disgust. When a person feels disgusted he has slightly lowered his eyebrows, his wrinkled nose, sometimes his protruding tongue or the upper lip is raised.

Table 2. Centre for Clinical Psychology, 2022





Cognition of Emotions

Cognition of emotions or perception of emotions is defined as the ability to recognize emotions in oneself and others. It is not just a simple ability to perceive emotions, it is also about knowing or recognizing that an emotion exists, and it is about considering emotional experience.

Being able to define your emotions requires awareness and introspection. Anyone who wants to better understand and know themselves must pay attention to their feelings, body sensations and the reasons for the emergence of emotions.

Conscious sensing and naming	The reason	Body sensations
How do I feel now? Can I name my emotion?	What behavior or environmental factor triggered this feeling? What past experience or event is related?	Maybe I'm stressed? Maybe breathing increased? Maybe I'm sweating? Maybe my heart is beating restlessly?

Table 3. Prepared according to Ekman, 2021

For example:

Lina is a 22-year-old student with a physic disability. One day, her classmates invite her to a Halloween party downtown. After going to the place of the celebration, Lina realized that the party will be held on the third floor of the building, where there is no elevator. Description of Lina's feelings, according to the above table.





Conscious sensing and naming	The reason	Body sensations
How do I feel now? Can I name my emotion?	What behavior or environmental factor triggered this feeling? What past experience or event is related?	Maybe I'm stressed? Maybe breathing increased? Maybe I'm sweating? Maybe my heart is beating restlessly?
Anger	Anger at her friends who did not think about her, how she can get up to the third floor.	She feels heat in his face, her hands are shaking.
Fear	Fear of feeling uncomfortable, asking for help.	Feels a stronger beating of the heart and sweating

According to the example, we can see how different emotions and different body sensations can appear in the same circumstances. As mentioned above, the type of emotion may depend on the evaluation of the emotional experiences. The expression of the emotion depends on the self-regulation of the expression of the emotion (ABC Model, 2010).

Come up with an interpretation of this situation, when the student Lina would feel happy in the previously discussed example (presented situation). What should be the approach to the situation?

Discussion (1)





The concept of knowing emotions includes not only the separation and analysis of emotions, but also the expression of emotions, their recognition and coping. Emotions are not only individual states, they are intended for social communication. Thanks to the linguistic expression of emotions, individuals share information about their moods, intentions, and relationships with others (Kleef et al., 2004).

It can be immature when we express our feelings in a destructive, inappropriate way, and mature when we respond thoughtfully and apply social skills. It is worth noting that suppressing feelings is also classified as harmful expression. Immature expression of feelings can destroy communication and close relationships, hinder adaptation in the environment, and be a source of various mental and physical problems.

Emotions	Impulsive reaction	Purposeful, consciously chosen reaction
Happiness	Shouting for joy, enjoying, giving, smiling unconsciously	Support, seek more, get involved, laugh with gusto
Anger	Argue, yell, use physical force, passive aggression	Set boundaries, keep calm, take a break, take a deep breath, avoid, back off, remove distractions
Sadness	Seek help, cry, protest, feel shame	Withdraw, distract
Fear	Withdraw, avoid, freeze, scream (scream), worry, ruminate (repeatedly thinking about the fearful thing)	Breathe, increase awareness, withdraw
Disgust	Back off, avoid, become mechanical, feel sick (vomit)	Back off, avoid

Table 4. Prepared according to Ekman, 2021





Emotion Management

Emotion management is characterized as the ability to change the emotional response in various provocative situations. In everyday circumstances, emotion management is often used to reduce emotional arousal, especially negative emotions: anger and frustration (Thompson et al., 1996).

People who have developed the management of emotions, understand and express their emotions, recognize emotions in others and manage emotions in pursuit of adaptive behavior. The process of managing emotions consists of such actions: observation, evaluation of emotional reactions, changing their intensity, duration and state.

When it comes to managing emotions, it is important to remember that the expression of our emotions is affected by our thoughts as well as body reactions, so we will add the following steps to table 3 (presented before) (Cognitive behavior tree, 2010).

Conscious sensing and naming	The reason	Body sensations
How do I feel now? Can I name my emotion?	What behavior or environmental factor triggered this feeling? What past experience or event is related?	Maybe I'm stressed? Maybe breathing increased? Maybe I'm sweating? Maybe my heart is beating restlessly?
	Work with your thoughts/view of the problem	Work with your body's reactions
	Are my thoughts about the situation correct? Is the problem real? Does my experience matter?	Help the body to calm down. What helps me express my emotions the most.





2. Communication Styles



Communication is a process that involves the perception, exchange of information, interactions and relationships between two or more people.

The most important aspects of communications	Mutual perception (social perceptuality) It allows you to predict the behavior of another person in communication and plan your own.
	Exchange of information (communication) To convey information in the process of communication, two main methods of coding are used: verbal and non-verbal.
	Interrelationships These are long-term emotional connections, mutual obligations that arise between people.
	Interaction with each other It is the impact of communicators on each other.

Table 5. Prepared according to Psychology of Cominication, 2005

In this topic, we will discuss several communication styles that will help you better recognize yourself and your interlocutor. Each style of communication can be described on the basis of the components of social skills that a person uses. The most important characteristics of quality communication that we can single out are: Attention, Listening, Respect, Compassion, Clarity, Positive Body language, Openness, Not aggressiveness, Not to criticize (Almonaitiene et al., 2005). How important they are in communication and how their presence or absence affects our communication style will be discussed by examining the following examples.





Obomodomiotica	Ammonatus
Characteristics of successful communication	Aggressive Communication Style
Attention	-
Listening	-
Respect	-
Compassion	-
Clarity	+
Pasitive Body language	-
Openness	+
Not aggressiveness	-
Not to criticize	-

Tom is 22 years old and has a mobility disability. Tom lives alone, has no friends, does not actively participate in social life. As the country's presidential elections are approaching, Tom meets a neighbor in the yard. A neighbor asks if he will participate in the elections and Tom complains that he has difficulties in participating in the elections.

The neighbor begins to accuse the young man of being irresponsible, that young people do not care about anything. Blames Tom that young people do not understand politics and are worthless. The neighbor says "You should vote for "x" president". According to the neighbor, if more people thought as intelligently as he did, things would be much better. Tom feels his neighbor's angry look, aggressively raising his hands.

Aggressive communication of communication in which a person expresses their opinion out of time, out of place and in the wrong form. This is usually a consequence of not being able to behave in a stressful situation. Aggressive communication promotes aggressiveness, because for a person who is experiencing an attack, a protective mechanism is activated.

This is a sharp manner and character, a conservative attitude, a dictatorial posture and a readiness to attack anywhere, anytime. This style of communication often has a negative impact, but is so open and sincere, without masks and hidden, suppressed emotions that having people of this style of communication in your environment makes it easy to understand and accept them (Almonaitiene et al., 2005).





Characteristics of successful communication	Passive Communication Style
Attention	-
Listening	-
Respect	-
Compassion	-
Clarity	-
Pasitive Body language	-
Openness	-
Not aggressiveness	+
Not to criticize	-

Tom is 22 years old and has a mobility disability. Tom lives alone, has no friends, does not actively participate in social life. As the country's presidential elections are approaching, Tom meets a neighbor in the yard. A neighbor asks if he will participate in the elections. Tom complains that he has difficulties in participating in the elections. The neighbor looks indifferently, does not delve into Tom's problems. He says something incoherently and leaves.

Passive communication has a negative impact (in this case, more on oneself). For example, introverted instincts primarily encourage a person to obey.

A person who communicates in a passive style is shy, reluctant to participate in discussions, looks timid or uninterested, and tend to be away. This is the complete opposite of aggressive communication. The passive style of communication overshadows one's true feelings, being treated as if other people's rights are more important than their own (Almonaitiene et al., 2005).





Characteristics of successful communication	Passive- Aggressive Communication Style
Attention	-
Listening	+
Respect	-
Compassion	-
Clarity	-
Pasitive Body language	-/+
Openness	-
Not aggressiveness	+
Not to criticize	-

Tom is 22 years old and has a mobility disability. Tom lives alone, has no friends, does not actively participate in social life. As the country's presidential elections are approaching, Tom meets a neighbor in the yard. A neighbor asks if he will participate in the elections. Tom complains that he has difficulties in participating in the elections. The neighbor complains that he also has difficulties. Accuses Tom of being ineffective.

Passive-aggressive communication is used when one is afraid or unwilling to express one's dissatisfaction or anger loudly and openly. This is done mainly because of the desire to like and please other people. If you do not squabble or do not scold strongly with your hands, it does not mean that you are not aggressive. However, if you notice that it is difficult for others to communicate with you, trust and respect you, it is quite possible that people are discouraged by your passively aggressive style of communication.

The main difference between an aggressive and passive-aggressive style of communication is that when communicating aggressively, a person openly, directly and clearly expresses anger or dissatisfaction. A passive style of communication is applied to win, dominate or control, but education or status does not allow, so it is treated subtly, suppressing real feelings (Almonaitiene et al., 2005).





Characteristics of successful communication	Positive Communication Style
Attention	+
Listening	+/-
Respect	+
Compassion	+
Clarity	-
Pasitive Body language	+
Openness	-
Not aggressiveness	+
Not to criticize	+

Tom is 22 years old and has a mobility disability. Tom lives alone, has no friends, does not actively participate in social life. As the country's presidential elections are approaching, Tom meets a neighbor in the yard. A neighbor asks if he will participate in the elections. Tom complains that he has difficulties in participating in the elections. The neighbor asks what problems Tom has. Tom says he has to leave town on election day. The neighbor smiles and says that it is not a problem. He says that everything is being worked out so that Tom won't have to go through too much because everything will be fine. Everything is fine with the elections, and whatever happens, the result will be positive. The neighbor hugs Tom, wishes him a good day and says goodbye.

Positive communication does not mean that these people do not communicate, do not talk about unpleasant things. Far from it, you often have to share negative information as well.

However, if this is conveyed by previously sharing positive observations, such information is understood and accepted much easier. When communicating in a positive way, discussions become lively, open, full of positive emotions, and each unpleasant situation acquires a positive way of solving. This style of communication is characterized by attentiveness and listening. It helps to understand the other person's point of view and gain confidence.

And yet there is not a single truth or a single rule on how we must communicate. Each of us are unique personalities with all our perfections and imperfections. Often in different situations we use different styles. Sometimes thoughtfully, sometimes completely spontaneously (Almonaitiene et al., 2005).





Characteristics of successful communication	Assertive Communication Style
Attention	+
Listening	+
Respect	+
Compassion	+
Clarity	+
Pasitive Body language	+
Openness	+
Not aggressiveness	+
Not to criticize	+

Tom is 22 years old and has a mobility disability. Tom lives alone, has no friends, does not actively participate in social life. As the country's presidential elections are approaching, Tom meets a neighbor in the yard. A neighbor asks if he will participate in the elections. Tom complains that he has difficulties in participating in the elections. Tom's neighbor politely asks what kind of problem he has and how can he help him. Tom says he has to leave town on election day, so he thinks he'll miss the election. The neighbor asked if could give him advice and when Tom agreed, he explained that there are different ways to vote. Tom can vote by early voting, or vote in another city. Tom is surprised to learn new information. He thanks and assures that he will definitely participate in the elections. The two men politely shake hands, say goodbye and leave.

Assertive communication is a demonstration of polite perseverance, a person's ability to behave with self-confidence and benevolence, the ability to constructively defend one's rights, showing respect for others while taking responsibility for one's own behaviour.

Assertial communication is the justification of one's own opinion without distorting it, but at the same time respecting the opinions of others. In simple terms, an assertive person is not passive and prone to adaptation. An assertive person does not change their mind just to agree with other people's opinions and does not underestimate either other people's opinions or their own, even if they do not coincide with their own point of view.

Simply put – you have your own opinions and points of view, you are not afraid to express them or talk about them, you do not try to instill them in others, but you know how to defend them (Almonaitiene et al., 2005).





As we can see from the examples given, the assertive communication style is the most correct and appropriate in all aspects of quality communication: Attention, Listening, Respect, Compassion, Clarity, Positive body language, Openness, Non-aggression, Non-criticism.

In order to improve the quality of your communication, it is very important to improve all these qualities. The discussion (2) will help you understand your personal weaknesses that hinder quality communication.

Characteristics of successful communication	Assertive Communication Style
Attention	
Listening	
Respect	
Compassion	
Clarity	
Pasitive Body language	
Openness	
Not aggressiveness	
Not to criticize	

In pairs, discuss the most important qualities of successful communication, discuss which qualities are personally important in communication, and which qualities you personally lack.

Discussion (2)





3. Conflict Management



Conflict is defined as the perceived incompatibility of actions, goals, or ideas. Conflict is any situation where different values, expectations, opinions, interpretations, needs or desires of people collide (Dictionary of conflict resolution, 1999).

Conflicts

Task-oriented conflicts

They arise when opinions about goals, the desired result, about procedures, resource management; when interpreting available data, etc. Such conflicts are the engine of change.

Social-emotional conflicts

Their source is interpersonal relationships between people. Socio-emotional conflicts arise when the world view, individual views, personal needs or interests are different. Often they arise due to influence, status.

Table 6. Prepared according to S.P.Robins, 2005

For examle:

Lina is hearing impaired and works in the IT sphere in a small company. The company has about 6 employees: Lina, her director, three colleagues and an accountant. Lina always tries to be a responsible employee, completes all tasks on time. Due to her hearing disability, Lina does not participate in company parties and does not have close relationships with her colleagues.

Lately, Lina has started to think that she gets more assignments than the rest of her colleagues. They leave work earlier, chat more during work. One day, when the manager assigned her another additional task, Lina expressed her dissatisfaction, a conflict arose.

What type of conflict is there in the given example? What arguments show this?

Discussion (3)





Conflicts are more easily resolved when disagreements are not deep-rooted and when everyone involved in the conflict wants to resolve it. It is also very important to be able to manage emotions and positively evaluate the efforts of conflict participants to resolve it. In order to resolve conflicts effectively, it is important to understand the situation that caused the conflict, that is:

- Find out the causes of the conflict;
- To be aware of choices;
- Know yourself and your partner(s) well enough;
- Have the knowledge and skills to help resolve conflicts constructively.

In the presented table, we can see how the conflict develops. In order to resolve the conflict correctly, it is important to recognize your feelings, set goals and choose your strategy in each phase.

In the initial stage, we recognize our feelings, thoughts and attitude towards the current situation. It is very important here to manage emotions (the management of which we talked about in the previous chapter). In the rise and peak stage, we name our goals and choose our behavior pattern to achieve our goal.

Stages of conflict	Description	Actions
Initial stage	The emergence of a conflict situation. Awareness of the conflict situation, self-awareness.	Type of conflict, emotions, thoughts
Ascent stage	The beginning of an open conflictual interaction.	Choice of behavior during
Peak	The development of open conflict.	conflict
Fall	The end.	

Table 7. Communication Psychology, 2001

Thomas Kilmann distinguished five styles of behavior in conflict situations: competition, accommodating, compromise, avoidance and collaborating. Styles are distinguished according to attention to the interests of one's own and the other conflicting party. We will briefly review the features of each style and their application possibilities (Communication Psychology, 2001).





Competition is a battle that only one side wins. People whose behavior is dominated by competitive style usually actively defend their position, tend to quickly solve problems and seek a favorable conflict resolution. They are not interested in cooperating with others, they try to satisfy their own needs and interests first by forcing the other person to accept their solution to the problem.

The essence of the collaborating style is the active participation of both sides in solving the problem, seeking to satisfy their needs to the maximum, but also taking into account the interests of the opponent and finding ways to satisfy them. Therefore, the result of cooperation is a solution that fully satisfies the interests of both parties.

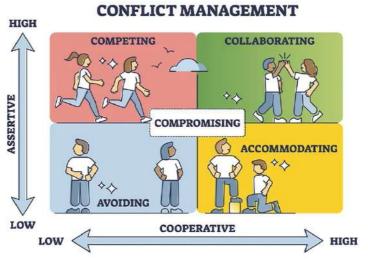


Table 5 Thomas Kilmann - Conflict Model, 1974

Avoidance is indifference to the interests of both one's own and the other party without seeking a solution to the conflict. When one avoids conflict physically (e.g., leaving the room) or emotionally (taking the position "I don't care"), one loses the opportunity to participate in the course of the situation and to act on it. Other possible forms of conflict avoidance are switching to another topic, postponing actions, withdrawing from the situation.

Accommodating is giving up one's own interests in order to satisfy the interests of the other side. People who tend to use the adaptation strategy actively participate in the situation in search of a solution to the problem, work together with the opponent, try to satisfy his interests and do what he wants, but do not defend their needs.

Compromise is a style of conflict resolution where mutual concessions are made to achieve certain benefits. Compromise is usually viewed positively as a way to achieve a just outcome of a conflict. In the negotiation process, the needs of both sides cannot be completely satisfied.





Competition is suitable when:

- A decision needs to be made very guickly.
- One of the parties has sufficient authority to do so and it is clear that the proposed solution is the best one.
- The outcome of the situation and the implementation of the proposed solution are very important to one of the parties.
- It is necessary to control the situation in order to protect other people from possible negative consequences.

For example: Conflict with a friend, which way of leisure to choose. If you have enough arguments and experiences about your proposed choices, you have better possibility to prove your points.

The compromise style is suitable for use when:

- The problem is relatively simple and clear.
- The interests of both parties coincide but cannot be satisfied simultaneously.
- You don't have much time to resolve the conflict, or you want to resolve it as soon as possible.
- You can quickly reach a temporary agreement, and then return to the problem and analyze its root causes.
- The problem and its solution are not very significant for both parties, they may change their original goals.
- You'd rather gain something than lose everything.

For example: You have an argument with a friend about democratic life.

Both of you reach an agreement that you and your friend have enough knowledge about different aspects of democracy.

Accommodating styles are suitable for use when:

- The problem is not very important to you personally.
- You understand that the situation is much more significant for the other person than for you.
- You want to maintain peace and good mutual relations with another person.
- Maintaining good mutual relations is more important to you than protecting your own interests.
- You understand that the other side is right.







For example: You have a work related disagreement with your colleague. Resolution of a conflict is not important to you, therefore you agree with your colleagues suggestions.

Avoidance style is appropriate to use when:

- The problem and the outcome of the situation are not very important to you, so it is not worth wasting your energy searching for a solution.
- The situation seems hopeless, and there is no good reason to continue communicating with the opponent.
- You do not have enough power to solve the problem in your favor.
- Trying to solve the problem is dangerous, because openly discussing the conflict will only make the situation worse.
- The tension is very high, and you feel the need to reduce it.
- The conflict does not directly affect your interests, and your participation cannot affect further events.

For example: A conflict with a partner, due to home repairs. You agree with his proposed wall color, because he is more interested and understanding about it.

The collaborative style is suitable for use when:

- Solving the problem is very significant for both parties; the object of the dispute is complex and requires a detailed discussion;
- Both sides are ready to spend enough time to basically clarify the deep needs and interests:
- For both sides, their interests are very important, and compromise is unacceptable for them;
- Both sides have a good attitude towards each other, are ready to listen to each other and respect different opinions;
- Both sides have equal authority or agree to ignore their differences in order to seek a solution from equal positions.

For example: Conflict with a colleague in the same hierarchy of power and with whom you have a good relationship

Talk things over and put different points of view and objectives on the table.







For example:

Marius has been working for the second year in a large company whose goal is sales. According to the company's policy, the remuneration for the work depends on the realized sales. Marius tries very hard to do his job well. Lately, Marius feels that he receives fewer tasks from manager and therefore does less sales than his colleagues. Marius expresses his dissatisfaction to his manager, a conflict arises.

Examine an example of Marius and his manager conflict. What kind of conflict behavior would you choose? Explain your choice according to all these steps:

- The causes of the conflict?
- Goal of the conflict?
- Impact of the conflict on participants?
- How to achieve the goal? Impact on the future?

Discussion (4)







Read the following questions and select the correct answer.

- 1. What does self-conscious competence mean?
- a) Collaborative work, conflict management, ability to seek help
- b) Analysis of the situation, problem solving, reflection
- c) Recognizing your emotions, accurate self-recognition, cultural intelligence
- 2. What are the reasons for our emotions?
- a) Our thoughts
- b) Parenting
- c) Education
- 3. The most important characteristics of quality communication are two Attention and Positive Body language?
- a) True
- b) False
- 4. When you understand that the situation is much more significant for the other person than it is for you and you want to maintain peace and good mutual relations with the other person, what style of behavior will you choose to deal with the conflict?
- a) Competiting
- b) Accommodating
- c) Compromising
- d) Avoiding
- e) Collaborating
- 5. When a person speaks to you clearly and openly, what style of communication are they using?
- a) Passive style of communication
- b) Aggressive style of communication
- c) Positive style of communication





Quiz Solutions

- 1. c) Recognizing your emotions, accurate self-recognition, cultural intelligence
- 2. a) Our thoughts
- 3. b) False
- 4. b) Accommodating
- 5. b) Aggressive style of communication





Session Plan



Training designation: Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities

Module:

Relationships and socio-emotional learning

Trainer:

Session n.:1

Duration: 1h30

Date:

Main objectives:

- Understand Social emotional education
- To know and recognize basic emotions
- Understand Cognition of emotions
- Understand Emotion management

Learning outcomes:

- What is Social emotional education
- · What emotions are basic
- · What is the recognition and management of emotions

Methods: Expositive and active participation

Contents:

- Social emotional education competence
- Discuss the basic emotions
- · Understand Cognition and management of emotions





Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials
10 min.	Reception of trainees and introduction to the topic.	• PPT
20 min.	Development of social-emotional competencies and cognitions of emotions.	• PPT
15 min.	Discussion 1: Come up with and discuss the situation in pairs.	Discussion 1 in A5 per group
15 min.	Analyse the Management of emotions.	• PPT
30 min.	Activity: Represent positive and negative ways of expressing emotions.	Paper sheetsPens
Assessment methods: Attendance sheet		





Training designation: Promoting the Democratic Participation of Young People with Disabilities Module: Trainer: Relationships and socio-emotional learning Session n.: 2 **Duration: 2h10** Date: Main objectives: • Understand characteristics of successful communication Understand conflict Management • Understand/recognize styles of behavior in conflict situations; **Learning outcomes:** • What are the communication styles What is Management of conflict • What is Styles of behavior in conflict situations

Contents:

- Communication styles
- Management of conflict
- Styles of behavior in conflict situations

Methods: Expositive and active participation





Hours	Activities (Face-to-face/sychronous)	Resources and pedagogical materials
30 min.	Analyse of Coommunication styles: Aggressive communication style Passive style of communication Passive-aggressive communication style Positive style of communication Assertive Communication style 	• PPT
10 min.	Discussion 2: Discuss the most important qualities of successful communication, discuss which qualities are personally important in communication, and which qualities you personally lack.	Discussion 2 in A5 per group
10 min	Tipe of conflicts	• PPT
10 min.	Discussion 3: Type of conflict is in the given example. What arguments show this.	Discussion 3 in A5 per group
30 min.	Analyse of Styles of behavior in conflict situations	• PPT
10 min.	Discussion 4: The causes of the conflict; Goal of the conflict; Impact of the conflict on participants; How to achieve the goal; Impact on the future;	Discussion 4 in A5 per group
30 min.	Activity 10: Presentation of conflict behavior	Paper sheetsPensFive cards with the name of a certain behavior
Assessmen	t methods: Attendance sheet	Deliavioi



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PARTICIPATORY ACTIONS WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES







Learning Objectives & Outcomes





OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

• Providing practical activities that enable people with disabilities to be better prepared for active participation in the community and to get involved in democratic processes and decisions in the future.

LEARNING OUTCOMES



 Access to a set of tools and exercises that can implement with the young people, in order to prepare them for situations where they are called upon to participate and make decisions.

KEYWORDS

Young people with disabilities; Participation; Democracy; Promotion; Activities.





1. Practical Tools for Trainers



Strategies for Promoting Critical Thinking

Visual Aids: Use simple and clear visual aids like pictures, diagrams, and symbols to explain concepts. Visuals can help young people with intellectual disabilities better grasp ideas and promote critical thinking. For example, create an image of a school or classroom with a teacher and students. Use an open book or a blackboard to symbolise education. This visual represents the right to access quality education.

Simplified Language: Communicate in plain and straightforward language. Avoid jargon and complex terminology to ensure that the content is accessible and easy to understand. For example: "The right to work means you have the right to have a job and earn money. You can choose the kind of job you like, learn new skills, and be treated fairly at work. Nobody should stop you from working because of who you are. It's about having opportunities and being respected at your job." Such simplified language aims to make the concept of the right to work accessible and understandable for individuals with disabilities.

Storytelling: Share stories or narratives that illustrate key concepts. Stories can engage participants and help them relate to the information on a personal level. For example, create social stories that focus on specific situations or behaviours, helping individuals with disabilities better understand and navigate social interactions.

Questioning Techniques: Ask open-ended questions that encourage participants to think critically and express their opinions. Use prompts like "What do you think?" or "Why do you think that is important?"

Tools to Create Debates and Make Decisions

Role-Playing: Engage participants in role-playing scenarios related to democratic processes. For example, simulate a mock election or a town hall meeting where they can practice making decisions and expressing their views. Use simple language, images or painting to be more inclusive for all the participants.







Visual Decision-Making Boards: Create decision-making boards with images or symbols representing different choices. Participants can point to their preferred options, making decision-making more accessible.

Voting Cards: Use simple voting cards with pictures or colours to help participants cast their votes during debates or decision-making exercises. This can make the process more interactive and inclusive.

Group Discussions: Facilitate small group discussions with clear discussion guidelines. Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak and share their thoughts in a supportive environment.

Techniques for Fostering Active Participation

Peer Support: Encourage peer support among participants. Pair individuals to work together, ensuring that they feel comfortable and supported in contributing to discussions and activities.

Visual Timetables: Create visual timetables or schedules that outline the session's activities step by step. This visual aid helps participants understand what to expect and reduces anxiety.

Use of Technology: Incorporate technology, such as tablets or accessible apps, to engage participants. Interactive games or quizzes can make learning and participation more enjoyable. For example, provide a person with disabilities with a tablet or smartphone with an accessible, inclusive education quiz app installed.

Inclusive Games: Design games and activities that promote teamwork and cooperation. These can be structured to accommodate various abilities and learning styles. For example, such an activity can promote the right to education for all.





Non-Formal Education Approaches

Art-Based Activities: Incorporate art-based activities like drawing, painting, or crafting to explore democratic concepts. Art can serve as a creative outlet for self-expression and learning. For example, such an activity can promote their self-expression and the right to freedom.

Interactive Storytelling: Create interactive stories where participants make choices that impact the storyline. This approach can help them understand the consequences of different decisions.

Music and Movement: Use music and movement to engage participants. Songs, dance, and rhythmic activities can be both fun and educational.

Sensory Experiences: Incorporate sensory experiences, like tactile materials or sensory bins, to enhance learning. Sensory activities can cater to a variety of sensory preferences and abilities.

These approaches and the activities presented in the next chapter aim to make the learning experience more accessible, enjoyable and inclusive, so they can and should be **adapted to the specific needs of young people with disabilities**. Using simple language, visual aids and interactive methods, the aim is to promote the involvement, critical thinking and active participation of participants.





2. Participatory Activities



This sixth module was co-created by the five partners. Each developed two activities that seek to encourage and promote the participation of people with disabilities in democratic processes.

These activities can be implemented during the rest of the training or can be used separately to work on a specific aspect.

The summary of these activities is presented in the following table:

Module	Name of the activity	Brief description	Duration	Level of complexity
1. Human Rights & Civil Rights of people with disabilities	Activity 1: Rights in Pictures and Painting	This activity focuses on understanding human and civil rights for people with disabilities using visuals and creative expression. Participants will select a human right and create a simple painting that represents that right. If they want to express themselves through another type of art, the activity can be adapted.	20 minutes	Low level of difficulty
1. Human Rights & Civil Rights of people with disabilities	Activity 2: Rights Art Exhibition	This activity involves showcasing the artwork created by participants in the previous activity as part of a "Rights Art Exhibition." Each participant will have the opportunity to present their artwork and share their thoughts on the human rights they depicted.	2 hours	Low level of difficulty





Topic	Name of the activity	Brief description	Duration	Level of complexity
2. Democracy and Democratic Participation of people with disabilities	Activity 3: Making Links	This activity allows to learn how to negotiate about the rights and responsibilities of citizens, the government, NGOs, and the media in a democracy. The participants are divided in four groups representing the citizens, the government, the media and the NGOs. The purpose is to draw a map of the relationship within the 4 "actors" in an ideal democratic society.	2 hours	High level of difficulty
2. Democracy and Democratic Participation of people with disabilities	Activity 4: The Ladder of Participation	In this activity participants are involved in role play and discussion. They are asked to reflect on the meaning of youth participation and discuss ways of increasing their own participation in the democratic society.	2 hours	Mederate level of difficulty
3. The Main European Democratic Values	Activity 5: Debate in Motion	This activity is short and quick and is used as a way to start discussions. It is particularly efficient with young people who are less comfortable in formal conversations because it allows all participating people to express their points of view without having to talk.	20 minutes	Low level of difficulty





Topic	Name of the activity	Brief description	Duration	Level of complexity
3. The Main European Democratic Values	Activity 6: Dear Prime Minister Writing a letter	This activity is about writing a letter to the Government on a specific topic, developing ideas and opinions about it, as well as possible solutions that the Government should implement. Facilitators can use prepared and printed letter templates with the formal greeting "Dear Minister" as start. Blank paper can also be used.	Up to 1 hour	Moderate level of difficulty
4. A Voice in the Decision-Making Process	Activity 7: Election Campaign	Role play of an information session on the 2024 European Elections, in which young people are divided into two groups: 1) politicians from different parties and 2) Young people who want to have their doubts clarified so they can then make a decision.	1h30	Moderate level of difficulty
4. A Voice in the Decision-Making Process	Activity 8: Participate in a Municipal Assembly	Participate in a Municipal Assembly or a Parliamentary session, giving young people the opportunity to be in a real political discussion environment and be able to participate in it.	2 hours	High level of difficulty





Topic	Name of the activity	Brief description	Duration	Level of complexity
5. Relationships and socio- emotional learning	Activity 9: Socio- emotional learning components	This activity will help deepen the education of social and emotional skills, allowing young people to understand their emotional strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, it will allow us to discover how emotions and their management affect individual participation in democratic life.	30 minutes	Moderate level of difficulty
5. Relationships and socio- emotional learning	Activity 10: Communicat ion Styles and Conflict Management	This activity will help the participants to look more specifically and at the same time more broadly at the mechanism of problem solving. The strength of this activity is that participants can look at their problems from another person's perspective. In this way, you develop a broader perspective.	1h30	Moderate level of difficulty





3. Activities Description



Activity 1: Rights in Pictures and Painting

MODULE 6	Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities
TOPIC	1.Human Rights & Civil Rights of people with disabilities
OBJECTIVES	 Understanding the concept of Human Rights Understanding the concept of Civil Rights
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND CONTEXTUALIZATION	This activity focuses on understanding human and civil rights for people with disabilities using visuals and creative expression. Participants will select a human right and create a simple painting that represents that right. If they want to express themselves through another type of art, the activity can be adapted.
TIME	20 minutes
NECESSARY RESOURCES	 Printed copies of the infographics of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Bill of Human Rights. Technological equipment. Paper, watercolours, coloured pencils, markers.
	Step 1) Use the Infographics of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Bill of Human Rights.
	Step 2) Provide each participant with a printed copy of the infographic. Ensure that the visuals are clear and easy to interpret. Use also technology to discover together the interactive International Bill.
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	Step 3) Ask participants to select one human right from it that they believe is crucial for people with disabilities. If it is easier and suitable for the participants you can also use case studies for a better understanding of the human rights barriers.
	Step 4) Provide participants with art supplies such as paper, watercolours, coloured pencils, or markers.
	Step 5) Instruct participants to create a simple painting that represents the human right they selected. They should use colours and images to convey their understanding of the right and its importance. Encourage participants to be creative and expressive in their artwork.





REFERENCES	International Bill of Human Rights: https://humanrights.gov.au/international-bill-rights
ATTACHMENTS	-









Activity 2: Rights Art Exhibition

MODULE 6	Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities	
TOPIC	1.Human Rights & Civil Rights of people with disabilities	
OBJECTIVES	 Interaction with other people regarding Human & Civil Rights Discussing in public regarding this topic 	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND CONTEXTUALIZATION	This activity involves showcasing the artwork created by participants in the previous activity as part of a "Rights Art Exhibition." Each participant will have the opportunity to present their artwork and share their thoughts on the human rights they depicted.	
TIME	30 minutes to organise the exhibition & 1 hour to 2 hours for the walking through and the discussion (about 2 hour in total)	
NECESSARY RESOURCES	 Room and space for the exhibition Necessary tools (display materials/technological equipment, etc.) 	
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	 Step 1) Set up an exhibition area within the room where participants can display their paintings. Ensure that each participant has a designated space for their artwork. Step 2) Arrange the paintings in an organised manner so that they are easily visible to all participants. Step 3) Invite participants to walk through the exhibition and view the paintings. Step 4) Participants will now have the opportunity to explain their artwork and share their ideas about human rights with the visitors and other colleagues. They should describe the elements of their artwork and how they relate to their chosen human right. Encourage participants to express why they believe the human right they have portrayed is essential for people with disabilities. 	
	Step 5) Create an inclusive and supportive atmosphere where participants can ask questions and engage in discussions about the artwork and rights.	
REFERENCES	-	
ATTACHMENTS	-	





Activity 3: Making Links

MODULE 6	Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities	
TOPIC	2. Democracy and Democratic Participation of people with disabilities	
OBJECTIVES	 To develop an understanding of the link between rights and responsibilities To develop discussion and co-operation skills To promote civic responsibility 	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND CONTEXTUALIZATI ON	This activity involves negotiation about the rights and responsibilities of citizens, the government, NGOs and the media in a democracy. Related rights • The right to participate in government and in free elections • Freedom of information and expression • Everyone has duties to the community	
TIME	2 hours	
NECESSARY RESOURCES	 A sheet of A4 paper and pencil for each group for making notes 4 large sheets of paper (A3) or flipchart paper (one for each group's "record sheet") 3 markers, (one red, one green and one blue) for each group 4 balls of string or wool (a different colour yarn for each group) A roll of sticky tape (Scotch tape) for each group Scissors Rules of play handout sheet, one per group 	
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	 Step 1) Prepare the material: Divide the participants into four equal-sized groups to represent four "actors" in a democracy: the government, the NGO sector, the media and the citizens. Cut 1.5 m long strands of wool (6 of each colour, one colour per group). Step 2) Explain that the purpose of the activity is to draw a "map" of the relationships between four "actors" within (an ideal) democratic society. Setp 3) Give each group a sheet of A4 paper and a pencil to use for making notes and ask them to spend ten minutes brainstorming the role that their "actor" plays in a democratic society - what are the main functions that it performs? At the end of the time, they should agree on the five most important functions. Step 4) Each group has to prepare their "record sheets" on a large sheet of paper (A3 or flip chart paper) and a red marker pen. Ask them to write down the "actor" they represent at the top and underneath their five most important functions. 	





Step 5) Bring the groups together to present their "record sheets". Let the groups share their reactions. Ask them if they agree about the main functions of these four "actors". If they wish to, the groups may amend their lists in the light of the feedback.

Step 6) Now separate the four groups again and hand out the green pens. Give them fifteen minutes to brainstorm what they require from each other, in order to carry out their own functions. When the time is almost up, ask the groups to prioritise the two most important demands they make of each of the other "actors" and to list these under separate headings using the green marker pen.

Step 7) Hand out the copies of the "Rules of play", go through them and make sure everyone understands what they have to do. Then ask the groups to bring their "record sheets" into the middle of the room and to lay them in a square about 1m apart (see diagram). Ask members of each group to position themselves in their "corner".

Step 8) Hand each group their 6 strands of wool, a roll of tape and a blue pen.

Step 9) The rounds of negotiation now begin. You should allow 10 minutes for each round. Remind people that the aim is to map out relationships between the different "actors" and that when a demand is accepted one piece of wool should be taped between the two papers to signify acceptance of responsibility.

Step 10) Move on to the debriefing and evaluation while participants are still sitting around the map.

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Debriefing and reflection in big group:

- Was it hard to think of the functions that the government, NGOs, media and citizens perform in a democracy?
- Were there any disagreements within the groups about which claims should be accepted or rejected?
- Which of the claims made on other groups did they not accept as responsibilities? Why was this? Do you think that such cases would cause any problems in reality?
- Were there responsibilities that each group accepted but which they had not recognised before? How do they feel about this now?
- Did the activity show people anything new about democratic society that they did not know before? Were there any surprises?
- · Which rights are at stake in this activity?
- Article 29 of the UDHR states: 'Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible'. Which are the most important duties you have at present in your life?
- What are the roles of the different actors in ensuring that nobody's rights are violated?
- What are the different actors' roles in ensuring that everyone has access to human rights education?





REFERENCES	https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/making-links
ATTACHMENTS	Rules of playTips and variations

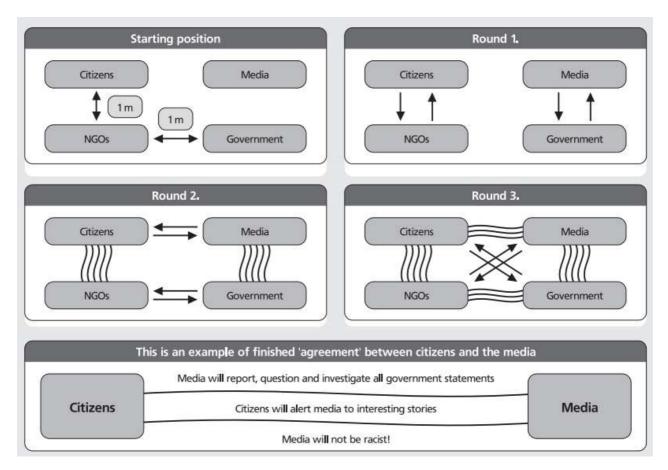
Rules of Play

- 1. The aim of the exercise is for each "actor" to get their demands accepted by each of the other "actors".
- 2. The negotiations are made between pairs of "actors" in three rounds as follows:
 - Round 1: citizens and NGOs negotiate, and the media and the government negotiate.
 - Round 2: citizens and the media negotiate, and NGOs and the government negotiate.
 - Round 3: citizens and the government negotiate, and the media and NGOs negotiate.
- 3. In each round, the pairs themselves decide who is to start and they take it in turns to make demands of each other.
- 4. When making a demand, people should state the demand clearly and concisely. They should also explain what it involves and why they are making this particular demand, that is, why it is important to enable them to fulfil their own functions.
- 5. When deciding whether or not to accept a demand, people should decide whether what is being asked is fair, and whether they would be able to carry it out.
- 6. If the demand is accepted, then the pairs use one of the "demander's" strands of yarn and tape it between the two "record sheets" to signify the agreement that has been made. The accepting group should make a brief note on their "record sheet" in a blue pen to remind them of their responsibilities and what they agreed to do.
- 7. If the second group rejects the demand, the piece of wool is put aside.
- 8. Repeat the negotiations, until all demands have been discussed.
- 9. In each round the process is repeated until there are connections between all four "actors".
- 10. At the end of the process there will be a map to represent the relationships between the different actors in a democracy.

Each of the actors will have a "record sheet" with a list of their functions in red pen, a list of demands of the other "actors" in green and a list of actions they have agreed to take in order to meet the demands of the other "actors" written in blue. The demands and actions are represented by coloured yarn.







Activity interaction diagram

Tips for Facilitators

If groups struggle to come up with functions, try asking them to think about the kind of thing their "actor" does, and what would be missing if it did not exist! You may want to provide some examples to help groups to get started:

- Governments draft legislation, decide on general policy, and ensure that the country meets its budget.
- NGOs lobby for minority interests, take up issues which the government (or opposition) fails to address, and campaign for changes in legislation.
- The media reports on government policy, investigates issues, and provides analysis and commentary.
- The "functions" of citizens include everything that is important in a democratic society: ideas may range from standing for parliament, engaging in human rights activism, setting up organisations to protect particular groups, questioning and becoming involved in political life, and so on.





Variations

The activity may be made more or less complicated by using different numbers of "actors" within society: for example, you may want to add "businesses", "minorities", or "disadvantaged groups". However, this will make the negotiation process a lot more complicated, and you may not want all of the groups to exchange demands with each of the others. You could also use different categories with more direct relevance to young people's reality – for example, replace "citizens" by "young people" and "the government" by "school".

The activity could be simplified by removing one or more of the groups: for example, by working with only "citizens" and "the government". This may be preferable if you have a small group.

You may want to try the activity without the use of the "record sheets": during the negotiation process, someone from the first group should hold one end of the piece of wool, and offer the other end to someone in the second group. If people keep hold of their ends, the whole "society" should be physically linked up by the end of the process!

Ideas for Action

Do the activity again but this time use it as a method to analyse how your local government, the local media, local NGOs and citizens interact with each other. Identify where the links could be better and bring this to the attention of the "actors", either through writing letters, a blog or an article in the local media. You could make a practical start to improve the links between your own organisation, school, college or club with the other "actors".





Activity 4: The Ladder of Participation

MODULE 6	Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities
TOPIC	2. Democracy and Democratic Participation of people with disabilities
OBJECTIVES	 To reflect on the ways young people can participate and the factors which impede or facilitate their participation To develop skills to co-operate, organise and take action together with others To cultivate a sense of responsibility for one's own actions
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND CONTEXTUALIZATION	This activity involves role play and discussion. Participants reflect on the meaning of youth participation and discuss ways of increasing their own participation in the democratic society. Right to participate in government and free elections Right to participate in the cultural life Freedom of opinion and information
TIME	2 hours
NECESSARY RESOURCES	 Handout: "The Ladder of Participation" Large sheet of paper, marker pen and scissors "Post-its" or small pieces of paper to be taped on a wall A wall
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	 Step 1) Prepare the material: Make copies of the handout, one per small group Make 6 signs: obstacles, control, no control, enabling factors, control, no control Step 2) What is the ladder of participation? 1. Ask participants what they understand by the term "youth participation". 2. Hand out the diagram of the ladder of participation and explain that this is one model for thinking about different ways of participating. Briefly discuss the different levels. 3. Divide the group into 8 small groups. Allocate one level of participation to each group and ask them to prepare a short 2-3 minute role play to illustrate the level they have been allocated. 4. When the groups are ready, invite them to present their role plays in turn. Allow questions or time for comments between the different role plays if participants want.



STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	Step 3) How we participate? 5. Ask participants to work individually for 5 minutes, trying to find examples in their own lives for as many of the 8 levels as they can. Tell them to think about what they do in all aspects of their lives: at home, school, clubs, work and with family and friends. 6. Then invite participants to share their examples in small groups of 4-5 people. While discussing the examples, ask participants to come up with ideas for obstacles (things that stop them from moving up the ladder) and enabling factors (things that help them to move up the ladder). They should write each idea on a separate "post-it". 7. While the groups are discussing, stick the prepared headings "obstacles" and "enabling factors" on the wall about 2 metres apart. Then bring the groups into plenary and ask them to stick their papers on the wall under the headings. 8. Review the two lists with the participants. Ask for clarification about any ambiguous statements and try to resolve any disagreements between participants about the positioning of the statements. 9. Now put the "control" and "no control" headings up on the wall under the first headings and ask participants to sort each list into two sub-lists according to whether the statements are about things that they have (or could have) control over, or whether the statements refer to external factors that are out of their control. 10. Finally review the positions of the papers in the four lists. Debriefing and reflection in big.group: • Did the activity help you think more clearly about the ways you participate in different areas of your life? What surprised you most? • Do you think that youth participation in general is high or low – in your school, club, and community? What are the reasons? • Does it matter whether young people participate actively or not? Why? • Do they regard low participation as a result mostly of internal (psychological) factors, or mostly as a result of external factors? • How do people feel when they are able to participate at a hi
	 "rung" than they do at the moment? If so, in which areas? What are the reasons for doing so, and what are the reasons against? How many people feel they could participate more than they do at present, and how many feel that they will do so? If so, how and when? How is the right to participate in decision making guaranteed in human rights documents?
REFERENCES	https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/on-the-ladder
ATTACHMENTS	Tips for facilitators • "The Ladder of Participation" • Tips for facilitators





Tips for Facilitators

When the group tries to think about enabling factors and obstacles, help them to put as many statements as possible under the "control" category. You may want to give a few examples or remind them that the "obstacles" may be psychological as well as physical or structural. In the discussions, encourage participants to find ways around things that appear to be obstacles, for example, if they suggest that "an authority (teachers or board of governors in a club or college) won't let us", find out if they have tried asking!

You could use the role plays at the beginning to explore obstacles and enabling factors, rather than having young people think about cases in their own lives.

Ideas for Action

Get the group to draw up a list of things in their local community that they would like to change. Then ask them to identify one or two items on this list where they believe they may be able to have an impact, and to explore how their voice could be heard or how they could influence change in some other way. Then encourage them to pursue these ideas in action!





Activity 5: Debate in Motion

MODULE 6 Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities	
TOPIC	3.The Main European Democratic Values
OBJECTIVES	 Start discussions Express points of view without having to talk.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND	This activity involves creating a debate within the group to improve the understanding of the topics of the main european democratic values, to make young people with disabilities feel more empowered, and to give them the opportunity to express their opinions. Before the activity, the facilitator must create between 10 and 20 statements that encourage the debate. These statements must be linked to the main theme of the topic. They can be controversial,
CONTEXTUALIZATION	 causing disagreement among participants. Examples: In Europe, every young person with disability has the same opportunity of participation Young people with disabilities have enough support from the EU institutions Democracy is efficient in guaranteeing everyone's rights
TIME	20 minutes
NECESSARY RESOURCES	Agree and disagree signsBetween 10 and 20 statements
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	Step 1) At the beginning of the activity, the facilitators will put up an "agree" sign on one side of the room and a "disagreement" sign on the opposite side of the room, and one of "I don't know" in between. Step 2) The facilitator will ask the participants to stand up, and they will read the first statement to the group. The group will be asked to position themselves more near the "agree" or "disagree" sign, depending on what level they agree or disagree with the statement (in order to create a gradual scale). Step 3) Then, the facilitator will ask them why they have chosen that placement in order to know their opinion and start a debate.
REFERENCES	-
ATTACHMENTS	-





Activity 6: Dear Prime Minister... Writing/drawing a letter

MODULE 6	Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities
TOPIC	3.The Main European Democratic Values
OBJECTIVES	This activity intends to give a voice to people with disabilities by expressing their concerns and opinions about their quality of life in our democratic processes.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND CONTEXTUALIZATION	This activity is about writing or drawing a letter to the Government on a specific topic, developing ideas and opinions about it, as well as possible solutions that the Government should implement. Facilitators can use prepared and printed letter templates with the formal greeting "Dear Minister" as start. Blank paper can also be used.
TIME	Up to 1 hour
NECESSARY RESOURCES	Piece of papersPens
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	 Step 1) Before beginning the activity, the facilitator needs to explain the purpose of the activity so that the group can think and process what they would like to write to the Government (about 20 mins). Step 2) The facilitator will provide papers and pencils to write the letter. Step 3) At the end of the activity, the letters can actually be sent to the Government (not mandatory).
REFERENCES	Consejo de la Juventud de España. Guía de Herramientas IX Ciclo Diálogo con la Juventud. [Online]. Available at: https://dialogojuventud.cje.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/IX-Ciclo-Di%C3%A1logo-con-la-juventud-Guia-de-Herramientas.pdf
ATTACHMENTS	-





Activity 7: Election Campaign

MODULE 6	Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities
TOPIC	4. A Voice in the Decision-Making Process
OBJECTIVES	 Reflect and create arguments to defend a vision on a given topic. Identify the correct way to present arguments. Work on confidence in asking concrete questions. Promote conscious and informed decision-making.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND CONTEXTUALIZA TION	The elections for the European Parliament will take place next year 2024, between the 6th and 9th of June. This being the motto, the aim is to carry out a role-play in which a clarification session from an electoral campaign is recreated. in which young people are divided into two groups: 1) politicians from different parties and 2) young people who want to have their doubts clarified so they can then make a decision.
TIME	1h30 • Steps 1, 2, 3) 15min • Step 4) 30min • Step 5) 45min
NECESSARY RESOURCES	 Chairs Tables Paper sheets Pens Electoral ideas previously prepared to support group 1, if necessary Set of suggested questions to be provided to group 2, if necessary
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	Step1) Divide the participants into two groups: 1) Politicians from different parties campaigning; 2) Young people attending the clarification session and wanting to have their doubts clarified so they can then make a decision. The facilitator should ask which group each person prefers to belong to. Step 2) People in group 1 should stand behind a table. Each person in group 1 must write on a sheet of paper their vision for the future of Europe, listing some points on their electoral agenda, as well as the message they intend to convey to the public. It may be important to reflect on the body posture and voice intonation to adopt. The facilitator may provide some model speeches with points from an electoral agenda to help participants play this role.





Examples of issues that can be addressed by the group of political parties:

- Creation of sustainable and accessible quality jobs
- · Combat gender based violence
- Restart the economy through boosting renewable energy, buildings renovation, clean transports and decarbonisation
- Reorganising our health systems to put safety of patients and workers first
- · Protecting whistle-blowers and protecting tax payers' money
- Decent income and proper minimum wage for all Europeans
- · Affordable energy and the fight against climate change
- · Opportunities for young Europeans

Step 3) People in group 2 must reflect on the main challenges and issues that are important to them, formulating questions to ask politicians. The intention is for group 2 to interrogate group 1 with questions that they want clarified, so that in the end each person can make a considered and conscious decision and, thus, elect a political party, justifying their choice. These people should be seated on chairs scattered in front of the tables.

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Step 4) The facilitator must explain the structure of the role-play: first, each person representing their political party must have 5 minutes to present their ideas. Then, the debate opens and people in group 2 can ask questions. The session should run naturally and fluidly, avoiding the intervention of the facilitator, so it is possible (and even encouraged) for people to disagree and present their arguments organically.

Step 5) End of the role-play and return to the places, opening space for a large group reflection.

Questions to reflect on - group 1:

- How did you feel when defending your idea in front of an audience and with competition?
- What was most difficult for you?
- In which situation did you feel most comfortable?
- What do you think can be improved for future interventions?

Questions to reflect on - group 2:

- What was most difficult for you?
- In which situation did you feel most comfortable?
- How did you feel when you made the final decision?
- What do you think should be improved the next time you have to make a decision?

Suggestion: Record the performances to aid reflection and group discussion on how to improve some behaviors, adjust the use of "linguistic canes" and increase participants' confidence in future interventions.





REFERENCES	Links to some European political parties: • Socialist and Democrats: https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/ • European Conservatives and Reformists: https://ecrgroup.eu/ • European People's Party: https://www.eppgroup.eu/ • The Green/EFA: https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/
ATTACHMENTS	The moderator may include some of the tools created in module 4 (see manual) to help with the production of the activity.





Activity 8: Participate in a Municipal Assembly

MODULE 6	Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities
TOPIC	4. A Voice in the Decision-Making Process
OBJECTIVES	 Create a meaningful and educational experience for the young participants and encourage their active participation in the political process. Provide young people with an opportunity to come into contact with reality and the political context. Promote the civic and political participation of young people in democratic actions and of community interest.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND CONTEXTUALIZATION	Encouraging young people to have an active civic participation is crucial so that they can stay informed about what's happening around them and assert their rights. So, organizing a visit for the group to a Municipal Assembly in your city or a session at your country's Parliament is a great way to engage young people in civic participation.
TIME	About 2 hours
NECESSARY RESOURCES	Questions previously formulated by young people
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	 Step 1) Preparation: Before the visit, provide the young participants with background information about the political structure, the topics that will be discussed, and the politicians who will be present. Encourage them to research and prepare questions related to the issues that matter to them. Step 2) Visit to the Assembly/Parliament: During the visit, instruct the young participants to pay close attention to the following aspects: i) How politicians structure and present their arguments and ii) The posture and body language of the participants. If possible, encourage them to actively participate in the discussion by asking questions or sharing their viewpoints on the topics being discussed. Step 3) Post-Visit Discussion: After the session, gather the young participants for a discussion. Ask them to share their thoughts, observations, and what they've learned from the visit. Encourage them to reflect on how political decisions can impact their lives and the importance of civic engagement.





STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	 Step 4) Guest Speaker (if possible): If there is an opportunity, try to arrange a meeting or interview with a local representative or politician. Encourage the young participants to prepare questions that relate to the issues that affect them the most. This interaction can provide valuable insights and make the political process more relatable for the young people. Step 5) Follow-up: Keep the discussion alive after the visit. Provide resources for the young participants to stay informed about local and national politics. Consider organizing follow-up activities or discussions to further engage them in civic matters.
REFERENCES	-
ATTACHMENTS	-





Activity 9: Socio-Emotional Learning Components

MODULE 6	Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities
TOPIC	5. Relationships and socio-emotional learning
OBJECTIVES	Understand the basic concepts of social-emotional education: interaction with emotion management
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND CONTEXTUALIZATION	This activity will help to deepen the competences education of emotional social. Participants will understand their strengths and weaknesses (from the emotional side). Find out how emotions and their management affect our participation in democratic life.
TIME	30 minutes
NECESSARY RESOURCES	Paper sheetsPens
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	Step1) Divide the participants into 5 groups
	Step2) Each group randomly chooses one emotion (picks a slip)
	Step 3) Each group creates (stages, draws, etc optional) ways of expressing an emotion. Positive and negative.
	 Step 4) Discuss the points: How our emotions (happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, anger) help or hinder the growth of this competence in a democratic society. Discuss each emotion separately for this competency and give an example for each emotion.
	Step5) Present the expressions of the emotion to the other groups.
REFERENCES	-
ATTACHMENTS	-





Activity 10: Communication Styles and Conflict Management

MODULE 6	Participatory Actions with People with Disabilities
TOPIC	5.Communication Styles and Conflict Management
OBJECTIVES	 Understand characteristics of successful communication Understand conflict Management Understand/recognize styles of behavior in conflict situations
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY AND CONTEXTUALIZATION	This activity will help participants look more specifically and at the same time more broadly at the problem-solving mechanism. The strength of this activity is that participants can look at their problems from another person's perspective and thus develop a broader perspective.
TIME	30 min.
NECESSARY RESOURCES	 Paper sheets Pens Five cards with the name of a certain behavior that contradicts the corresponding slogan
STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS	 Step 1) The presenter divides all participants into five groups, each group chooses its representative, to whom the presenter hands one of five cards with the name of a certain behavior that contradicts the corresponding slogan: "For me to win, you have to lose." "For you to win, I must lose." "For each of us to gain something, we each have something to lose." "For me to win, you have to win." "I don't care if you win or lose, but I know I'm not in it." Step 2) Each group discusses and creates a story that demonstrates the proposed type of conflict behavior. Step 3) The presentation must combine the following aspects: How did such behavior in the conflict affect the emotional state, the feelings of its participants? Could a different behavior in this situation have been more beneficial to the participants? What makes people choose one or another style of behavior in a conflict?
REFERENCES	-
ATTACHMENTS	-





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