Changemakers of Tomorrow – Workshops for Impact

Created by KidHub

Toolkit for Active Rural Youth

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Changemakers of Tomorrow – Workshops for Impact

This toolkit includes three interactive workshops developed and tested by young participants during the Erasmus+ Youth Mobility project "Active Rural Youth Now - Changemakers of Tomorrow", running from March 2024 to March 2025.

Goal of the Toolkit: o equip rural youth and youth workers from Serbia, Croatia, Spain, and Bulgaria with practical tools for:

- Active community participation
- Social innovation
- Sustainability and lasting community impact

Through these workshops, youth participants (13+) will:
- Understand real needs in their communities using Empathy Mapping
- Generate creative solutions using the Design Thinking methodology
- Implement online campaigns to promote their solutions effectively

Why this Toolkit?

We believe in youth-driven change. By connecting rural youth from different European countries, this project creates a network of young leaders who learn together, inspire one another, and bring innovative, sustainable solutions back to their communities.

Participants:

Young changemakers (13+) from Serbia, Croatia, Spain, and Bulgaria.

Project Goals:

- Encourage youth participation in rural communities.
- Foster social innovation and sustainable practices.
- Strengthen international youth cooperation and networks.

Summary
Introduction

- What is Social Innovation in youth work?

- Design Thinking Workshop: Understanding

- Youth Needs in Rural Areas

- Rural Design Marathon Workshop: Empowering Rural Youth Through Social Innovation

- Youth Workshop: Creating Your Online Campaign

- Useful Resources & Tools

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What is Social Innovation in Youth Work?

Social innovation in youth work is about developing and implementing new, creative solutions to address real-life social challenges young people face, especially in their local communities.

Key Elements of Social Innovation in Youth Work:
- Youth-led solutions: Young people actively create and implement ideas.
- Community-oriented: Solutions directly address local social, environmental, or economic challenges.
- Creative & Collaborative: Encourages teamwork, creativity, and collective problem-solving.
- Sustainable Impact: Solutions create lasting positive change rather than temporary fixes.

Why Use Social Innovation in Youth Work?

- Empowers youth as leaders and changemakers.
- Engages young people in active citizenship and participation.
- Strengthens skills like empathy, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership.

Examples in Practice:
These examples were created during workshops held as part of a youth exchange and are the result of teamwork among young people aged 16 to 23.

Eco-Art Trail "Vodi me na planinu!"
(Art & Nature)

Description:
Develop an interactive eco-art trail featuring installations and sculptures by local and visiting artists. The art integrates natural materials, storytelling, and local heritage, creating a unique outdoor cultural experience.

Example activities:
- Annual open-air art festival and exhibitions
- Art workshops (wood carving, land art)
- Youth-led guided tours for visitors

Active rural youth

Description:

Create a digital platform or app offering immersive tourism experiences. Features include virtual reality tours, interactive maps, and augmented reality storytelling about Stara Planina's history, nature, and traditions.

Example activities:

- Virtual guided hikes or historical village walks
- AR-enhanced storytelling at local heritage sites
- Digital treasure hunts to engage younger tourists

Intergenerational Heritage Center (Elderly & Youth Collaboration)

Youth idea:

A community-led heritage center where elderly residents share traditional knowledge, crafts, stories, and sustainable farming methods with younger generations. This space bridges generations, preserves local traditions, and empowers youth through mentorship.

Example activities:

- Elderly teaching traditional crafts (weaving, wood-carving, pottery)
- Digital documentation (videos, podcasts, blogs) of elder stories and rural traditions
- Joint workshops on traditional sustainable agriculture practices
- Intergenerational cooking classes showcasing local recipes

Green Adventure Park (Sustainable Tourism & Education)

Description:

Build a sustainable adventure park combining eco-friendly outdoor sports, environmental education, and permaculture. Young locals manage activities, fostering sustainable tourism while protecting nature.

Example activities:

- Sustainable adventure trails (mountain biking, climbing)
- Environmental education camps for youth
- Workshops on biodiversity and local ecosystems

Community Permaculture Orchard
(Youth & Elderly Cooperation)

Youth idea:

Create a community-managed orchard based on permaculture principles where youth and elderly residents collaboratively plant and care for fruit trees, medicinal herbs, and edible plants. Elders contribute traditional ecological knowledge, while youth implement modern permaculture techniques, combining tradition with innovation.

Example activities:

- Joint planting and harvesting events
- Intergenerational workshops on herbal medicine and food preservation
- Youth-led digital documentation of traditional ecological wisdom
- Creation of a community seed bank preserving local biodiversity

Design Thinking Workshop: Understanding Youth Needs in Rural Areas

Goal:
Use Design Thinking methods to deeply understand the real needs and p.erspectives of rural youth and co-create innovative solutions.

What is Design Thinking?

Design Thinking is a human-centered, creative approach to problem-solving that focuses on deeply understanding the real needs and experiences of people. It encourages empathy, collaboration, and experimentation to develop innovative and practical solutions.

Workshop Steps (2.5 hours)

Step 1: Welcome & Icebreaker (15 min)

● Introduction: Briefly explain the goal, structure, and what Design Thinking is.
● Icebreaker:
  ● "One thing I'd like to improve in my community is…"
  ● Collect answers quickly (flipchart/online board).

Step 2: Empathy Mapping (1 hour)

Objective:
Understand what rural youth experience daily, their thoughts, emotions, motivations, and frustrations.

Activities:
● Form small groups (3-5 youth).
● Choose a specific persona relevant to their rural area, e.g.:
  ● Young student
  ● Teen farmer
  ● Young entrepreneur
  ● Young unemployed person

● Each group completes an Empathy Map divided into quadrants:
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  ● Say & Do: What youth openly express or actively do.
  (e.g., "I need better internet to finish my homework.")

● Think & Feel: Hidden thoughts and emotions not easily shared.
(e.g., "I'm afraid I'll have to leave my village to succeed.")

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● Hear: What youth hear around them (from family, media, community). (e.g., "Young people have no future here.")

● See: What youth observe daily in their surroundings.
(e.g., abandoned buildings, lack of activities/spaces.)

● Say & Do: What youth openly express or actively do.
(e.g., "I need better internet to finish my homework.")

● Think & Feel: Hidden thoughts and emotions not easily shared.
(e.g., "I'm afraid I'll have to leave my village to succeed.")

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(e.g., abandoned buildings, lack of activities/spaces.)

● Bonus Quadrants (optional):

  ● Pains & Gains: Identify worries (e.g., isolation) and dreams
  (e.g., becoming entrepreneurs).

Facilitation Techniques:
● Guided questioning, storytelling
● Encourage openness, no judgment
● Active listening

Materials Needed:
  ● Offline: Empathy map posters, flipcharts, markers, sticky notes
  ● Online: Digital whiteboard (Miro, Jamboard, Padlet)

Step 3: Present & Share Insights (30 min)

Objective:
Participants share empathy maps, identifying common themes and challenges.

Activities:
- Each team presents their empathy map (3-5 min per group).
- Participants note similarities and differences in the experiences of rural youth across groups.
- Identify key insights (common challenges and unmet needs).

Facilitation Techniques:
- Active listening, note-taking, visual clustering

Step 4: Ideation – Generating Solutions (30 min)

Objective:
Rapidly brainstorm potential solutions based on the empathy insights.

Activities:
- Use e mpathy insights to frame clear problem statements, e.g.,
  - "How might we provide better social spaces for youth in our village?"
  - "How might we make education more accessible for rural teens?
- Facilitate fast-paced brainstorming sessions.

Facilitation Techniques:
- "Crazy 8s" method (rapid, creative idea generation)
- Idea clustering and prioritizing

Step 5: Reflection & Next Steps (15 min)

Objective:
Reflect on insights gained and discuss actionable next steps for turning solutions into reality.

Activities:
- Quick round-robin: Each participant shares their main takeaway or favorite idea.
- Identify how participants could start implementing ideas in their \community (stakeholders, resources, European opportunities).

Facilitator Tips:
- Create a safe, supportive space to encourage honest conversations.
- Ensure that youth voices remain central; facilitators guide but don't lead ideas.
- Highlight that every opinion matters; there are no wrong answers.

Workshop Outcome:
Empowered rural youth equipped with deeper understanding of their community's needs and motivated to co-create impactful, innovative solutions.

Rural Design Marathon Workshop: Empowering Rural Youth Through Social Innovation

Workshop Objective

To collaboratively develop innovative, youth-driven solutions addressing rural community challenges by applying social innovation and design thinking approaches.

What is Social Innovation Education method?

Detailed Workshop Steps:

1. Introduction & Icebreaker (30 min)

- Aim:
  - To introduce participants, build trust, and set the context for rural challenges.

- Activities:
  - Short introductory presentation about rural issues.
  - Icebreaker: Participants complete the statement, "If I could change one thing in my village, it would be…",facilitating an engaging dialogue.

Problem Identification (1 hour)

- Objective: Clearly map local issues and choose priority challenges.

- Activities:
  - Participants are divided into small teams.
  - Participatory Rural Mapping: Teams map community assets, challenges, and opportunities.
  - Prioritization criteria: urgency, impact potential, feasibility, and community support.

Design Thinking Process (2 hours)

Step-by-step structure:

Empathize (30 mins)

  - Understand community needs through storytelling, empathy maps, and stakeholder interviews.
  - Facilitation: Active listening, open-ended questions. Define (15 mins)
  - Formulate clear and concise problem statements based on insights from empathy stage.

- Facilitation: "How Might We" statements.

Ideate (45 mins)

- Brainstorm solutions using methods:
  - Mind mapping
  - Rapid brainstorming
  - Idea clustering
  - Facilitation: Encourage openness and defer judgment; use visual aids (post-its, digital whiteboards).

Prototype (45 mins)

- Develop rapid prototypes to visualize solutions (sketches, models, digital mockups).
- Facilitation: Hands-on approach, encourage playful experimentation.

Presentation & Feedback (1 hour)

- Teams deliver short (3-minute) presentations (pitches).
- Constructive feedback from peers and experts focusing on clarity, feasibility, innovation, and impact.

Action Plan Development (1 hour)

- Teams outline clear implementation steps.
- Identify resources, timelines, partners, and stakeholders required.
- Facilitation: Action planning templates, SMART goal-setting.

Facilitation Techniques:

- Participatory Rural Mapping – Collaborative identification and visualization of local challenges and assets.
- World Café Method – Encouraging collaborative discussion and cross-group exchanges to enrich ideas.
- Group Discussions – Facilitating inclusive and structured conversations.
- Brainstorming Sessions – Generating creative, innovative ideas openly.
- Pitch Presentations – Concise and persuasive presentations to clearly communicate solutions.

In-Person Workshop:

- Flip charts & markers
- Post-it notes & index cards
- Pens, colored pencils, paper
- Large maps (for rural mapping)
- Projector/screen for presentations
- Prototyping materials (cardboard, tape, glue, recyclable materials)
- Printed action planning templates
- Timer for pitches
- Name tags

Online Workshop:

- Zoom or similar conferencing platform
- Digital collaboration tools (Miro, Jamboard, Miro, Padlet)
- Digital presentation software (Canva, PowerPoint)
- Online collaboration platforms (Slack, Trello, Google Drive)
- Breakout room management

Youth Workshop: Creating Your Online Campaign

Workshop Goal:
Empower rural youth (13+) to understand their target group's needs and create effective online campaigns to drive positive change in their local communities.

Workshop Outcome:
Youth participants leave equipped with clear campaign goals, targeted online strategies, engaging digital content prototypes, and confidence to launch their online campaigns effectively.

What is an Online Campaign?
An online campaign is a structured digital initiative designed to raise awareness, inspire action, and influence change around specific local challenges or issues. It uses online platforms—like Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook—to share powerful stories, messages, or visuals aimed at engaging people and influencing decision-makers.

Examples:
- Instagram campaign demanding better rural transport.
- TikTok challenge to promote local rural tourism.
- Facebook page advocating for youth spaces in rural areas.

Workshop Structure (3 hours)

Step 1: Welcome & Icebreaker (20 min)

Activity:
- Briefly explain the purpose of the workshop and introduce the concept of online campaigns.

- **Icebreaker:**
"My favorite social media campaign was…

"Facilitation Techniques:
- Quick group sharing to foster comfort and creativity.

Objective:
Participants define a clear goal for their campaign and identify their target audience.

Youth Workshop: Creating Your Online Campaign

Activities:
- Small groups select a local challenge (e.g., poor public transport, lack of activities).
- Defi ne the campaign goal clearly:
    - Example: "Improve internet connectivity in our village."
- Identify target groups clearly (youth, local officials, parents). Facilitation Techniques:
- Mind mapping
- "How might we..." statements

Step 3: Content Creation & Prototyping (1 hour)

Objective:
Create engaging content prototypes suitable for chosen platforms.

Activities:
- Select campaign platforms (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook).
- Develop content ideas:
    - Short video storyboard/script.
    - Visual graphics or memes.
    - Hashtags and campaign slogans.

Facilitation Techniques:
- Storyboarding
- Rapid prototyping (Canva, sketches, mockups)
- Creative brainstorming (Crazy 8s)

Step 4: Present & Peer Feedback (40 min)

Objective:
Share campaign ideas and receive structured feedback.

Activities:
- Groups present their prototypes in 3-minute pitches.
- Peer feedback session: participants share constructive criticism.

Facilitation Techniques:
- "I Like, I Wish, I Wonder" feedback framework.

Step 5: Action Plan & Campaign Launch (20 min)

Objective:
Plan next steps for implementing the online campaign.

Activities:
- Teams create actionable campaign plans (timeline, posting schedule, partners, influencers, next steps).

Facilitation Techniques:
- SMART goals method for detailed planning.

Materials Needed

Offline Workshop	Online Workshop
Flipcharts & markers	Zoom or Google Meet
Sticky notes, colored pens	Digital whiteboards (Miro, Jamboard)
Storyboard templates	Canva, Adobe Express (digital content)
Prototyping supplies (posters, paper)	Shared docs (Google Docs, Trello)
Smartphones/cameras	Examples of successful online campaigns

Facilitator Tips:

- Encourage creativity, experimentation, and bold thinking.
- Maintain a positive, supportive atmosphere.
- Emphasize that participants' voices are valuable for real community change.

Annexes
Useful Resources & Tools

Design Thinking Resources:

- IDEO Design Kit (Human-Centered Design)
  www.designkit.org
- Stanford d.school – Free Design Thinking guides
  dschool.stanford.edu/resources
- Empathy Map Templates (Free Downloads):
    - Interaction Design Foundation Empathy Map PDF
    - Miro Empathy Map (Digital Template)

Online Campaign Resources:

- Canva – Graphic and video design for social media campaigns
  www.canva.com
- Adobe Express (Easy content creation)
  express.adobe.com

- CapCut – Simple video editing for TikTok and Instagram
    - Download on Android I iOS
- Change.org – Create online petitions for social impact
  https://www.change.org

Popular Social Media Platforms for Campaigns:

- Instagram: instagram.com
- TikTok: www.tiktok.com
- Facebook Pages and Groups: facebook.com
- Canva for Social Media Templates: canva.com/social-media

Tools for Digital Collaboration:

- Miro (Online Whiteboard): miro.com
- Padlet (Idea Board): padlet.com
- Jamboard (Free Google Whiteboard): jamboard.google.com

Further Inspiration for Youth-led Rural Initiatives:

- European Youth Portal – EU opportunities, exchanges, and funding europa.eu/youth
- SALTO-YOUTH – Youth resources & training
  salto-youth.net

Get started now: Download your Empathy Map Template here, and begin creating impactful solutions for your rural community today