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Not Neat to be NEET

Handbook for Inclusive Youth Projects

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT

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Imprint and disclaimer

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*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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Foreword: the context of 'Not Neat to be NEET'

The **EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027** stresses that one third of young people in Europe are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Many of these young people continue to face multiple forms of discrimination, prejudice, and systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing their social rights. Furthermore, the **European Youth Goals** emphasise the urgent need to ensure that all marginalised young people have equal access to non-formal learning environments, addressing all dimensions of inclusion.

Crucially, the overarching framework for realising these goals within European funding is the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps **Inclusion and Diversity Strategy**. This strategy serves as the definitive guide for creating equitable access, acknowledging that societal diversity requires proactive, structured support to ensure European programmes are accessible to everyone. The strategy mandates that inclusion must be integrated into all stages of project management to ensure that no one is left behind.

In the context of these policies and grassroots youth projects, "youth with fewer opportunities" refers to young people who face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under programmes like Erasmus+. As defined by the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, these barriers can occur for economic, social, cultural, geographical, or health reasons, as well as due to migrant backgrounds, disabilities, or educational difficulties. This specifically includes NEET youth—young people not in education, employment, or training.

Experienced organisations recognise that including youth with fewer opportunities, particularly those facing severe social and economic barriers, remains highly challenging. The inclusion of these young people requires significantly greater effort, time, and resources compared to engaging youth who have already participated in previous projects or who possess a strong command of the English language, for instance. For smaller organisations or those based in remote and rural communities, these challenges are often magnified.

Without structured guidance, organisations working with young people can inadvertently create exclusionary environments. It is illogical to plan a youth mobility project for young people with mobility issues only to host it in a completely inaccessible facility, or to expect youth facing severe economic barriers to front their own international travel costs while waiting weeks for reimbursement. Yet, these situations occur frequently because many organisations lack staff or volunteers specifically trained to support the participation of marginalised youth.

The core solution: empowering the inclusion coordinator

The project 'Not Neat to be NEET' was developed by a consortium of organisations from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, and Kosovo as a direct, practical implementation of the **Inclusion and Diversity Strategy.**

This project represents a significant milestone: it is the first initiative of its kind ever to be conducted within the Western Balkans region under the Erasmus+ framework. Its primary innovation lies in the creation of a brand-new non-formal education methodology designed specifically for the education and professionalisation of "inclusion coordinators". Until now, comprehensive resources and learning methodologies for training staff and volunteers strictly dedicated to the inclusion of youth with fewer opportunities have been virtually non-existent.

Beyond creating the educational framework, the project's innovation extends to the active promotion of this new role and establishing a regional network of organisations working with young people united around this idea. To translate the priorities of European strategies into grassroots reality, the project is built on a clear premise: the situation for marginalised youth will only improve when these organisations engage qualified staff and volunteers who are dedicated to supporting their full participation.

This project advocates for the formal recognition and professionalisation of the "inclusion coordinator" within organisations working with young people. To achieve this, the project focuses on:

- Developing non-formal education methodology intended for the education of staff and volunteers from organisations working specifically in support of the participation of young people with fewer opportunities.
- Testing and implementing this methodology in practice by educating close to 100 inclusion coordinators in the region, through capacity-building events and local job-shadowing experiences delivered by organisations working with young people based in the Western Balkans.
- Involving youth with fewer opportunities directly to build their personal capacities, empowering them to potentially act as inclusion staff for their peers.
- Establishing a regional network of organisations around this idea, developing a new, firmly structured cross-border cooperation network promoting the mass non-formal education of these dedicated coordinators.
- Publishing this pioneering Handbook, which serves as the very first comprehensive guide for the education of inclusion coordinators and the general support of inclusive youth work, designed to be scalable and applied far beyond the Western Balkans across all of Europe.

How to use this handbook

The "**Handbook for Inclusive Youth Projects**" is designed to serve as a practical, open educational resource for organisations working with young people in the Western Balkans and beyond.

Crucially, this handbook represents a major innovation in itself. It is the very first guide created specifically for educating and equipping inclusion coordinators, filling a significant gap in general youth work support. Furthermore, a highly innovative aspect of this resource is its cross-border scalability. While it was developed and tested within the realities of the Western Balkans, its practical tools and methodological frameworks are universally adaptable and can be freely utilized by organisations across Europe.

The primary goal of this digital publication is to ensure that organisations delivering non-formal education events do not have to start from zero in terms of experience when trying to build inclusive methodologies. By utilizing this handbook, youth workers can avoid repeating common mistakes and directly benefit from tested, innovative best practices.

It is important to emphasise that this handbook is explicitly designed to equip organisations working with young people and youth workers, rather than the youth participants themselves. The handbook adapts the methodologies, tools, activities, and evaluation methods developed and practically tested during the project into 27 practical working “units”. For example, when aiming to involve a young person with health issues, a youngster who does not speak English, or a participant who cannot afford international travel tickets, youth workers will find the specific tools and step-by-step guidance they need within these pages to help those participants overcome such barriers. Furthermore, the guide serves as a comprehensive manual for organisations that want to conduct their own internal education and training to develop dedicated inclusion coordinators. Users are encouraged to take these units, adapt them to their specific local contexts, and apply them to design adequately budgeted and highly inclusive project proposals.

To facilitate easy navigation and practical application, the handbook is structured into three main sections. **Part 1** presents the regional research findings, laying the necessary groundwork by exploring the lived socio-economic realities and structural barriers facing marginalised youth. **Part 2** outlines a comprehensive non-formal education methodology for educating inclusion coordinators, providing a step-by-step capacity-building journey based on the learning-by-doing principle. Finally, **Part 3** forms the core practical component: a digital toolkit containing 27 ready-to-use educational resources, workshops, and methodologies designed to help youth workers translate strategic inclusion directly into grassroots practice.

PART 1: REGIONAL RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE INCLUSION OF YOUTH WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES

To build effective, inclusive methodologies for youth work, one must first understand the lived realities of the target audiences—which include both the youth with fewer opportunities and the youth workers who support them. As youth workers are responsible for implementing these methodologies, dedicating half of the focus groups to their experiences provided first-hand insight into the structural and practical challenges of inclusive youth work. As part of the 'Not Neat to be NEET' project, a comprehensive mixed-method research initiative was conducted across five Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia.

The research engaged participants through online surveys, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. It captured the dual perspectives of young people—specifically those categorized as NEET or facing systemic barriers—and the youth workers striving to support them.

The consolidated findings present a clear picture: while young people across the region share a strong desire for personal development and social connection, severe structural, economic, and cultural barriers persistently block their path to non-formal education and active civic participation.

The socio-economic realities of marginalised youth

The research confirms that youth with fewer opportunities in the Western Balkans face a highly complex and universally vulnerable reality. While this overarching target group includes young people facing a wide spectrum of social, geographical, and health-related obstacles, the research highlighted those categorized as NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) as a particularly critical and economically isolated subset. Statistical indicators from the region regarding this group are alarming; for instance, the youth NEET rate in Kosovo recently stood at 33.3%, representing 98,017 young people. **This vulnerability is even more pronounced within the specific focus groups of this research; as Chart 1 illustrates, a staggering 64% of the surveyed youth from marginalized backgrounds reported being unemployed.** Meanwhile, the survey sample in Albania revealed an unemployment rate of 51% among youth respondents.

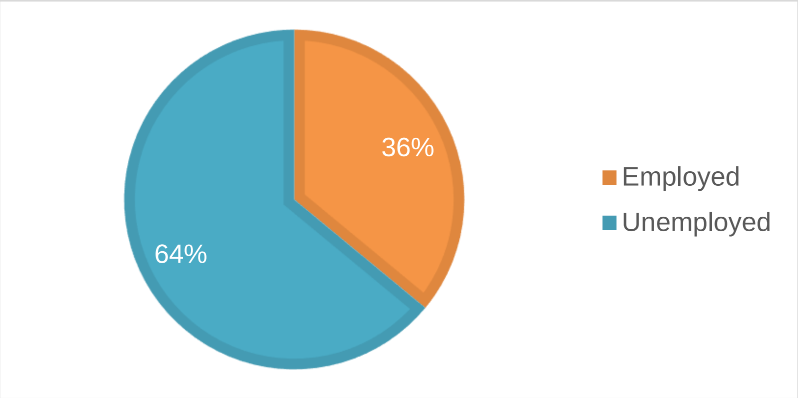


Chart 1: Current employment status of surveyed youth.
Source: National Research on Youth Inclusion – Kosovo.*
This chart illustrates the stark youth employment gap among respondents, revealing that a significant majority (64%) are currently unemployed compared to 36% who are employed.

Furthermore, the data highlights severe intersectional discrimination. In Montenegro, focus groups revealed a stark contrast in participation levels between youth from the majority population and those from the Roma and Egyptian (RE) communities. While majority youth often utilize non-formal education to supplement their university studies, RE youth frequently face bullying in formal schooling, drop out early, and are disproportionately pushed into the informal labour market ("off the books" work). Similar exclusionary cycles were noted across the region, where youth from low-income families feel socially and economically inferior, leading to profound disengagement from both educational and employment opportunities.

The awareness and participation gap

A recurring theme across all five countries is the significant disconnect in how information reaches marginalised youth. While a general segment of active youth is relatively well-informed about national and international opportunities—primarily through social media and peer networks—NEET youth and those in rural areas remain largely isolated.

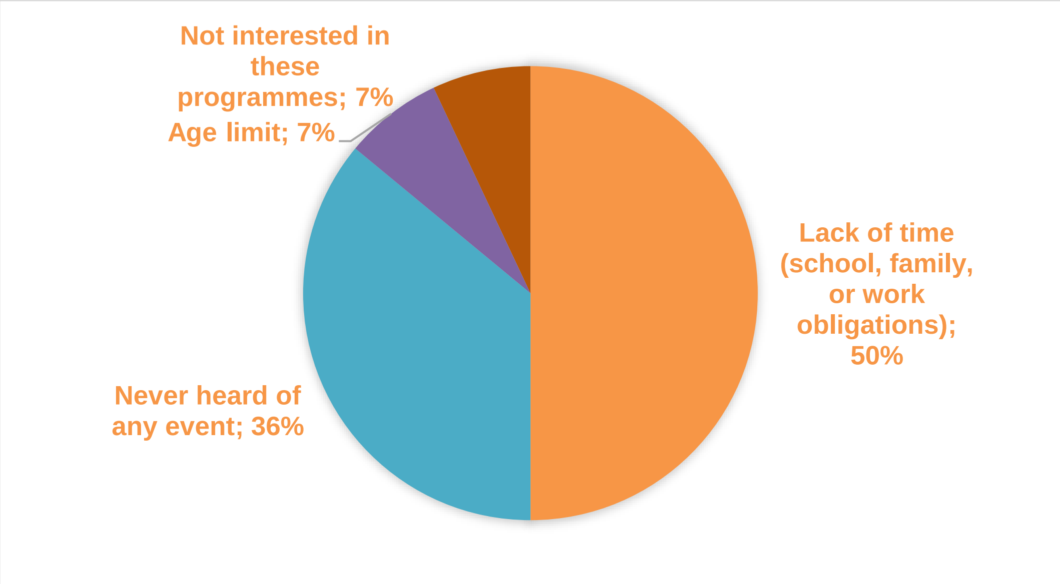


Chart 2: Main obstacles to participation in youth trainings and exchanges. Source: National Research on Youth Inclusion – Bosnia and Herzegovina. This chart visually highlights the primary barriers preventing youth participation. The top reasons cited are a lack of time due to school, family, or work obligations (50%), and a severe lack of information, with over a third of respondents simply never hear about the events (36%).

In Serbia, focus groups with marginalised youth revealed that almost none could recall a specific youth project they had been invited to. Similarly, in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, young people noted a severe lack of targeted information. When information does circulate, it rarely penetrates the "bubble" of already-active youth, such as student council members, leaving those outside the formal education system completely in the dark.

Key barriers to inclusion in youth projects

When young people with fewer opportunities do hear about youth projects or mobility opportunities, they are immediately confronted by a complex web of barriers.

Economic and financial obstacles

Economic constraints are universally cited as the most paralysing barrier. Across the region, the standard project practice of "reimbursement"—where participants pay for travel upfront and wait weeks for the money to be returned—is highly exclusionary.

- In Kosovo, 82.1% of surveyed youth stated they need financial support to cover basic costs, with 66.7% explicitly requesting that travel tickets be provided in advance.
- In Montenegro, 38.6% of surveyed youth cited upfront tickets as a primary need, alongside on-site reimbursement.

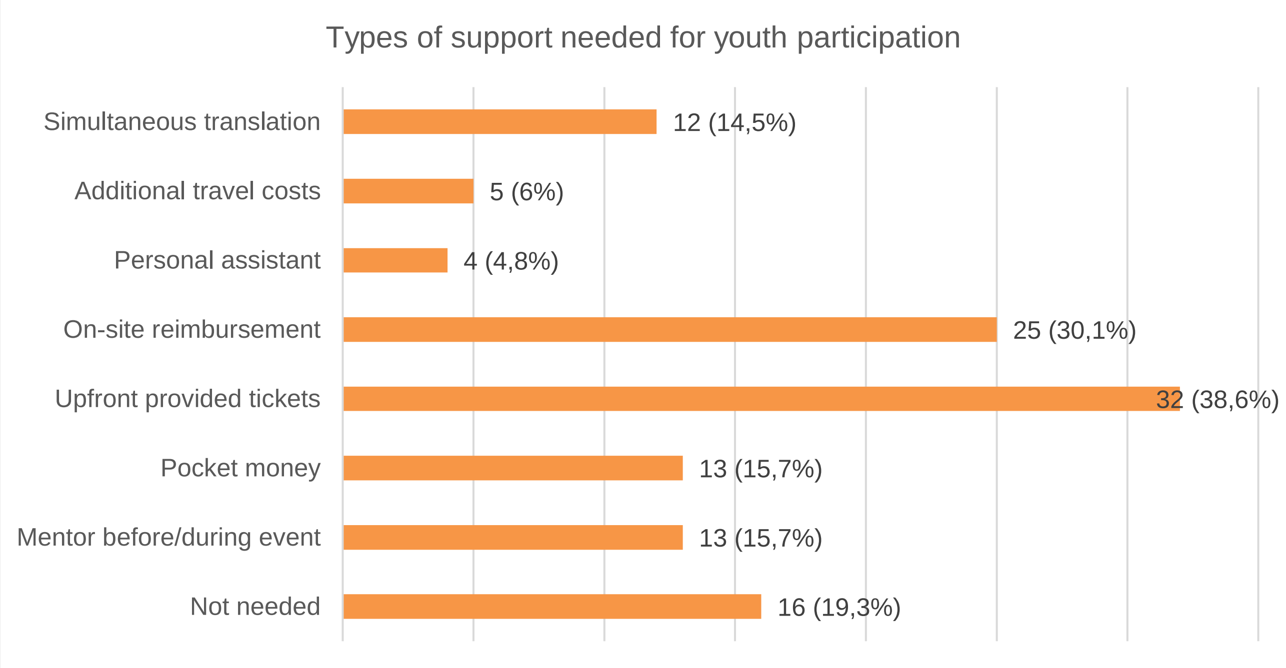


Chart 3: Types of support needed for youth participation.
Source: National Research on Youth Inclusion – Montenegro.
This chart showcases the high demand for financial and logistical assistance, specifically highlighting the critical need for 'Upfront provided tickets' (38.6%) and 'On-site reimbursement' (30.1%).

Many marginalised youth, particularly those in rural areas of Albania and Serbia, also work in seasonal agriculture or informal jobs to support their families. Attending a multi-day training means a direct loss of essential income, making the provision of daily allowances or pocket money a necessity rather than a luxury.

Geographical and infrastructural isolation

Geographical isolation compounds economic hardship. Youth from rural areas and smaller towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Serbia highlighted severe transportation deficits. Poor or non-existent public intercity transport makes attending activities in urban centres exhausting, expensive, and sometimes unsafe. Additionally, youth workers noted the chronic lack of accessible physical spaces; many youth centres and training venues lack ramps or elevators, automatically excluding young people with physical mobility issues.

Socio-cultural attitudes and family influence

The research strongly indicates that family and community perceptions heavily dictate youth participation. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, youth reported that parents and peers often view non-formal education and volunteering as a "waste of time" because they do not yield immediate financial compensation. The legacy of rigid, traditional education systems means that many families fail to see the link between soft-skill development and future employability. Furthermore, rural communities often hold strong gender stereotypes, limiting the mobility and educational opportunities of young women.

Language and administrative hurdles

Participation in international Erasmus+ projects is further hindered by administrative and educational gaps. Visa restrictions remain a significant psychological and bureaucratic barrier, heavily cited by youth in Kosovo and Montenegro. Additionally, the dominance of English as the working language in international youth work excludes a vast number of young people who have not had access to quality language education, highlighting a critical need for simultaneous translation and linguistic support during activities.

Motivations and required support mechanisms voiced by youth

Despite the systemic hurdles facing the sector, and the socio-economic obstacles in their own lives, marginalised youth possess a strong desire to learn and connect. When asked what motivates them to participate, young people prioritised developing soft skills (such as critical thinking and problem-solving), expanding their personal and professional networks, and experiencing new cultures. They recognise the value of non-formal education, provided the environment is safe and supportive.

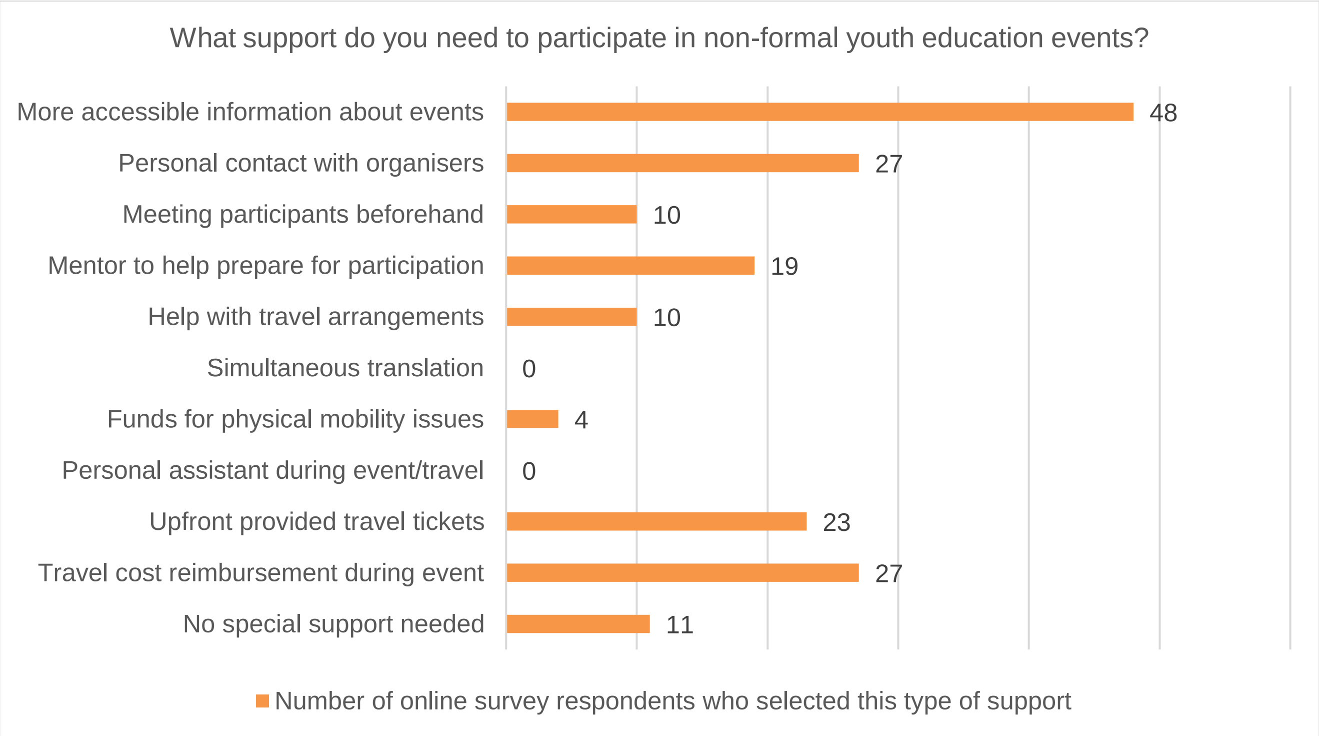


Chart 4: Types of support needed for youth participation in non-formal education. Source: National Research on Youth Inclusion – Serbia. This chart highlights that easily accessible

information is overwhelmingly the most needed form of support, closely followed by financial and logistical assistance such as travel cost reimbursement and direct contact with organisers

To make this a reality, the research clearly outlines the support mechanisms young people require:

- **Tailored outreach:** Moving away from passive social media posts toward active, face-to-face community engagement and partnerships with social welfare and employment offices.
- **Upfront financial logistics:** Pre-purchased travel tickets and the elimination of delayed reimbursements.
- **Continuous mentorship:** A large percentage of youth requested a dedicated mentor to guide them before, during, and after an activity.
- **Language support:** The provision of simultaneous translation to lower the threshold for international participation.

The youth worker's dilemma: navigating limited capacities

The research also gave voice to youth workers, revealing a sector that is highly motivated but structurally overburdened. Youth workers across the Western Balkans enter the field driven by a desire to create positive community change, but they face complex, systemic hurdles.

The national research papers unveiled several critical dilemmas:

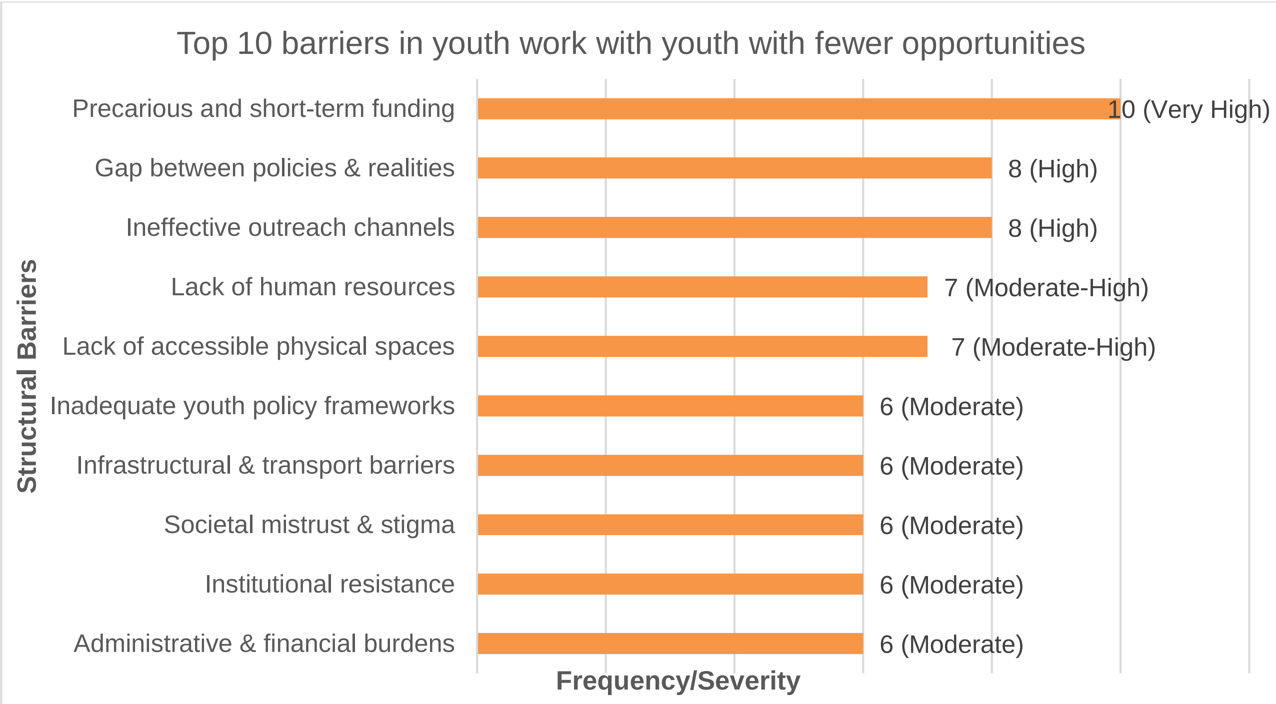


Chart 5: Top 10 barriers in youth work with youth with fewer opportunities. Source: Focus Group Conclusions – Serbia. This chart summarizes the most frequently cited systemic hurdles by youth workers, highlighting precarious funding as the most severe barrier.

- **The gap between declared policies and grassroots reality:** Across the region, youth workers pointed out a stark contradiction in the sector. In Montenegro and Kosovo, for instance, many projects officially declare a focus on youth with economic and social barriers, yet practically require these same young people to temporarily finance their international travel and absorb bank transfer fees. This creates an immediate exclusionary wall, exposing a disconnect between broad inclusive strategies and the rigid financial mechanics of actual project implementation.
- **Precarious funding and lack of human resources:** Across the region, organisations rely heavily on short-term, project-based foreign funding. In Kosovo, youth workers highlighted a severe lack of continuous

governmental funding for youth development programmes over recent years. Similarly, in Montenegro, delayed payments from local municipalities routinely paralyse planned activities. Consequently, organisations simply cannot afford to hire dedicated, part-time staff focused solely on inclusion, leading to widespread burnout among existing, overstretched youth workers.

- *As one participant summarized: "The problem is also the lack of human resources in youth organisations in both a quantitative and qualitative sense. Thus, organisations rarely can afford to hire someone who will work at least 'part-time' on achieving a higher level of inclusivity of youth programmes in that organisation." - Direct finding from the Serbian focus groups.*
- **Infrastructural and logistical burdens:** Reaching rural youth often places immense logistical and financial strain on the organisations themselves. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, youth workers noted that poor intercity public transport forces NGOs to organise and pay for private transportation, severely draining limited project budgets. Additionally, Serbian youth workers highlighted the chronic lack of physically accessible public spaces and youth centres, particularly in smaller communities.

- **Ineffective outreach and information channels:** There is a major disconnect in how information is disseminated. Organisations often fail to reach the most vulnerable youth because they rely on standard, passive digital communication that does not penetrate marginalised communities.

  "The problem is how organisations inform young people, especially youth with fewer opportunities living in poverty or in rural and remote areas. Such young people do not follow youth mobility websites and other online sources where they can find out about these programmes." - Direct quote from the Serbian focus groups

This creates a severe information bubble where only already-active, connected youth learn about new opportunities, leaving marginalised groups completely unaware of the programmes designed specifically for them.

- **Interdisciplinary and specialised training gaps:** Youth workers openly admitted they lack the psychological, pedagogical, and specialised training required to adequately support youth with complex needs. In Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, workers stressed the need for structured protocols, mentorship, and training in career guidance, mental health support, and conflict resolution. Serbian researchers also noted specific challenges, such as the absolute necessity of ensuring strict privacy for vulnerable groups (e.g., sexual minorities or youth with chronic health conditions) to make them feel safe enough to participate.

- **Societal resistance and trust-building:** Youth workers in Serbia observed that building trust with marginalised youth takes immense time and effort. They noted that youth from ethnic minorities (such as the Roma community) rarely participate due to mutual distrust and a lack of targeted campaigns. Furthermore, youth workers face resistance from formal institutions; for instance, schools often refuse to justify student absences for non-formal education activities, undermining the perceived value of youth work. In Albania, deep-rooted gender stereotypes further complicate outreach, requiring youth workers to navigate complex cultural norms just to get young women into the room.

- **The need for systemic roles:** Because the current approach to inclusion is often ad-hoc, youth workers strongly advocated for the formal institutionalization of the "inclusion coordinator"—a dedicated, trained staff member within organisations working with young people whose sole mandate is to ensure programmes are accessible to marginalised groups.

Summary of regional findings

The regional research findings deliver a definitive mandate: organisations working with young people must move beyond generic invitations and dismantle the structural barriers embedded in standard project management. Inclusion cannot be an afterthought; it requires strategic budgeting, targeted outreach, and the professionalisation of youth workers.

Access the National Research Publications

To explore the complete datasets, detailed focus group transcripts, and specific national contexts, you can access the full national research papers below. Each paper is available in its respective national language and includes an English summary:

- National Research Serbia - Annex 1
- National Research Bosnia and Herzegovina - Annex 2
- National Research Montenegro - Annex 3
- National Research Albania - Annex 4
- National Research Kosovo* - Annex 5

Moving Forward: From Theory to Practice

Now that we have established the regional realities, identified the critical barriers, and heard directly from both marginalised youth and the youth workers striving to support them, it is time to move from understanding the problem to implementing tangible solutions. The following section, **Part 2: Educating inclusion coordinators**, provides a comprehensive, step-by-step capacity-building journey based on the "learning-by-doing" principle. It will equip you with the exact framework needed to train dedicated inclusion coordinators and transform these localised challenges into actionable, inclusive youth work.

PART 2: EDUCATING INCLUSION COORDINATORS: A NON-FORMAL EDUCATION METHODOLOGY

To successfully foster the inclusion of youth with fewer opportunities—particularly focusing on, but not limited to, those facing economic, social, geographical, or health barriers—youth organisations should move beyond theory. This methodology outlines a comprehensive, step-by-step capacity-building journey based on non-formal education, driven by the "learning-by-doing" principle. It is specifically designed not only to equip individual youth workers, educators, and community leaders with the practical skills needed to act as dedicated "inclusion coordinators," but also to build the systemic capacity and benefit the youth organisations they represent.

The role of an inclusion coordinator is not merely administrative; it is a transformative function. This individual acts as the focal point for ensuring that all phases of a youth project—from outreach and design to implementation and evaluation—are fully accessible. To build this capacity, the methodology avoids traditional lectures in favour of an immersive, non-formal education framework that actively includes the drafting of Inclusion Action Plans.

The methodology follows a clear, five-phase progression, starting with the very creation of the learning framework itself:

- Needs analysis and methodology development
- Online preparatory workshops
- National capacity-building trainings (incorporating experiential learning and the creation of Inclusion Action Plans)
- The learning-by-doing approach (local job shadowing and the implementation of Inclusion Action Plans)
- Transnational networking and upscaling

Phase 1: Needs analysis and methodology development

Before any training takes place, the foundation of the methodology should be built upon the real-world realities of the target groups. A successful inclusion strategy cannot be generic; it should be carefully designed prior to engaging participants.

Core components of the preparatory phase

- **Mapping and needs analysis:** This essential first step involve a dual approach. First, organisations should conduct mapping to identify relevant local stakeholders, specific marginalised groups, remote or rural communities for targeted outreach, and existing policy frameworks related to inclusion.

Tool Recommendation: Use "Power Mapping" to categorise stakeholders based on their influence over youth policy and their current support for inclusion.

Focus: Once the landscape is mapped, a needs analysis is conducted through focus groups with both youth workers and youth with fewer opportunities (focusing on, but not limited to, those facing economic, social, health, or geographical barriers). This direct engagement identifies the exact obstacles preventing participation in youth projects within specific local contexts.

- **Curriculum and methodology design:** Utilising the findings from the focus groups, the youth organisation (or consortium) designs the specific non-formal education tools, learning methodologies, and draft agendas. This curriculum development goes beyond standard youth work training. It should explicitly integrate key European frameworks (such as the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, the European Youth Goals, and the Youth Participation Toolkit). The designed methodology should focus on highly interactive, experiential methods—such as role-playing simulations, Forum Theatre, the Living Library, and the World Café method—to build both empathy and practical skills.

The Inclusion Curriculum: Furthermore, the curriculum should address concrete elements of inclusive project management. It must teach participants how to: structure reinforced mentorship and coaching, secure additional financial support, simplify and streamline outreach and recruitment processes to lower bureaucratic thresholds, provide language learning support, organise preparatory visits (or online preparatory meetings), and manage inclusive budgeting. Alongside technical skills, the curriculum should embed core thematic values such as social solidarity, human rights, volunteerism, and intercultural learning. Crucially, the methodology should explicitly include practical frameworks and guidance for drafting Inclusion Action Plans (IAPs) and, if the schedule permits, optional inclusive pilot projects. To ensure a holistic approach, the methodology should also incorporate sessions with external, cross-sectoral experts (e.g., representatives from social services, special education, or employment agencies) to share specialised knowledge.

- **Targeted outreach and participant selection:** Once the methodology is designed, organisations should launch public calls for participants in their national languages. Outreach should go beyond algorithm-based social media posts by actively applying the mapping results. Organisations should utilise direct digital channels (such as dedicated Viber communities) and collaborate with intermediaries (such as social care institutions, employment services, or specialised NGOs) to engage youth from remote or rural areas and those facing severe social and economic barriers. Finally, a dedicated selection committee should be established to evaluate applications and choose participants based on their motivation, potential to act as future inclusion coordinators, and the capacity of the grassroots organisations they represent.
- **Strategic project setup:** This phase also includes creating the structural backbone of the capacity-building journey, such as developing quality checklists, establishing evaluation plans, and setting up collaborative online spaces for all partner organisations to share knowledge and track progress.

Phase 2: Online preparatory workshops

Before gathering participants for intensive physical trainings, it is crucial to establish a shared baseline of understanding. These sessions, lasting up to three or four hours, are designed as a cost-effective way to prepare participants, prevent drop-outs, manage expectations, and ensure the subsequent training agenda responds to actual grassroots needs.

Objectives of the online phase

- To foster mutual acquaintance and initiate early intercultural dialogue.
- To empower participants by giving them a voice in shaping the upcoming physical trainings.
- To present the key findings of the national mapping and needs analyses.
- To demystify the upcoming training process and logistics.

Step-by-step implementation for experts

1. **Host a focused, interactive online session:** Use digital collaboration tools (such as Mentimeter, Padlet, or Miro).
2. **Break the ice and build rapport:** Facilitate initial networking. Use simple, engaging questions to ensure every voice is heard.
3. **The "Digital Inclusion Check":** Before diving into content, conduct a quick poll on participants' comfort with digital tools and the stability of their connection. This models the "Inclusion Coordinator" behaviour by identifying accessibility barriers in the virtual space.
4. **Establish the baseline through research:** Present the findings of local mapping and needs analyses. Facilitate an interactive discussion on how these findings reflect the reality in their local communities.
5. **Co-create the physical agenda (Crucial Step):** Present the draft agendas and working methods. Give participants space to suggest adjustments. This ensures the final training is highly responsive to the actual needs of the group.
6. **Set logistical and psychological safety guidelines:** Clearly inform participants about participation rules, travel logistics, and the code of conduct.

Bridging the gap: Distributing preparatory handouts

Organisers should deliver a comprehensive package of digital handouts soon after the online workshop.

Accessibility considerations: If a participant lacks reliable internet or devices, provide a printed version. Provide screen-reader accessible formats for visual impairments. Proactively translate documents if language is a barrier.

The handout library: The distributed materials could include (this list is not exhaustive):

- The national research publication.
- The official guide on the job shadowing programme.
- The Inclusion and Diversity Strategy.
- The EU Youth Strategy and European Youth Goals.
- *Tools for Equality and Inclusion in Youth Work.*
- The UNDP HRBA Toolkit.
- The Youth Participation Toolkit.

Phase 3: National capacity-building trainings

Utilisation of the inclusion budget: Preparatory support measures

Before the national trainings commence, organisers must "practice what they preach" by ensuring the physical events are fully accessible to all selected youth workers. Utilising the dedicated inclusion budget (such as Erasmus+ "Inclusion Support" or "Exceptional Costs" categories), organisers should proactively undertake specific measures to support participants with physical, sensory, health, or other disabilities so they can participate on an equal footing.

- **Pre-event needs assessment:** Before booking venues, organisers must send a detailed, confidential questionnaire to selected participants specifically asking about their accessibility needs, dietary requirements, and medical support needs.
- **Accessible venues and accommodation:** Ensuring that training rooms, dining areas, and hotel rooms are barrier-free, wheelchair-accessible, and equipped with necessary adaptations (e.g., accessible restrooms, ground-floor access, or elevators).
- **Personalised support staff:** Allocating funds to cover travel, accommodation, and fees for personal assistants, sign language interpreters, medical support staff, or childcare/dependent care provisions, allowing youth with family responsibilities to fully participate.
- **Specialised transportation:** Arranging and financing adapted transport from the participant's hometown to the venue if standard public transport is inaccessible.
- **Adapted learning materials:** Ensuring all training handouts, templates, and presentations are available in accessible formats (e.g., screen-reader compatible digital files, large print, or braille if requested).

The Core Tool: The Inclusion Action Plan (IAP)

The IAP is a concrete, strategic document designed by participants to equip their organisations with a strategy for engaging youth with fewer opportunities. It helps organisations formulate actionable steps, including formally establishing a dedicated position (the Inclusion Coordinator) responsible for supporting the full participation of marginalised youth. This provides organisations with a sustainable, long-term strategy rather than ad-hoc project fixes. The IAP serves as a roadmap: participants draft it during Phase 3, implement its operational steps locally during Phase 4, and upscale it transnationally during Phase 5. Crucially, the physical IAP documents drafted during these trainings will be brought directly to the

International Training Course (Phase 5), serving as the foundational blueprints and working materials for designing joint cross-border projects.

IMPORTANT: The complete, ready-to-use Inclusion Action Plan template is provided in Annex 6. It is the primary working document for Training 1 and Training 2.

The core capacity-building tool - trainings

Two linked, intensive, at least five-day in-person events trainings. Participant groups should be kept small (max 25 people).

- **Training 1:** Focuses on listening, learning, and acting—fostering deep empathy and understanding structural barriers. Drafting of IAPs begins here.
- **Training 2:** Focuses on strategic planning, organisational transformation, and finalizing the drafts of IAPs.

Training 1: Fostering empathy and understanding exclusion

The first training course shifts the perspective of the youth worker while introducing core practical components. Before one can design an inclusive project, one should profoundly understand the lived realities of exclusion, initiate the first drafts of organisational Inclusion Action Plans (IAPs), and co-create practical strategies to overcome systemic barriers. Crucially, all activities in this module should be grounded in the findings of the national research conducted in Phase 1.

Key non-formal education methods utilised:

- **"A step forward" (Role-playing exercise):** Roles are assigned based on specific personas identified in the **national research findings**.
- **Deconstructing Professional Barriers:** Participants dive into the specific data gathered during the Phase 1 **focus groups with youth workers**. By openly discussing the professional, institutional, funding, and administrative difficulties youth workers themselves face when trying to involve marginalised youth, the group validates these systemic struggles and shifts toward collective problem-solving.
- **Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and causal analysis:** Participants use the **UNDP HRBA Toolkit** and the **national research publication** to identify specific gaps in knowledge or access.
- **Barrier-busting brainstorming:** Groups use "Reverse Brainstorming" to identify how to *exclude* someone, then flip these points into inclusion strategies, using **"Tools for Equality and Inclusion in Youth Work"** as a reference.

- **Inclusion Action Plan (IAP) inception: Using the template provided** participants begin drafting "Section 1: Overall Objective & Values" and "Section 2: Situation Analysis" based on research data.
- **Theatre of the oppressed (Forum theatre):** Small groups enact real-life situations of structural violence identified in Phase 1.
- **The living library:** Half of the group acts as "Books" sharing stories that reflect research findings, while the other half acts as "Readers."
- **Peer-Facilitation (Learning by leading):**
    - *How to facilitate:* Allocate specific sessions (such as morning energisers, daily evaluations, or intercultural evenings) where participants are given the chance to act as trainers and facilitators themselves.
    - *Learning outcome:* Builds confidence, public speaking, and practical group-management skills, empowering future coordinators to take the lead in their own organisations.
- **World Café (Harvesting inclusive practices):** Tables focused on specific tools (e.g., **Youth Participation Toolkit**) to brainstorm application to identified bottlenecks.
- **Reflective journaling:** Daily journaling to consolidate emotional and professional learning.

Training 2: Strategic inclusion and action planning

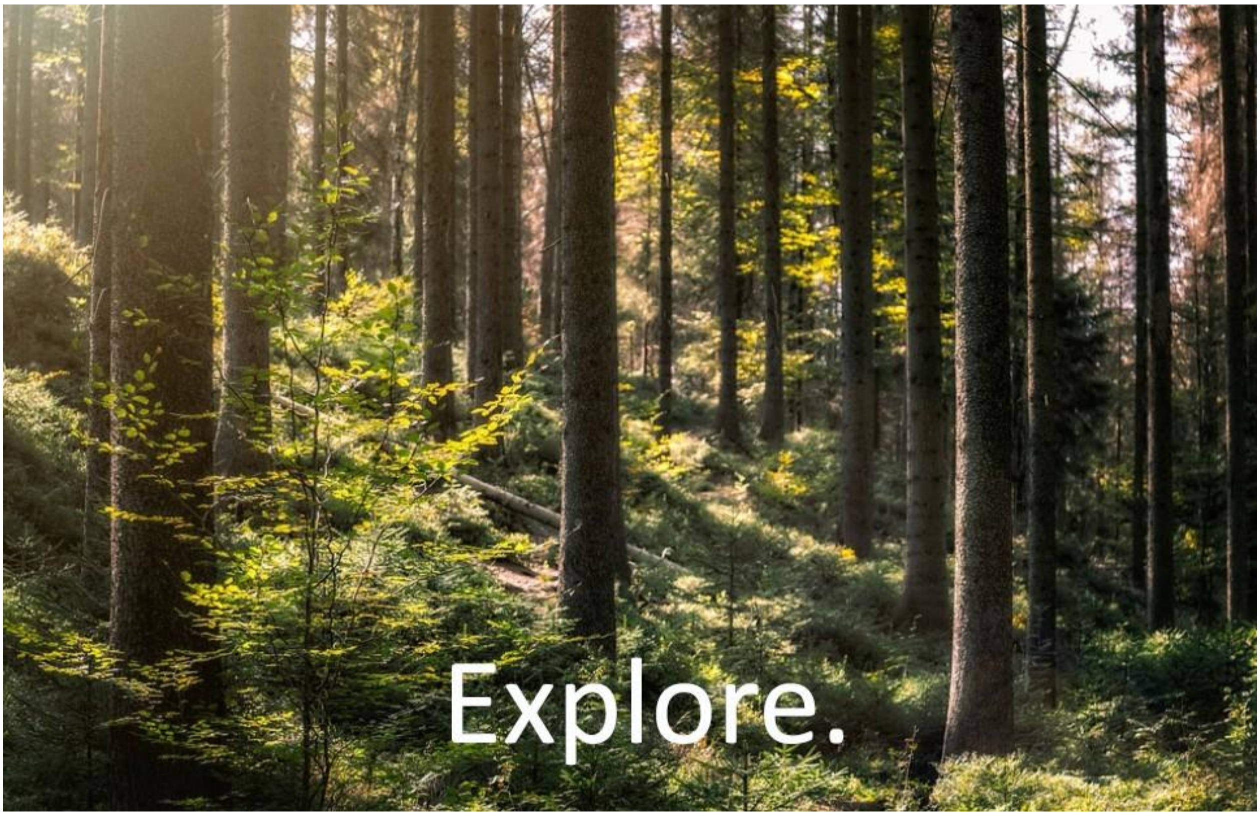
This module focuses on the practical application of European handouts to build institutional capacity.

Key non-formal education methods utilised:

- **Cross-Sectoral Expert Exchange:** External speakers and specialised facilitators are invited to join specific sessions. By bringing in representatives from social services, employment agencies, or NGOs dedicated to persons with disabilities, participants gain fresh, outside perspectives on systemic issues. This cross-pollination of knowledge helps youth workers step outside their traditional "bubble" and establishes vital local referral networks.
- **Organisational self-assessment and gap identification:** Participants use the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy handout as a benchmark to assess their own organisations. This assessment actively incorporates the youth worker focus group findings from Phase 1, allowing participants to directly tackle internal organisational bottlenecks that hinder their staff.
- **Problem tree and objective tree analysis:** Participants map core community problems and convert them into positive goals, ensuring consistency with the national research.

- **Developing the Inclusion Action Plans (IAP):** This is the cornerstone activity of Training 2. Trainers and mentors provide dedicated coaching as participants finalise their IAPs using the standardised template provided. The process involves several structured steps: defining the organisation's current baseline regarding inclusion, setting concrete and measurable objectives based on the prior problem tree analysis, outlining step-by-step operational activities (e.g., updating physical spaces, revising external communications), and formally defining the mandate and responsibilities of the newly created "Inclusion Coordinator" role within their organisation. Throughout the process, participants continuously reference the EU Youth Strategy and Inclusion Strategy handouts to ensure their local goals are strongly aligned with broader European funding priorities.
- **Drafting inclusive pilot projects (Optional Activity):** Depending on the available time and duration of the specific training programme, drafting pilot projects serves as an excellent optional activity. If time permits, groups draft local project ideas using the Youth Participation Toolkit as a design checklist and "pitch" them to a panel of peers. To inspire youth workers reading this methodology, a "Menu of Inclusive Pilot Projects" could include:
    - *Cross-border Virtual Exchanges:* Organising online events to specifically overcome severe geographical or mobility barriers, creating a transnational peer-support mechanism without the need for travel.
    - *Empowerment Mobilities:* Designing non-formal education activities that directly engage and empower marginalised youth to increase their employability, encourage civic volunteering, or facilitate language learning.
    - *Research-to-Action Focus Groups:* Pilot projects where marginalised youth are engaged to conduct and actively publicise research regarding their own needs and the actual obstacles faced in their communities.
    - *Recruitment Simplification:* Internal projects aimed solely at redesigning an organisation's outreach and recruitment process to remove jargon, lower bureaucratic thresholds, and make information fully accessible.
- **Inclusion Risk Assessment (Non-formal exercise):**
    - *How to facilitate:* Using "Inclusion Crisis Cards" (The Safety Crisis, The Accessibility Crisis, The Digital Divide Crisis, The Ethical Crisis, The Economic Crisis), groups develop "Plan B" mitigation strategies using a structured risk matrix.
    - *Learning outcome:* Teaches resilient inclusive leadership by moving from "hoping for the best" to proactive management.
- **Erasmus+ project management simulation:** Participants use the "Making Erasmus+ and the ESC more inclusive" handout to draft a mock "Inclusion Budget" including reinforced mentorship and exceptional costs.

MODEL AGENDAS: Detailed model agendas for Training 1 and Training 2 can be found in Annex 7 and Annex 8, respectively. These provide a suggested chronological flow and session-by-session breakdown for facilitators.



Phase 4: The learning-by-doing approach: Job shadowing and IAP implementation

Theoretical knowledge and strategic plans must be tested in real-world environments to achieve genuine organisational change. This phase acts as the vital bridge between formal classroom training and independent professional action, heavily relying on practical application. It encompasses two main pillars: the practical implementation of the drafted Inclusion Action Plans (IAPs) by all participants within their home organisations, and an immersive local job shadowing experience for highly dedicated participants.

The job shadowing activity is specifically designed for a highly motivated small group of participants from each national training group. This selection is based on rigorous criteria, including the participant's active engagement during the first two training modules, their demonstrated ability to apply non-formal education principles, and the maturity of their drafted Inclusion Action Plan. By selecting the most dedicated participants, the programme ensures that those moving into immersive placements have the baseline capacity to act as catalysts for change within their host organisations. Furthermore, this hands-on experience significantly increases their employability and strengthens the broader youth work sector, as these trained coordinators have the potential to remain with their host organisations long-term, either working professionally or volunteering.

Implementing the Inclusion Action Plans (IAPs)

After the national trainings conclude, all participants return to their home organisations to put theory into practice. While only a select few proceed to the job shadowing, every participant is responsible for this core implementation phase. This is where real institutional change begins:

- **Internal presentation and buy-in:** Before execution, the newly trained inclusion coordinator must present the drafted IAP to their organisation's board and team members to secure official institutional backing and align internal resources.
- **Organisational implementation:** Participants begin executing the operational matrix they designed during Training 2. This involves formally stepping into their newly established role as an inclusion coordinator and establishing internal mechanisms—such as updating external communication guidelines for better accessibility, ensuring physical spaces meet inclusion standards, and forging new partnerships with specialised local NGOs.
- **Testing inclusive methodologies (Optional Pilot Projects):** If participants drafted local pilot projects during Training 2, they launch these initiatives locally. This allows them to directly test new outreach strategies and apply

inclusive budgeting principles. Crucially, they must apply the principle of "nothing about us without us" by co-designing these tools alongside the specific marginalised youth identified during the Phase 1 needs analysis, rather than just designing projects for them.

- **Continuous monitoring and peer support:** Implementation is tracked through the collaborative online spaces set up in Phase 1. Participants share their milestones, unexpected bottlenecks, and successful workarounds with their national cohort, fostering an ongoing process of peer-learning. Locally, the success of the implemented IAPs will be measured through concrete indicators, such as the number of new NEET youth effectively engaged or the successful submission of new, inclusive funding proposals.
- **Preparing for transnational upscaling:** The practical experience gained during this local implementation—both the successes and the failures—is documented. These insights, along with the physical IAP documents, will be shared at the International Training Course (Phase 5). This process serves a dual purpose: it educates peers across the region through real-world case studies, and it gives these local action plans a cross-border dimension, allowing them to be upscaled into international strategies.

Continuous Mentorship for IAP and Pilot Project Implementation

As previously outlined, participants draft and structure their Inclusion Action Plans (and optionally, inclusive pilot projects) during the national trainings. The purpose of these documents is twofold: first, they act as a tool to extend the learning process far beyond the limited timeframe of the training room. Second, and more importantly, they provide grassroots youth organisations with a tangible, strategic roadmap to embed inclusive practices into their everyday operations and local policy dialogues.

Because it is unrealistic to expect these action plans to be fully realised independently immediately following a training course, the organizing consortium must provide a continuous mentoring programme between the national events and the final international training.

Core principles of the mentorship approach:

- **Engaging an Expert Support Network:** The project management team, internal staff, external experts, and experienced youth workers within the consortium will act as dedicated mentors for the participants.
- **Structured Check-Ins and Feedback:** This mentorship does not require a complex, separate budget, but rather dedicated, scheduled time. Mentors will regularly contact the youth workers (both between trainings and post-trainings) to monitor the progress of their IAPs and, where applicable, the

implementation of their pilot projects. They will ask participants to share updates, identify roadblocks, and clarify what support they lack within their own organisations or local communities.

- **Practical, Tailored Assistance:** Mentors will go beyond merely analysing and commenting on the documents. They will offer practical assistance tailored to the specific needs of the mentored individual, which could include providing access to the consortium's non-financial resources, sharing tools for executing activities, or offering strategic advice for overcoming institutional resistance.
- **From Plan to Proposal (Funding Focus):** To sustain high motivation, mentors will actively support the vision that well-developed IAPs and successfully tested pilot projects (if executed) can be easily translated into actual funding proposals (such as Erasmus+ Key Action 1 or 2 applications). Showing participants direct link between their action plans, their local outcomes, and future project funding heavily stimulates continuous work.
- **Standardised Templates:** The mentorship relies on ensuring all participants utilise the comprehensive Inclusion Action plan template provided so that the final strategic documents maintain adequate structure and address all necessary operational elements.

The “Local” Innovation: A pioneering approach to job shadowing

Traditionally, job shadowing within the European framework is an international activity, requiring significant funding for cross-border travel and long-term accommodation. As a core pilot activity of this project, the methodology introduced a profound innovation: **local job shadowing**. By shifting the focus inward, this model maximises opportunities for contextualized learning while operating on a fraction of the standard budget.

Operating with a micro-budget of approximately EUR 250 per participant—covering only essential local travel, daily meals, and minor logistical costs—this approach proved that profound professional development does not require crossing borders. Participants stayed in their own homes, entirely eliminating the heavy financial burden of international accommodation. Despite the reduced costs, this local model achieved capacity-building and networking effects fully comparable to traditional international shadowing.

- **Cost-Effectiveness and Unprecedented Access:** By removing international travel and accommodation barriers, the programme opened doors for youth workers from severely marginalised backgrounds who could never have participated in a standard European mobility project.
- **Contextual Relevance:** Inclusive practices observed on a daily basis are immediately and directly transferable, as both the ‘shadower’ and the host operate under the exact same national, legal, and social systems.

- **Sustainable Networking:** Instead of building fleeting international connections, this model builds a robust, permanent national ecosystem of inclusion by fostering concrete NGO-to-Institution and NGO-to-NGO partnerships within the same community.
- **Strengthening Civil Society and Employability:** The local immersion had significant, measurable effects on individual lives, drastically increasing the employability of the 'shadowers'. Simultaneously, it strengthened regional civil society by providing organisations with highly trained, dedicated new volunteers and staff members. Results indicate that out of the 20 job shadowers in the pilot programme, almost half (9 persons) continued working or volunteering long-term with the host organisations where they completed their "learning-by-doing" placements.

Implementation of the shadowing programme

A minimum placement of 3 weeks (15 working days) is required for meaningful integration.

CRITICAL RESOURCE: All operational details, mentorship guidelines, daily log-books, evaluation rubrics, and contract templates are provided in Annex 9 Handbook for Job Shadowing.

The Role of the Host Organisation (The Mentor):

The host assigns a dedicated mentor to supervise the participant and ensure they are integrated into staff meetings, field visits, and workshop co-facilitation.

The Role of the Shadower (The Inclusion Coordinator):

The shadower acts as a "critical friend," bringing fresh perspective. They continue reflective journaling and test specific tools from the handout library.

The Practical Assignment: The Inclusion Audit

During the placement, shadowers should conduct a comprehensive Inclusion Audit of the host organisation using checklists from the UNDP HRBA Toolkit and the Youth Participation Toolkit:

- **Barrier Identification:** Identifying one previously "invisible" structural barrier.
- **Solution Prototyping:** Proposing a concrete, cost-effective adjustment to overcome that barrier.

Outcome: The Job Shadowing Inclusion Report

A formal report summarising observed practices and findings. Crucially, the shadower presents this audit back to the host organisation's leadership to provide them with actionable, peer-to-peer feedback. Afterwards, this document serves as the basis for the participant's contribution to Phase 5.


Network

Phase 5: Transnational networking and upscaling (the International Training and Networking event)

The final phase elevates grassroots youth work from a local and national context to a broader regional and European level. This large-scale international training and networking event acts as the capstone of the capacity-building journey. It is designed to be geographically flexible, hosted either in a central location like Serbia or another participating European country, depending on logistical advantages.

The event gathers a diverse group of stakeholders to forge cross-border partnerships, share best practices, and design future European projects. The participant pool brings together the most motivated participants from the national events (those who excelled in Phase 3 and 4) alongside peers and experts from other European "programme countries." Importantly, organisations not previously involved in the project—specifically those specializing in working with youth facing severe barriers (such as youth with targeted disabilities, severe economic obstacles, or those facing systemic education barriers)—should be actively invited as external experts to cross-pollinate knowledge.

To ensure cross-sectoral collaboration, the group features a strategic mix of representatives from Civil Society Organisations (such as youth hubs, disabled persons' organisations, and rural youth clubs) and Public Institutions (such as municipal youth offices and formal education institutions), ranging from active youth workers to prospective inclusion coordinators.

During this phase, participants formally present their Job Shadowing Inclusion Reports, the outcomes of their local IAP implementation, and the prototypes/pilot projects developed in Phase 4 (if applicable).

MODEL AGENDA: A detailed, day-by-day model agenda for the International training and networking event is provided in Annex 10 - International TC, outlining the progression from mapping realities to project design and network founding.

Methodological Approach

The methodology purposefully avoids formal, passive lectures. Instead, the vast majority of the time is spent in highly interactive formats: work in pairs and trios, World Café methods, interactive role-playing games, the Living Library, Forum Theatre, and immersive "city games." The design ensures that theoretical frameworks (like human rights, social solidarity, and intercultural learning) are constantly translated into practical youth work tools through non-formal educational methods.

Thematic Pillars and Core Sessions

- **Mapping Realities & Policy Discovery:** Participants move beyond reading policy documents by actively mapping their local realities against frameworks like the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and the European Youth Goals. They use their national research publications to identify the root causes of exclusion across different European contexts.
- **Best Practice Exchange & The "Human Library":** A dedicated session showcases successful models of outreach. Job shadowing alumni act as a "Human Library," sharing detailed case studies on how they transitioned from theory to hands-on practice during their immersive placements. They present their Inclusion Audits to the broader European group, demonstrating how professional immersion sharpens the skills of future Inclusion Coordinators.
- **Mastering Outreach (Evidence-Based Strategies):** Using the national research findings, participants transition from theoretical problems to actionable solutions. They focus on overcoming researched barriers by developing proactive outreach strategies—such as organizing cross-border virtual exchanges to connect isolated rural youth, or structuring preparatory visits to build trust with marginalised groups prior to a mobility project.
- **Upscaling Local Action Plans (Transnational Networking):** Participants present their locally tested IAPs. Using a peer-consultancy format, international attendees review these plans to add a transnational component. This process establishes cross-border support mechanisms based on direct knowledge exchange. For instance, an expert in accessible digital design from one country might offer their resources to support the implementation of a partner's local IAP in another country, or organisations might agree on a system for continuously exchanging lessons learned during their ongoing inclusion work.
- **The Inclusive Project Lab (Drafting joint Erasmus+ proposals):** Participants form cross-border teams based on shared thematic interests. Guided by project canvas frameworks, this comprehensive lab is split into key stages:
    - *Concept Development:* Brainstorming joint cross-border pilots (such as Key Action 2 Cooperation Partnerships or inclusive Youth Exchanges). Groups should tackle specific themes; for example, one group could focus entirely on effectively overcoming language barriers for youth in international projects, while another concentrates on physical accessibility and outreach.
    - *Inclusive Activity Design & Inclusion Budgeting:* Designing the actual youth mobility activities while applying Erasmus+ "Inclusion Support" mechanisms. Participants calculate resources for reinforced mentorship, exceptional costs, and language learning support.

    - *The Project Showcase:* The lab concludes with an interactive "Gallery Walk," where teams pitch their fully drafted project concepts to the plenary for constructive peer feedback. The ultimate goal is that these drafts are developed into full grant proposals in the post-event period.
- **Field Research and Community Exploration:** To break away from the plenary hall, the methodology includes a half-day of organised field visits. Participants observe the practical application of inclusion and accessibility in a local urban context, engaging in Q&A sessions with local practitioners at youth centres or state authorities to compare regional strategies with on-the-ground reality.
- **Co-creating the Methodology Handbook:** A unique feature of this TC is the active contribution of the participants to the project's final outputs. Participants are given dedicated space to author specific methods, workshops, energisers, and evaluation tools based on their recent experiences. For example, a small working group might author a "unit" dealing exclusively with outreach activities towards youth facing discrimination. This collaborative authoring process grants significant additional visibility to grassroots youth workers, as their methodologies are subsequently published for a wide internet audience of European peers.
- **Founding the Regional Network (The "Marketplace of Ideas"):**
    - ***The process****:* The capacity-building journey culminates in the founding of the informal **"Inclusion Coordinators Across Borders"** network.
    - ***The method****:* In a strategic plenary session, participants self-organise into thematic working groups (e.g., drafting formal founding documents/statutes, developing new non-formal education tools, or monitoring the joint projects drafted in the Project Lab). They define digital communication protocols, establish a rotating moderation schedule to share relevant grant calls, and set timelines for future collaborations.

Final Evaluation and Recognition

The event—and the capacity-building journey as a whole—closes with a comprehensive reflection and evaluation process. Participants are formally recognised for their professional development, receiving their YouthPass certificates to officially validate their newly acquired competencies and their readiness to act as regional Inclusion Coordinators.

Subotica local government obstruction of the Erasmus+ International Training and Networking event

At the time of developing and publishing this handbook, the Phase 5 International Event has been temporarily postponed due to severe political obstruction by the local government in Subotica, Serbia.

Originally scheduled to take place from 18 to 24 April 2026 in Palić near Subotica, the capstone event was set to gather 70 youth workers and inclusion coordinators from across the Western Balkans. However, after a devastating fire destroyed the planned hotel venue in February 2026, the organising consortium faced targeted administrative sabotage. Despite a month of negotiations, the Subotica municipal authorities discriminatorily denied the project access to alternative public venues, such as the "Velika terasa". While other commercial and sporting entities affected by the fire were freely granted the use of these alternative public spaces, the youth inclusion project was explicitly and unjustifiably blocked.

This politically motivated discrimination—likely stemming from the People's Parliament long-standing work in human rights—directly undermined regional civil society cooperation and sabotaged a project funded by the European Commission.

As a result of this obstruction and subsequent financial breaches by the local provider "Elitte Palić" Subotica, the Association "People's Parliament" was forced to officially delay the event and consequently successfully relocate the event in a more supportive host location in Serbia.

Read the full official statement regarding this obstruction here.

From Strategy to Practice: Moving to Part 3

The capacity-building journey outlined in this methodology provides youth organisations with the strategic and educational framework necessary to train and empower dedicated Inclusion Coordinators. However, systemic change requires not only long-term strategy but also concrete, adaptable tools for daily grassroots youth work. To bridge the gap between strategic planning and direct implementation, the following section of this **Handbook - Part 3: Practical Working Units** - offers a comprehensive collection of 27 ready-to-use educational resources. Co-created by the consortium partners, these units provide youth workers with specific workshop scenarios, methodological step-by-step guides, and practical tools designed specifically for direct engagement with NEET youth and young people facing economic, health, and social barriers.

PART 3: DIGITAL TOOLKIT FOR INCLUSIVE YOUTH WORK

Introduction: From Strategy to Practice

The capacity-building journey outlined in Part 2 provides youth organizations with the strategic and educational framework necessary to train and empower dedicated Inclusion Coordinators. However, achieving systemic change and fostering the genuine inclusion of youth with fewer opportunities—particularly NEET youth and those facing economic, social, geographical, or health barriers in the Western Balkans—requires more than long-term strategy. It requires concrete, adaptable tools for daily grassroots youth work.

To bridge the gap between strategic planning and direct implementation, Part 3 of this Handbook offers a comprehensive digital toolkit of **27 ready-to-use educational resources**.

Co-created by the consortium partners and directly tested by youth workers during our capacity-building events, these "Units" are designed specifically for direct engagement with marginalized youth. They are structured to ensure that youth workers do not have to "start from zero" when trying to design inclusive projects.

How to Use Part 3 of the Handbook

To make this toolkit as accessible and user-friendly as possible, the 27 units are divided into four distinct categories, depending on what the youth worker or Inclusion Coordinator needs at any given moment:

1. **Workshops & Educational Activities:** Full, ready-to-run session plans and quick energisers. Use these when you need a step-by-step facilitation guide to run a live session with young people.
2. **Methods & Techniques:** Modular facilitation formats. Use these when you have a topic but need a fresh, inclusive way to facilitate a conversation or gather ideas (e.g., Focus Groups, World Cafés).
3. **Practical Tools:** Tangible instruments, templates, checklists, and digital platforms. Use these for specific, practical fixes to administrative or logistical barriers (e.g., inclusive budgeting, accessibility checklists).
4. **Methodologies & Approaches:** Long-term frameworks and programmatic designs. Use these when designing future grants, establishing structural programs, or creating new roles within your NGO.

Standard Unit Template

Unit Title: [Clear, descriptive title]

Category: [1, 2, 3, or 4]

Author: [Name of the consortium partner/organization that developed the unit]

Summary: [A brief, 2-3 sentence overview of the unit and its purpose]

Learning Goals: [What the user or participant will know, be able to do, or understand after completing the unit]

Topics: [The key themes or issues the unit addresses (e.g., "mentorship support", "inclusive budgeting")]

Target Group: [The ideal audience for this unit (e.g., "youth workers," "young people with health issues")]

Inclusion Considerations: [Specific guidance on how to adapt the unit to ensure it is accessible and welcoming for all, especially for youth with fewer opportunities. This can include tips for physical, social, or economic accessibility.]

Practical Details: [The necessary logistical information. For Workshops/Activities/Energisers: List the Duration and recommended Group Size. For Tools/Methodologies: Describe the estimated time needed to learn/use the resource.]

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): [A list of all required physical or digital resources, including attachments, room setup instructions, or required reading]

The Process: [A detailed step-by-step guide on how to execute the unit, use the tool correctly, or apply core principles in practice]

Tips & Best Practices: [Additional advice to ensure success. This can include tips for facilitators, common mistakes to avoid, variations for different groups, or real-world examples.]

Evaluation & Follow-up: [Guidance on how to assess the unit's impact and ensure learning continues. This can include debriefing questions, feedback methods, or suggestions for future collaboration.]

References & Additional Information (Optional)**:** [External links, further reading, and source material]

Category 1: Workshops & Educational Activities

Full, ready-to-run session plans, as well as quick energisers to kick them off. If a youth worker needs to fill a 90-minute slot on a Tuesday afternoon about inclusion—or just needs a quick 10-minute energiser to break the ice—they go here.

In this section:

- **Jump In, Jump Out (Energiser)**
- **From Problem Tree to Goal Tree:** A Step-by-Step Workshop for Designing Inclusive Youth Projects
- **Mapping Duty-Bearers & Rights-Holders:** Practical HRBA Exercise for Youth Engagement
- **Turning ideas into action:** How to design an inclusion action plan
- **Truth Lies in Balanced Voices:** Designing Balanced Focus Groups for Inclusive Research
- **Promoting inclusion through national-level intercultural exchanges**
- **Study Visit as a Learning Method:** Exploring Good Practices for NEET Inclusion
- **Advocacy Essentials:** Tools and Pathways for Youth Influence

Jump In, Jump Out (Energiser)

Category: Workshops & Educational Activities

Author: Center for Bridging Communities (CBC)

Summary: This energiser uses movement and cognitive challenge to illustrate how people process information differently under changing instructions. It highlights how confusion, assumptions, and pace differences can create exclusion in group situations.

Learning Goals:

- Experience how instructions can be interpreted differently
- Recognize how speed and clarity affect participation
- Reflect on how miscommunication can lead to exclusion
- Increase group energy and engagement

Topics: Communication and comprehension, Inclusion and accessibility, Assumptions vs reality, Processing differences.

Target Group: Youth workers and trainers, Young people aged 14+, Mixed-ability learning groups.

Inclusion Considerations: Participants with mobility limitations may perform movements seated or using upper-body gestures. Participants with slower processing pace may observe first rounds before joining. Facilitators should demonstrate visually as well as verbally. Instructions should be given slowly at first and progressively increased in complexity. Participation is voluntary; observation is an equally valid role.

Practical Details: Duration: 10–15 minutes. Group size: 8–30 participants. Space: Open circle with safe movement area.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Open floor space. No other specific materials required.

The Process: 1. **Form a Circle:** Participants stand in a circle (or seated circle if needed). Facilitator explains that they must follow instructions.

2. **Level 1 – Follow Instructions:** Facilitator calls: "Jump in / Jump out / Jump left / Jump right." Participants perform exactly as instructed.
3. **Level 2 – Say the Same, Do the Opposite:** Facilitator instructs: "Say what I say, do the contrary." Participants repeat the words but move in the opposite direction.
4. **Level 3 – Do the Same, Say the Opposite:** Facilitator instructs: "Do what I say, say the contrary." Participants perform the movement but speak the opposite.
5. **Quick Reflection:** Ask what was confusing, who found it easy or difficult, and what this shows about communication and inclusion.

Tips & Best Practices: Start slowly and build complexity gradually. Demonstrate movements visually. Normalise mistakes and laughter. Ensure safe spacing between participants. Use as transition into inclusion discussion if relevant.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Ask participants: When did you feel confused? What helped you understand better? How can unclear instructions exclude people? Facilitators may connect insights to inclusive communication in youth work. Key outcomes to assess include whether participants recognize differences in processing and comprehension, the role of clarity in inclusion, how group norms affect participation, and the need for accessible communication.

From Problem Tree to Goal Tree: A Step-by-Step Workshop for Designing Inclusive Youth Projects

Category: Workshops & Educational Activities

Author: Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Mostar

Summary: This unit builds the capacity of youth organisations to use the Problem Tree → Goal Tree method to identify core inclusion problems, understand root causes and consequences, transform them into achievable, inclusive goals, and plan meaningful interventions for NEET youth and youth with fewer opportunities. It directly reflects the methodology used in Training 2 (Day 2): Situation Analysis, Problem Analysis, Objective Setting, and prepares material needed for Inclusion Action Plans (IAPs).

Learning Goals:

- Conduct a Problem Tree Analysis for an inclusion-related challenge.
- Map out root causes and effects using HRBA and inclusion lenses.
- Convert a Problem Tree into a Goal (Objective) Tree.
- Develop SMART, inclusive project objectives.
- Identify priority interventions and stakeholders.
- Integrate workshop outcomes into IAP Sections 1, 2, and 3 (Training 2 template).

Topics: Problem Tree Analysis, Goal setting, SMART objectives, Root cause and consequence analysis, Inclusion Action Plans (IAP).

Target Group: Youth workers and facilitators, NGO project designers, Public youth officers, Volunteers involved in planning, Mixed working groups across organisations.

Inclusion Considerations: To ensure full participation: Use visual symbols for youth with lower literacy. Allow participants to draw causes instead of writing. Offer large-print or digital templates. Provide transport, online access, or childcare. Ensure quiet spaces for those with sensory needs. Use mixed groups (youth + youth workers). Provide breaks to reduce cognitive overload.

Practical Details: Duration: 2.5 – 3 hours, or shorter as two 90-minute modules.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Flipcharts, Markers, Post-its, Problem Tree template (included in this Unit), Goal Tree template, Group work sheets, Sticky dots for prioritization, Optional: projector and digital templates. Annexes and Tools: Group_Work_Sheets_Inclusive_Project_Design, Youth_Friendly_Goal_Tree_Template, Problem_Tree_Goal_Tree_Templates.

The Process:

- ✓ **STEP 1 — Choose the Core Problem (15 minutes):** Facilitator asks: "What is one inclusion challenge our organisation faces?" Examples: "NEET youth do not join our activities." "We rarely work with youth with disabilities." "Our communication does not reach rural youth." "Our staff lack skills to work with diverse groups." The problem must be: Visible (demonstrated in experience or data), Specific, Neutral wording (not assigning blame). Write it at the centre of the flipchart. This forms the trunk of the Problem Tree.
- ✓ **STEP 2 — Identify Causes (Root System) (30 minutes):** Ask the group: "What causes this problem?" Break down causes into levels: Immediate causes (behaviours, actions, skills); Underlying causes (systems, resources, access);

Structural causes (policies, stigma, discrimination, socioeconomic factors). Use color-coded post-its. Example: "NEET youth do not join our activities." Possible causes might include: No transport money, No digital access, Social anxiety, Feeling unwelcome, Family responsibilities, Lack of trust in institutions, Times/days are not suitable, Stereotypes from staff, Negative past experience. Arrange them as roots.

- ✓ **STEP 3 — Identify Effects (Branches) (20 minutes):** Ask: "If this problem continues, what happens?" Examples: Youth remain disengaged, Organisations lose relevance, Fewer partnerships, Cycles of exclusion deepen, Lower community impact. Place these above the problem statement as branches.
- ✓ **STEP 4 — Validate with HRBA Lenses (10 minutes):** Check whether causes relate to: Participation, Non-discrimination, Accountability, Empowerment, Transparency. This ensures the analysis is rights-based and not biased.
- ✓ **STEP 5 — Transform the Problem Tree → Goal Tree (25 minutes):** Now flip each part: Problem → Overall Goal; Causes → Desired Changes (Results); Effects → Positive Impacts. Example conversion: NEET youth do not join activities → NEET youth participate actively in our activities; No transport money → Transport barriers are reduced; Low confidence → Youth feel confident and supported; Activities not tailored → Programmes are adapted to diverse needs; Youth remain disengaged → Youth feel included & valued. Turn all roots, trunk, and branches into positive, achievable statements.
- ✓ **STEP 6 — Prioritise Goals (15 minutes):** Give each participant 3 sticky dots to vote on: Which goals are most achievable? Which goals have highest impact? Which should be done first? Pick the top 3–5 goals.
- ✓ **STEP 7 — Develop SMART Objectives (20 minutes):** For each priority goal: SMART Criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). Example: "By December 2025, we will organise 6 outreach sessions in rural areas to engage at least 60 NEET youth." "By June 2026, at least 40 NEET youth from rural areas participate in three outreach activities co-designed with youth workers."
- ✓ **STEP 8 — Identify Interventions & Stakeholders (15 minutes):** Link each objective to: Actions, Responsible persons, Resources needed, Partners (schools, employment services, municipal youth office), Timeline. This directly supports completion of Inclusion Action Plan parts.
- ✓ **STEP 9 — Final Reflection (5 minutes):** Ask participants: "What part of the analysis changed your understanding of inclusion?" "What new idea are you excited to test?" "Who can we work with that we haven't approached before?"

Tips & Best Practices: Problems should be formulated in a way that the organisation can realistically influence them.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Ask individuals or groups: Which cause surprised you most? Which roots are easiest to address? Which goals would have the biggest impact on NEET youth? Did this method help us understand the situation differently? How confident are you in using the problem tree in your organisation? Simple rating scale: Very confident, Confident with support, Need more practice.

References & Additional Information: Training 2: Situation Analysis, Problem Tree, Goal Tree (core methodology); Inclusion Action Plan Template (API Sections 1–9); Unit 1: HRBA Self-Assessment Tool; Unit 2: World Café (useful for crowdsourcing causes); UNICEF MoRES framework (bottlenecks); CRS Toolkit — barrier frameworks for inclusion.

Mapping Duty-Bearers & Rights-Holders: Practical HRBA Exercise for Youth Engagement

Category: Workshops & Educational Activities

Author: Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Mostar

Summary: This unit provides a practical HRBA workshop that helps youth organisations: Understand the roles and responsibilities of all actors involved in supporting youth engagement; Identify rights-holders (young people, including those with fewer opportunities); Identify duty-bearers (institutions responsible for enabling participation and inclusion); Clarify who must do what to reduce barriers and improve access for NEET youth; Strengthen partnerships and accountability; Prepare inputs for Inclusion Action Plans (IAPs) and cross-sector cooperation. The method was introduced during Training 1 (HRBA: duty-bearers, rights-holders, causal & capacity gap analysis) and deepened during Training 2 via stakeholder mapping. This unit also supports advocacy efforts by clarifying institutional responsibilities and accountability gaps.

Learning Goals:

- Explain the HRBA concept of rights-holders and duty-bearers.
- Map all relevant actors in their local youth ecosystem.
- Analyse the capacities, gaps, and responsibilities of institutions.
- Identify how youth with fewer opportunities experience each actor.
- Develop HRBA-informed strategies to engage the right stakeholders.
- Strengthen accountability and follow-up mechanisms in inclusive youth work.

Topics: HRBA roles, Stakeholder mapping, Institutional responsibility, Capacity analysis, Advocacy.

Target Group: Youth workers, NGO staff, Local institutions (youth offices, schools, employment services), Volunteers, Youth representatives (NEET youth, marginalised youth), Multi-stakeholder working groups.

Inclusion Considerations: Use icons to represent stakeholders (good for youth with low literacy). Provide different participation formats (verbal, visual, discussion). Make the space physically accessible. Use smaller groups for youth who feel intimidated. Provide emotional support if youth share difficult experiences. Avoid blaming institutions; focus on capacity and system gaps.

Practical Details: Duration: 90–120 minutes. Can be split into 2 sessions: Understanding HRBA roles, Mapping and analysis.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Flipcharts, Markers, Sticky notes (two colours), Printed HRBA role cards, Local stakeholder list (optional), HRBA mapping templates (included below), Tape or large wall space. Annexes and Tools: HRBA_Mapping_Templates, Visual Stakeholder Map, Local Stakeholder List, HRBA Role Cards.

The Process:

✓ **STEP 1 — HRBA Roles Introduction (15 minutes):** Facilitator presents: Rights-holders: People whose rights must be respected and whose needs are central. -> Youth, especially those with fewer opportunities (NEET youth, Roma youth, youth with disabilities, rural youth, unemployed youth). Duty-bearers:

Actors who have the obligation to provide support, services, safe spaces, opportunities, and fair treatment. Examples: Municipal youth office, Schools, Employment service / labour office, Social services, NGOs and youth centres, Health services, Police (in safeguarding contexts), Universities, Community centres.

- ✓ **STEP 2 — Brainstorming Rights-Holders (10 minutes):** Ask: "Which groups of young people do we serve – and which groups do we NOT reach?" Participants use sticky notes to list all youth groups: NEET youth, Youth with disabilities, Rural youth, Refugee/migrant youth, Socioeconomically disadvantaged youth, LGBTQ+ youth, Youth at risk of drop-out, Early school leavers. Place them on the left side of the wall (rights-holder area).
- ✓ **STEP 3 — Brainstorming Duty-Bearers (10 minutes):** Ask: "Which institutions or actors have a responsibility toward youth rights and participation?" Participants produce sticky notes for: Local government youth office, High schools & VET schools, Centres for Social Work, Employment service, NGOs, community centres, Health centres, Cultural institutions, CSOs supporting specific groups. Place them on the right side of the wall.
- ✓ **STEP 4 — Creating the HRBA Map (20 minutes):** Draw a large diagram: RIGHTS-HOLDERS ----------------------> DUTY-BEARERS (Young people) (Institutions). Participants link rights-holder groups to relevant duty-bearers using arrows. Example: NEET youth → Employment Service; Youth with disabilities → Schools → Health services; Rural youth → Municipal transport → NGOs; Youth with mental health needs → Health centres → Schools. This creates a visual ecosystem map.
- ✓ **STEP 5 — Capacity & Gap Analysis (20 minutes):** For each duty-bearer, ask: 1. Do they have the capacity? (e.g., staff, skills, equipment, transport, communication tools) 2. Do they have the mandate? (legal responsibility or explicit role) 3. Do they have the willingness? (are they motivated, cooperative, supportive?) 4. What are the barriers? (systemic, social, resource-based) 5. What support do they need? (training, partnerships, funding, information, mediation, awareness). Participants write these on the HRBA Capacity Cards: ATTACHMENT: DUTY-BEARER: ________________________ Capacity Strengths: - … Gaps / Needs: - … Actions Required: - …
- ✓ **STEP 6 — Prioritisation (10 minutes):** Use dot-voting: Ask: "Which partnerships are urgent?" "Which duty-bearers must be engaged first?" "Where are youth needs currently most urgent?" Select 3–5 priority actors.
- ✓ **STEP 7 — Define HRBA Actions (15 minutes):** For each priority duty-bearer, define: What MUST they do? (their obligation) What support do THEY need? What can WE (youth organisation) do? What can young people themselves do? What joint activity would improve inclusion? Example: Duty-bearer: Employment Office. Must provide: guidance, counselling, information. Needs: youth-friendly communication training. We can: co-run info sessions. Youth can: participate as peer ambassadors. Joint action: NEET outreach day in the community.
- ✓ **STEP 8 — Reflection & Closing (5 minutes):** Ask participants: "What new duty-bearer surprised you?" "Where are the biggest gaps?" "How will we use this map to improve our work?"

Tips & Best Practices: This unit also supports advocacy efforts by clarifying institutional responsibilities and accountability gaps. Ensure the focus remains on systemic change rather than individual finger-pointing during the map creation.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Questions: Which rights-holder groups require urgent attention? Which duty-bearers must be involved to support inclusion? Which responsibilities are unclear and need clarification? Where are the biggest capacity gaps? How can the organisation advocate effectively? Simple evaluation tool: I understand HRBA roles, I understand partially, I need more support.

References & Additional Information: Internal Project Materials: Training 1 (HRBA principles and causal/capacity analysis) and Training 2 (Stakeholder & partner identification); UNICEF Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming; "Engaged and Heard!" UNICEF guidelines for adolescent participation; Units 1 & 5 of this Handbook (linked methodologies).

Turning ideas into action - How to design an inclusion action plan

Category: Workshops & Educational Activities

Author: Youth Center Drenas

Summary: This methodological workshop guides participants through the process of transforming ideas about inclusion into a concrete action plan. Through structured group work and reflection, participants identify barriers faced by youth with fewer opportunities and design practical steps to make youth projects more inclusive. The unit helps youth workers move from discussion to actionable solutions.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the importance of structured planning for inclusion in youth projects.
- Identify barriers that prevent youth with fewer opportunities from participating.
- Develop a basic inclusion action plan for youth activities or projects.
- Apply practical strategies to improve accessibility and participation.
- Collaborate with others to design realistic and inclusive solutions.

Topics: Inclusion in youth work, Participation of youth with fewer opportunities, Action planning, Youth empowerment, Accessible project design.

Target Group: Youth workers, youth leaders, volunteers, and young people aged 16–30 involved in youth projects, community initiatives, or Erasmus+ activities who wish to improve inclusion in their work.

Inclusion Considerations: Facilitators should ensure that all participants can actively contribute regardless of their background or abilities. Use simple and clear language when explaining the activity and provide written instructions if needed. Encourage different ways of participation such as speaking, writing, or drawing ideas. If participants have mobility challenges, ensure the room setup is accessible. Be mindful of participants who may feel less confident speaking in large groups by incorporating small group discussions where everyone has space to share their views.

Practical Details: Duration: 90 minutes. Recommended Group Size: 12–25 participants.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Flipchart paper, markers, sticky notes, printed "Action Plan Template" (optional), pens for participants. Room Setup: Arrange chairs and tables for small group work (3–5 participants per group). Ensure there is wall space where groups can display their action plans.

The Process:

1. **Introduction to Inclusion (15 minutes):** The facilitator briefly introduces the concept of inclusion in youth work and explains the importance of ensuring equal opportunities for all young people. Participants are invited to share examples of barriers that might prevent young people from participating in youth activities (financial barriers, discrimination, disability, lack of information, etc.).
2. **Identifying Barriers (15 minutes):** Participants are divided into small

groups of 3–5 people. Each group receives sticky notes and is asked to write down barriers that youth with fewer opportunities may face when joining youth projects or community activities. Groups place their notes on a flipchart and briefly present them.
3. **From Problems to Solutions (20 minutes):** Groups choose two or three barriers from the previous exercise and brainstorm possible solutions. The facilitator encourages participants to think about realistic actions youth workers or organizations can take to address these barriers.
4. **Designing the Inclusion Action Plan (25 minutes):** Each group develops a simple inclusion action plan using the following structure: What is the barrier? What action can address this barrier? Who is responsible for the action? When will it be implemented? What resources are needed? Groups write their action plans on flipchart paper.
5. **Presentation and Reflection (15 minutes):** Each group presents their action plan to the rest of the participants. The facilitator encourages constructive feedback and highlights practical ideas that could be implemented in real youth projects.

Tips & Best Practices: Encourage participants to focus on realistic and achievable actions, not only general ideas. Use examples from real youth projects to help participants understand the concept of action planning. Ensure that all participants have an opportunity to contribute within their group. If the group is very large, assign a facilitator or note-taker for each group. Adapt the activity by focusing on specific inclusion topics such as disability inclusion, economic barriers, or migrant youth participation.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Debrief by asking what barriers to inclusion were identified, which solutions are the most realistic to implement, what they learned about planning inclusive activities, and how they can apply this action plan approach in their own work or community. Follow-up by encouraging participants to further develop their action plans and test them in their organizations or youth projects. Youth workers may also collaborate with local stakeholders, schools, or youth organizations to implement some of the proposed inclusion measures. Participants are encouraged to stay in contact and share their experiences of implementing these ideas in practice.

Truth Lies in Balanced Voices: Designing Balanced Focus Groups for Inclusive Research

Category: Workshops & Educational Activities

Author: Youth Center Drenas

Summary: This workshop introduces participants to the importance of balanced representation when organizing focus groups in research or youth consultations. Through interactive exercises and simulations, participants learn why inviting only like-minded individuals can lead to biased conclusions and how including opposing perspectives can produce more reliable and meaningful insights.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the purpose of focus groups in research and youth consultation.
- Recognize the risks of bias when participants share only similar views.
- Appreciate the value of including opposing or diverse perspectives in discussions.
- Design a balanced focus group by selecting participants with different viewpoints.
- Facilitate respectful dialogue between participants with differing opinions.

Topics: Participatory research, Focus group methodology, Balanced representation, Critical thinking, Inclusive dialogue.

Target Group: Youth workers, researchers, NGO staff, facilitators, and young people aged 18+ who are involved in community research, project design, or policy consultations.

Inclusion Considerations: The workshop should create a safe environment where participants feel comfortable expressing different opinions. Facilitators should emphasize that disagreement is not a conflict but an important part of meaningful dialogue. Participants should be reminded to respect others' views and avoid personal criticism. When working with diverse groups, facilitators should ensure that quieter participants or those from marginalized backgrounds have equal opportunities to speak. If needed, smaller group discussions can help participants feel more comfortable sharing their perspectives.

Practical Details: Duration: 90 minutes. Recommended group size: 12–25 participants.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): *Materials:* Flipchart or whiteboard, Markers, Sticky notes, Printed scenario cards (optional), Pens. *Room Setup:* Arrange chairs in a semi-circle or circle to encourage open discussion. If possible, create space for small group work.

The Process:

1. **Introduction – What is a Focus Group? (10 minutes):** The facilitator briefly explains what a focus group is and how it is commonly used in research, youth work, and project design. Participants are asked if they have ever participated in or organized a focus group. The facilitator introduces the key message of the workshop: "Truth in research often emerges when different perspectives are present in the room."
2. **The "One-Sided Focus Group" Exercise (20 minutes):** Participants are

divided into small groups. Each group is given a topic for discussion (for example: "Should youth projects focus more on international mobility?"). However, participants in each group are instructed to take the same position on the topic (for example, everyone must agree). Groups discuss the topic for 10 minutes and write down their conclusions. Afterwards, groups present their conclusions. The facilitator asks participants: Did the discussion feel challenging or easy? Did new perspectives emerge? Most groups will notice that discussions were very quick and lacked deeper debate.

3. **The "Balanced Voices" Exercise (30 minutes):** Participants are reorganized into new groups. This time, each group contains participants with different positions on the same topic. Groups repeat the discussion exercise, but now they are encouraged to express different viewpoints and challenge each other's ideas respectfully. During the discussion, the facilitator observes how the conversation evolves. After the exercise, groups summarize the main points from their discussion.
4. **Reflection and Learning (20 minutes):** The facilitator leads a group reflection comparing both exercises. Discussion questions: What differences did you notice between the first and second discussion? Did the second discussion generate more ideas or deeper insights? Why is it important to include different perspectives in research? The facilitator explains that many researchers unintentionally create echo chambers by inviting only people who share similar views. Participants discuss how balanced participation improves research credibility.
5. **Designing a Balanced Focus Group (10 minutes):** Participants work in pairs and imagine they need to organize a focus group on a youth issue (for example youth employment, migration, education, or inclusion). They identify: Which groups of people should be invited, Which opposing perspectives should be represented, How they would ensure respectful dialogue. Pairs briefly share their ideas with the group.

Tips & Best Practices:

- Avoid inviting only participants who already support your idea or project.
- Seek diversity in experiences, opinions, and backgrounds.
- Set clear ground rules for respectful discussion.
- Encourage quieter participants to share their views.
- Remind participants that disagreement can improve understanding rather than create conflict.
- If tensions arise, redirect the discussion to focus on ideas rather than individuals.

Evaluation & Follow-up: *Debriefing Questions:* What did you learn about the importance of diverse perspectives in research? How can balanced representation improve focus group results? What challenges might arise when participants strongly disagree? How can facilitators ensure respectful discussions? *Follow-up Suggestions:* Participants can apply the lessons from this workshop when organizing consultations, community discussions, or project evaluations. Youth workers are encouraged to consciously include participants with different viewpoints when conducting research or consultations to ensure more reliable and meaningful insights.

Promoting inclusion through national-level intercultural exchanges

Category: Workshops & Educational Activities

Author: Youth Center Drenas

Summary: This workshop introduces the concept of intercultural evenings, where young people from different cultural, social, or regional backgrounds share their traditions, food, music, and stories. The goal is to break barriers, challenge stereotypes, and foster mutual understanding at the national level. Participants will learn how to organize such events in a way that is inclusive, low-cost, and meaningful.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the value of intercultural sharing for breaking social and cultural barriers.
- Plan and organize an intercultural evening in their community or organization.
- Encourage participation from diverse groups, including youth with fewer opportunities.
- Use intercultural activities to build empathy, respect, and inclusion.
- Reflect on cultural assumptions and challenge stereotypes in a safe environment.

Topics: Intercultural dialogue, Inclusion and social cohesion, Stereotype reduction, Participatory event design, Youth engagement.

Target Group: Youth workers, NGO staff, educators, volunteers, and youth groups aiming to increase inclusion and intercultural understanding in national-level youth activities.

Inclusion Considerations: Ensure accessibility: consider physical space, transportation, and timing for all participants. Include diverse participants: different regions, ethnic backgrounds, abilities, and socio-economic contexts. Use clear and simple communication for invitations, announcements, and instructions. Respect cultural sensitivities and provide safe spaces for discussion. Encourage voluntary participation, ensuring no one feels pressured to share personal beliefs.

Practical Details: Duration: 2–4 hours (depending on number of participants). Group size: 20–100 participants. Format: In-person national-level event.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Space for sharing (community hall, youth center, school); Tables for food, crafts, or displays; Projector or audio equipment for presentations, music, or videos; Materials for workshops or demonstrations (cultural artefacts, posters, instruments); Invitations and promotion materials (social media, flyers, personal invitations); Volunteers to assist with logistics.

The Process:

1. **Preparation (30–60 minutes planning session):** Define goals: inclusion, intercultural exchange, awareness raising. Identify participating groups and communities. Collect information about what each group wants to present (music, food, dances, crafts, stories).
2. **Event Setup (1 hour):** Arrange tables and display areas. Test technical

equipment (audio, projectors). Create a welcoming environment with decorations, banners, or posters reflecting diversity.

3. **Icebreaker and Introduction (15 minutes):** Start with a fun, inclusive icebreaker to get participants engaged. Facilitator introduces the event goals: breaking barriers, sharing cultures, and fostering respect.
4. **Intercultural Sharing (60–120 minutes):** Groups take turns sharing aspects of their culture: Music, dance, or performance; Traditional food tasting; Stories, games, or rituals. Encourage interaction: participants ask questions, try activities, or taste food.
5. **Reflection and Discussion (20–30 minutes):** Facilitator leads a group reflection: What did you learn about other cultures? Which assumptions or stereotypes did you notice? How can you apply this learning to your daily projects or interactions?
6. **Closing (10 minutes):** Thank participants. Highlight key takeaways about inclusion and intercultural understanding. Encourage ongoing intercultural exchanges in local communities.

Tips & Best Practices: Ensure balanced participation: invite diverse youth and avoid domination by any single group. Keep activities interactive rather than purely observational. Encourage sharing, not competition; celebrate differences without judgment. Consider low-cost approaches: homemade decorations, community volunteers, simple food sharing. Make reflection part of the event to connect the intercultural experience to inclusive practices in youth work. Record or photograph the event (with consent) to share best practices with other youth organizations.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Debriefing Questions: Did participants feel welcomed and included? Which stereotypes were challenged or changed? How can similar events be adapted locally or regionally? What practical actions will participants take in their own projects to promote inclusion? Follow-up Suggestions: Share feedback with all participants and involved organizations. Document lessons learned to guide future intercultural evenings. Encourage participants to replicate or expand the event in other communities. Use insights gained to improve project design, activities, and youth engagement strategies.

Study Visit as a Learning Method: Exploring Good Practices for NEET Inclusion

Category: Workshops & Educational Activities

Author: NVO Glas

Summary: This unit presents the study visit as a structured learning activity that allows participants to observe, engage, and learn from organizations or initiatives implementing effective practices for NEET youth inclusion. The study visit encourages experiential learning, reflection, and knowledge transfer, providing insights that can be adapted to participants' own contexts.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the practical application of NEET inclusion initiatives in real-life settings.
- Identify strategies, methods, and tools used by host organizations to engage NEET youth.
- Reflect on how observed practices can be adapted or implemented in their own communities.
- Develop critical thinking and observational skills in evaluating youth inclusion programs.
- Foster networking and collaboration with practitioners and organizations in the field.

Topics: NEET youth inclusion strategies and programs, Experiential learning and observation, Networking and knowledge sharing, Assessment of local needs versus best practices, Reflection and adaptation of good practices.

Target Group: Youth workers, trainers, and facilitators, NEET youth (18–30), Community activists and NGO staff, Policy makers or program coordinators interested in youth inclusion.

Inclusion Considerations: Accessibility: Ensure the venue is physically accessible for all participants; provide virtual alternatives if needed. Language: Provide translation or interpretation if participants have diverse language skills. Cultural sensitivity: Brief participants on local norms and organizational practices to prevent misunderstandings. Participation equity: Encourage all participants to ask questions, take notes, and actively observe, regardless of prior experience. Digital alternatives: If in-person visits are not feasible, use virtual tours, video presentations, or interactive webinars.

Practical Details: Estimated duration: 3–6 hours per study visit (depending on travel and number of organizations). Group size: 8–20 participants per visit (can be split into smaller observation teams if needed). Delivery format: In-person or hybrid/online if the host organization offers digital access.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Contact details of host organization(s), Agenda or schedule for the visit, Transportation arrangements and tickets, Notebooks, pens, or digital devices for observation notes, Cameras or audio recorders (if allowed), Pre-prepared questionnaires or observation templates, Safety and consent information (especially when visiting youth spaces).

The Process:

1. **Mapping and Selecting Host Organizations:** Identify organizations implementing good practices for NEET inclusion. Criteria for selection include relevance, innovative approaches, accessibility, and willingness to host visitors. Map potential visits using geographic proximity, thematic relevance, and logistical feasibility.
2. **Planning the Visit:** Contact host organizations and agree on a date, duration, and agenda. Define objectives for participants: what they should observe, which practices to focus on, and expected outputs. Prepare travel arrangements, permissions, and safety protocols.
3. **Preparing Participants:** Provide a briefing on the host organization, their mission, and key programs. Share observation templates or checklists (e.g., methods used, engagement strategies, inclusion measures). Set expectations regarding respectful behaviour, confidentiality, and active observation.
4. **Conducting the Study Visit:** Participants engage in guided observation, attend demonstrations, and interact with staff or youth. Encourage note-taking, photography (if allowed), and structured questioning. Optionally, participants can conduct short interviews or group discussions with staff and NEET youth.
5. **Reflection and Knowledge Capture:** Immediately after the visit, participants consolidate observations individually or in small groups. Use reflection prompts such as: "Which strategies could be adapted to my community?", "What challenges did the organization face, and how did they overcome them?", or "Which practices could be scaled or improved?". Create a structured report, infographic, or digital summary of key insights.
6. **Follow-Up and Sharing:** Share findings with broader peer networks, mentors, or partner organizations. Organize post-visit discussion sessions to evaluate how observed practices can inform participants' own initiatives. Identify concrete next steps for adapting or piloting practices locally.

Tips & Best Practices: Schedule sufficient time for travel, observation, and discussion. Encourage participants to ask open-ended questions and actively engage with staff. Rotate observation responsibilities in larger groups to ensure coverage of all aspects. Provide virtual participation options for those who cannot attend in person. Respect confidentiality and privacy of youth and organizational practices. Record insights systematically using templates to facilitate comparison across multiple visits.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Evaluate using observation reports and reflection notes by participants, debriefing sessions to discuss lessons learned, and peer or mentor review of collected insights. Follow up by implementing pilot practices adapted from the visit, organizing workshops to share best practices with wider networks, and maintaining contact with host organizations for ongoing collaboration. Key outcomes to assess include whether participants gain practical insights into effective NEET inclusion strategies, strengthen observation and analytical skills, and are equipped to apply learned practices in their own communities.

Advocacy Essentials: Tools and Pathways for Youth Influence

Category: Workshops & Educational Activities

Author: NVO Glas

Summary: This workshop introduces youth workers and participants to structured advocacy processes and tools to influence decisions and policies affecting young people with fewer opportunities. Participants progress from understanding advocacy concepts to applying tools in realistic scenarios, mapping pathways, and developing concrete, actionable advocacy messages.

Learning Goals:

- Explain what advocacy is and its relevance for youth with fewer opportunities.
- Identify practical advocacy pathways and entry points for youth participation.
- Select and justify advocacy tools appropriate for specific issues.
- Map responsible institutions and decision-making levels linked to issues.
- Structure clear, realistic advocacy messages.
- Reflect on potential barriers and ways to apply advocacy in real-life contexts.
- Engage in collaborative group work to simulate community-institution interactions.

Topics: Introduction to advocacy and its pathways (formal/informal), Overview of common advocacy tools, Mapping decision-making structures and institutional responsibility, Designing realistic advocacy strategies and messages, Collaboration and thematic group work, Reflection on accessibility, barriers, and implementation.

Target Group: Youth workers, trainers, and facilitators, Young people (especially NEETs or those with fewer opportunities), Local community activists and NGO staff working on youth inclusion, Youth groups seeking practical advocacy skills.

Inclusion Considerations: Language accessibility: Use simple terms, avoid jargon, and clarify concepts through examples. Digital/physical accessibility: Offer paper or tablet/digital templates; ensure inclusive group formation. Group diversity: Encourage mixing participants with different experiences and perspectives. Psychological safety: Emphasize that mistakes and experimentation are part of learning; there are no wrong answers. Contextual adaptation: Themes and tools should be adjusted to local realities and institutional structures. (For example, if participants have limited literacy, printed advocacy pathway maps with icons can support understanding.)

Practical Details: Estimated Duration: 120-150 minutes. Group Size: Total 15-25 participants, divided into groups of 3-6 participants per thematic group. Delivery Format: In-person or online; plenary sessions for input and reflection, small-group work for mapping and message drafting.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Cards or slips for advocacy themes, Cards for advocacy tools (petition, consultation, meeting, campaign, media action, etc.), Printed or digital advocacy mapping templates, Shared advocacy message templates (paper or tablets/laptops), Flipcharts, markers, sticky notes, projector/screens (optional for plenary presentations), Visual materials for introductory presentation (slides), Sample real-life advocacy cases for reference.

The Process:

1. **Introduction to Advocacy and Tools:** Facilitator presents what advocacy is and is not, its importance for youth with fewer opportunities, formal and informal pathways, and common tools (petitions, consultations, youth councils, meetings, campaigns, media). Use visuals and short examples to create a shared understanding.
2. **Identifying Themes and Forming Groups:** Participants select themes (e.g., employment, education, transport) via cards or a facilitator list. Form groups of 3–6 based on the chosen theme.
3. **Drawing Tools and Initial Discussion:** Groups draw one advocacy tool card and discuss why it suits the theme, its strengths and limitations, and other complementary tools. The facilitator guides with questions to help justify the tool choice.
4. **Mapping Advocacy Pathways:** Groups use printed or digital templates to map decision-makers, levels (local, regional, national), and entry points for youth voices. Links between issues, institutions, and entry points are visualized.
5. **Structuring Advocacy Message:** Groups use templates to create messages that outline the problem, who is affected, who has responsibility, and the requested change (e.g., NEET youth lack digital training → municipality → request free program). Focus on clarity and realism.
6. **Group Presentations – Advocacy Simulation:** Groups present their theme, tool, pathway, and message. Other participants act as the community or public, while the facilitator acts as the institution or decision-maker to simulate real advocacy dynamics and share learning.
7. **Structured Reflection:** Conduct an individual reflection on tool accessibility, barriers, and application, followed by group sharing of insights, challenges, and motivations. Conclude with a plenary session to share key insights, increasing self-awareness, confidence, and readiness for advocacy.

Tips & Best Practices: Facilitators should encourage realistic, actionable advocacy rather than perfect wording, support quieter participants, balance group dynamics, use visual aids for mapping, and keep discussions solution-oriented. Participants should be specific and concrete in describing issues, use group discussion to refine ideas, map institutional responsibilities clearly, and treat feedback as an opportunity to improve. Avoid common mistakes like choosing inappropriate advocacy tools for the theme, ignoring institutional competence, creating overly vague messages, or overlooking barriers to youth engagement.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Evaluate through facilitator observation of group collaboration, problem-solving, and message clarity. Use debriefing questions such as "Which advocacy tools feel most accessible?", "What challenges might you face in real-life advocacy?", and "How could you apply these strategies in your context?", along with short written reflections or surveys. Follow up by encouraging participants to implement advocacy messages in real contexts, sharing refined maps with mentors or peers, tracking responses from institutions, and facilitating ongoing networking or mini-workshops for continuous learning. Key outcomes to assess include whether participants leave the workshop equipped with practical skills to select advocacy tools, map pathways, structure clear messages, and apply advocacy strategies in realistic settings while reflecting on feasibility and barriers.

Category 2: Methods & Techniques

Modular facilitation formats that can be plugged into any topic. This is the "toolbox" section.

In this section:

- **Theatre of the Oppressed**
- **Stakeholder Mapping for Inclusive Youth Work**
- **Walk in My Shoes:** Exploring Inclusion and NEET Youth
- **World Café for Inclusion:** Harvesting Good and Bad Practices in Local Youth Work
- **Living Library with NEET Youth:** A Method for Empathy Building and Barrier Identification
- **SWOT Mapping for NEET Inclusion:** A Structured Method for Community Analysis
- **Reflective Journaling for Empowerment:** A Method for Personal Insight and Growth

Theatre of the Oppressed

Category: Methods & Techniques

Author: Center for Bridging Communities (CBC)

Summary: This method introduces Theatre of the Oppressed as a participatory and experiential approach to explore social exclusion, power relations, and discrimination. Participants collectively analyse real situations of oppression and actively experiment with strategies for change, making it a powerful tool for inclusive youth work.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the basic principles of Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre
- Recognize different roles in situations of oppression (oppressor, oppressed, allies, neutral actors)
- Experience how social power dynamics operate in everyday life
- Practice intervening in oppressive situations in a safe, educational setting
- Strengthen empathy, critical thinking, and collective problem-solving skills

Topics: Social exclusion and power relations, Oppression and structural inequality, Inclusion and discrimination, Agency, resistance, and social change, Participatory and non-formal education.

Target Group: Youth workers and trainers, Youth leaders and peer educators, Educators working with diverse or marginalized groups, Young people aged 16+ (with adaptations).

Inclusion Considerations: Participation in acting is voluntary; therefore, ask who wants to take part. Observing and reflecting are equally valid roles. Avoid re-enacting traumatic experiences without consent and proper support. Use clear, accessible language and explain all concepts step by step. Create a safe space with agreed group rules (respect, confidentiality, right to pass). Be attentive to emotional reactions and allow breaks if needed.

Practical Details: Duration: 2.5-4 hours (can be split into two sessions). Group Size: 10-25 participants. Space: Large room with open space for movement and chairs for discussion.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Flipchart and markers
- Sticky notes
- Open space for acting
- Chairs arranged in a semi-circle for the performance
- A facilitator familiar with group processes (the "Joker" role)

The Process:

1. **Key concepts to introduce:** Explain the roles of Oppressor, Oppressed, Allies, and Neutral actors.
2. **Clarify Purpose:** Divide participants into smaller groups of 6-7 to define their topic of interest. The situation presented must feel real, recognizable, and meaningful.
3. **Warm-up and Group Preparation:** Use simple movement and trust-building exercises, introduce basic acting concepts, and establish group rules.

4. **Creating the Scene:** Groups choose a concrete situation of oppression, assign roles, and create a 5-8-minute scene showing the context, the oppression, and a clear barrier. *Important rule: The scene must end badly for the oppressed person. No solution is shown yet.*
5. **First Performance (No interventions):** The scene is performed once. The Joker asks the audience clarifying questions (e.g., Who was oppressed? Which characters had power?).
6. **Forum Theatre (Audience interventions):** The scene is performed again. Audience members may stop the action by clapping, replace the oppressed character (never the oppressor), and try out a new strategy. The Joker facilitates to keep interventions realistic.
7. **Reflection and Debriefing:** Conclude the play and guide a structured reflection on which strategies worked, risks faced, and how it translates to real life.

Tips & Best Practices: Choose a relevant and real issue reflecting the community. Keep the oppression realistic and do not allow "magic solutions". Protect emotional safety, avoid forcing personal disclosures, and instruct the audience not to laugh at the plays. Focus on systems, not individuals. Support the Joker role carefully; they must remain neutral. Balance participation.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Ask what they learned about power and exclusion, what strategies seemed realistic in real life, and what surprised them. Encourage participants to identify a real-life situation where they can apply the learnings, adapt Forum Theatre for their own organizations, and develop action steps for improving inclusion. Key outcomes to assess include whether participants understand the dynamics of oppression and power, recognize the roles, develop empathy toward marginalized young people, practice safe experimentation with alternative behaviours, strengthen critical thinking, and gain confidence in using Forum Theatre as a non-formal education tool.

References & Additional Information:

- Boal, A. (1979). Theatre of the Oppressed. Pluto Press.
- Council of Europe – Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People
- SALTO Youth Toolbox – Theatre of the Oppressed resources
- Council of Europe – Youth Participation and Non-Formal Education

Stakeholder Mapping for Inclusive Youth Work

Category: Methods & Techniques

Author: Center for Bridging Communities (CBC)

Summary: This method introduces stakeholder mapping as a practical tool to help youth workers identify, understand, and engage key actors who influence the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities. Participants learn how to use a simple stakeholder matrix to plan more effective and inclusive actions.

Learning Goals:

- Understand what stakeholder mapping is and why it matters for inclusion work
- Identify key stakeholders around a specific youth inclusion issue
- Analyse stakeholders using a simple influence-interest matrix
- Reflect on how to engage stakeholders in a more inclusive and strategic way

Topics: Stakeholder analysis and mapping, Inclusion ecosystems and youth participation, Power, influence, and collaboration, Outreach and partnership in youth work, Strategic planning for inclusion.

Target Group: Youth workers and trainers, Project coordinators and volunteers, Staff of youth organisations working on inclusion.

Inclusion Considerations: Encourage participants to include informal stakeholders (peers, families, community figures). Emphasise the role of young people as stakeholders, not only beneficiaries. Avoid focusing only on institutions; lived experience is equally important. Use simple language and visual tools to ensure accessibility.

Practical Details: Duration: 60 minutes. Group Size: 10-25 participants. Space: Room with tables or wall space for group work.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Flipchart paper or large sheets
- Markers
- Sticky notes (at least two colours)
- Pre-drawn stakeholder matrix (Influence vs. Interest) or drawn during the session

The Process:

1. **Introduction – What Is a Stakeholder? (10 min):** Facilitator introduces the concept: any person, group, or institution that affects or is affected by youth inclusion. Explain why it matters (inclusion isn't isolated, helps avoid working only with "usual partners") and invite quick examples.
2. **Define the Inclusion Challenge (10 min):** In small groups (3-5 people), participants choose a concrete challenge (e.g., reaching marginalised youth in rural areas) and write it clearly on a flipchart.
3. **Identify Stakeholders (15 min):** Groups brainstorm all relevant actors (youth, peers, schools, NGOs, informal mentors) and write one stakeholder per sticky note.

4. **Stakeholder Matrix (15 min):** Facilitator introduces the Influence vs. Interest matrix. Groups negotiate and place their sticky notes into the four quadrants (High/Low Influence vs. High/Low Interest).
5. **Reflection and Action (10 min):** Groups reflect on which stakeholders are most important, who is missing, and how to actively involve youth. Groups share one key insight or action idea in plenary.

Tips & Best Practices: Start with a clear inclusion challenge; mapping becomes abstract if the issue is vague. Think beyond formal institutions and include families and local gatekeepers. Do not confuse influence with visibility. Encourage debate within groups; disagreement is productive for understanding power dynamics. Keep the matrix simple and focus on action. Revisit the map regularly as ecosystems change.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Ask what surprised them, which stakeholders are currently under-engaged, where the biggest gaps are, and how NEET youth are positioned on the map. Encourage organizations to identify one stakeholder to engage within the next month, develop an outreach plan, repeat the exercise annually, and involve NEET youth directly in the next mapping process. Key outcomes to assess include whether participants are able to identify relevant actors, analyse them using the matrix, recognise collaboration gaps, and develop strategic planning practices.

References & Additional Information:

- Council of Europe – Youth Participation
- OECD – Engaging Stakeholders in Policy Making
- UNESCO – Meaningful Youth Participation Toolkit
- Bryson, J. M. (2004). What to do when stakeholders matter: Stakeholder identification and analysis techniques.

Walk in My Shoes - Exploring Inclusion and NEET Youth

Category: Methods & Techniques

Author: Center for Bridging Communities (CBC)

Summary: "Walk in My Shoes" is an experiential empathy method that helps participants recognize how life circumstances influence opportunities, barriers, and inclusion. By responding physically to statements reflecting different life experiences, participants gain a deeper understanding of the structural, social, and personal factors that shape the realities of NEET young people.

Learning Goals:

- Understand how social, economic, and cultural contexts affect inclusion
- Recognize privilege, barriers, and marginalization through first-hand experience
- Reflect on assumptions about NEET youth and structural obstacles
- Strengthen empathy and insight for more inclusive youth work practice

Topics: Social inclusion and exclusion, NEET youth realities and structural barriers, Privilege and inequality, Empathy and perspective-taking, Access to opportunities (education, employment, participation).

Target Group: Youth workers and trainers, Peer educators and facilitators, Project teams working on youth inclusion, Young people aged 16+ (adapted for diversity and accessibility).

Inclusion Considerations: Provide alternative options for movement (e.g. raise a hand instead of stepping forward). Avoid triggering or overly personal statements. Allow participants to opt out of questions without judgement. Debrief gently and respectfully, emphasising learning over performance.

Practical Details: Duration: 90 minutes. Group Size: 10–30 participants. Space: Open area where participants can stand in a line and move safely.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Prepared list of life statements (paper or screen)
- Open floor space for all participants (go outside if the room is small)
- Chairs for a reflection circle
- **Role Cards (Print one per participant):** Unemployed single mother; 24-year-old NEET young man who left school early; President of a political youth organisation; 19-year-old young woman from a rural area; Daughter of a local bank manager; 22-year-old youth caring for a sick family member; Son of a migrant family running a business; 21-year-old NEET young woman with no job responses; Arab Muslim girl with strong religious family expectations; Daughter of a foreign diplomat; 23-year-old doing informal work; Youth with a physical disability using a wheelchair; 20-year-old Roma young woman; University graduate with strong networks; 25-year-old NEET youth with housing instability; Partner of a young artist with substance addiction; Youth in a remote village; 22-year-old lesbian accepted by friends but not institutions; Returned migrant youth; Youth who dropped out due to mental health challenges; Child of unemployed parents on social assistance; 19-year-old supported by a mentor; Youth who left education because of bullying; 26-year-old excluded from the labour

market; Youth with caring responsibilities for siblings; Student with private tutoring; 23-year-old NEET who feels unheard; Youth confident navigating public services.

The Process:

1. **Introduction and Safety (10 min):** Introduce the method as a simulation. Hand out role cards, emphasize that roles reflect structural realities, and state that participation/movement is voluntary (stepping forward, raising a hand, or passing).
2. **Baseline Line-Up (5 min):** Ask participants to form a horizontal line facing forward. Explain that they should step forward if a read statement applies to their role, or stay in place if not.
3. **Guided Statement Rounds (40 min):** Read 10-15 statements across areas like Education, Economic Opportunities, Support Networks, and Personal Conditions. (Examples: "I have had a stable job for at least six months", "I can count on someone close when I need help"). Pause after each.
4. **Observation and Reflection (15 min):** Invite participants to look around at the line. Ask them what they notice about the physical distances and how it relates to NEET life chances.
5. **Group Debrief (15 min):** Have participants sit in a circle to explore structural barriers, assumptions challenged, and how to improve inclusive youth work.

Tips & Best Practices: Prepare participants emotionally and reinforce that personal disclosures are not required. Keep statements balanced between privilege and barriers. Use silence intentionally after key statements so participants can observe. Do not rush the debrief; focus on systems (access, policy) rather than individual blame. Adapt for physical accessibility.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Ask what they noticed about the distance created in the room, which statements caused the biggest differences, and what assumptions this exercise challenged. Have participants identify addressable structural barriers in their own programmes, review their outreach strategies, and develop action steps to reduce these barriers. Key outcomes to assess include whether participants recognise how privilege and disadvantage accumulate over time, understand the structural dimensions of NEET status, and develop increased empathy.

References & Additional Information:

- Council of Europe (2020). Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People. Activity: "Take a Step Forward."
- Council of Europe – Youth Work and Inclusion
- UNESCO (2021). Meaningful Youth Participation Toolkit

World Café for Inclusion: Harvesting Good and Bad Practices in Local Youth Work

Category: Methods & Techniques

Author: Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Mostar

Summary: This unit provides youth organisations with a replicable World Café methodology for discussing inclusion challenges and opportunities through collective dialogue. It helps participants identify: Current barriers faced by youth with fewer opportunities, Existing positive practices in organisations and communities, New ideas for strengthening inclusion, and Shared understanding across sectors and organisations. This unit translates the World Café exercise successfully used during Training 1, Day 3 into a ready-to-use workshop format. Each World Café should result in at least three concrete recommendations that the organisation commits to reviewing or testing.

Learning Goals:

- Facilitate a World Café dialogue focused on inclusion.
- Identify good and bad practices in youth engagement, outreach, communication, and project design.
- Analyse inclusion-related problems using the perspectives of different stakeholders (youth, NGOs, public institutions, frontline workers).
- Generate community-driven recommendations for action.
- Prioritise concrete steps for improving organisational practice.

Topics: Collective dialogue, Good and bad practices, Youth engagement, Outreach, Cross-sector collaboration.

Target Group: Youth workers, NGO staff, Social workers and community practitioners, Municipal youth officers, Volunteers, Mixed groups of stakeholders, Youth representatives, including those with fewer opportunities. A mixed group enriches the exercise, but it can also be done with only youth workers.

Inclusion Considerations: To ensure meaningful participation for youth with fewer opportunities: Provide plain-language guiding questions. Allow drawing or symbols instead of writing. Ensure rooms are accessible (ramps, toilets, lighting). Provide transport or travel support if needed. Ensure mixed table composition (not all professionals, not all youth). Encourage table hosts to use supportive communication. Avoid jargon. Provide time for quiet reflection if needed.

Practical Details: Duration: 90–120 minutes (adaptable depending on number of tables).

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Flipcharts (1 per table), Markers, post-its, pens, Café-style tables (ideally 3–5 tables), Tablecloth paper (butcher paper), Timer, Optional: stickers for voting/prioritisation, Printed list of guiding questions (per topic). Annexes and Tools: [World Cafe Table].

The Process:

- ✓ **STEP 1 — Set the Café (10 minutes):** Create a welcoming space: Tables arranged "café-style" with 4–6 chairs each, Butcher paper covering all tables, Markers available at each table, Light background music optional. Designate each table with a theme. Recommended themes based on Training 1 input: Barriers youth face in participating in activities; Good inclusive practices in local youth work; Organisational communication: what works / what doesn't; How to reach youth with fewer opportunities; What NEET youth say they need from organisations (These can be adjusted depending on context).

- ✓ **STEP 2 — Welcome & Instructions (5 minutes):** Explain: Purpose of the World Café, Rotation system, Table host role (note-taker + continuity person), Encouragement to write, draw, circle key points. The "3 café principles": Participate openly, Connect ideas, Listen for insights.
- ✓ **STEP 3 — Round 1 (15 minutes):** Participants sit at a table and discuss the theme using guiding questions. Example guiding questions: Table 1 – Barriers to inclusion (Which young people do we reach least? Why? What prevents NEET youth from joining activities?); Table 2 – Good practices (What have we done that worked well? What made it inclusive?); Table 3 – Communication (Where do youth find information? Where are they not looking?); Table 4 – Outreach (Who are potential partners? What methods build trust?); Table 5 – Youth voices (What do youth expect from us? What supports motivation and retention?). Participants write ideas on the table paper.
- ✓ **STEP 4 — Rotations (15–20 minutes per round):** After each round: Participants rotate to the next table. Table host welcomes the new group, summarises previous inputs. New group builds on the ideas, adding layers and new perspectives. Suggested number of rounds: 2–3 (depending on time and number of tables).
- ✓ **STEP 5 — Harvesting (15–20 minutes):** After rotations, all return to their original table. The table host and group: Review all contributions, Identify patterns, priorities, and surprises, Select their top 3–5 insights. These are written clearly on a flipchart to present.
- ✓ **STEP 6 — Gallery Walk or Plenary (10–15 minutes):** Choose one: Option A – Gallery Walk: Participants walk around, read all tables' conclusions, place stickers on the ideas they find most important. Option B – Plenary: Each table presents key findings in 3 minutes.
- ✓ **STEP 7 — Prioritisation & Action Points (10 minutes):** Facilitator guides the group to select: Top 3 barriers, Top 3 good practices to strengthen, Top 3 new ideas worth testing. These form a draft action list for the organisation or local youth network.

Tips & Best Practices: A mixed group enriches the exercise, but it can also be done with only youth workers. Encourage table hosts to be neutral note-takers and continuity guides rather than lecturers. Each World Café should result in at least three concrete recommendations that the organisation commits to reviewing or testing.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Possible reflective questions: What did you learn from others that surprised you? Which experiences shared today reflect your own challenges? Which good practices did you hear that you'd like to try tomorrow? What new partnerships or collaborations emerged during the conversations? How can your organisation ensure follow-up after today? Simple closing evaluation: "One thing I'm taking with me is…" OR "One concrete action I'll try in my organisation is…"

References & Additional Information: Internal Project Materials: Training 1, Day 3 (World Café on inclusion), Project proposal (inclusion-focused organisational learning), Toolkit: Working with NEET young people (engagement methods), and Job Shadowing Handbook (collaborative learning methods); "Engaged and Heard!" UNICEF guidelines for adolescent participation.

Living Library with NEET Youth: A Method for Empathy Building and Barrier Identification

Category: Methods & Techniques

Author: Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Mostar

Summary: The purpose of this unit is to guide youth organisations in planning and implementing a Living Library event that brings together youth workers and young people with fewer opportunities—especially NEET youth—to foster empathy, reduce stereotypes, and understand real-life barriers from the perspective of youth. The method creates a safe, structured space in which NEET youth act as "Living Books," sharing personal stories, challenges, and successes, while youth workers and community stakeholders act as "Readers." This leads to deeper insight into hidden barriers, motivations, stigma, and practical steps for improving inclusive practice.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the concept and principles of a Living Library in the context of inclusion.
- Organize and facilitate a Living Library event safely and ethically.
- Engage NEET youth as co-creators of learning processes.
- Recognize and challenge stereotypes held by youth workers or institutions.
- Identify concrete barriers and needs expressed directly by youth.
- Integrate insights into organisational practice and Inclusion Action Plans.

Topics: Empathy building, Stereotype reduction, Barrier identification, Meaningful youth participation, Living Library methodology.

Target Group: Youth workers, NGO practitioners, Public sector youth officers, Volunteers, Young people (including NEET youth, young migrants, rural youth, minorities), Mixed groups of organisational representatives and community stakeholders. Participation as Living Books should always be voluntary, and this method is not suitable for youth who do not feel safe sharing personal experiences.

Inclusion Considerations: To fully include youth with fewer opportunities: Offer support persons or peer mentors. Provide travel support, snacks, and safe transportation. Adjust language to be simple and youth-friendly. Allow drawing or storytelling instead of complex descriptions. Provide trigger warnings and allow youth to skip any question. Ensure the presence of staff trained in safeguarding. Guarantee confidentiality and privacy.

Practical Details: Duration: 90–120 minutes (plus additional preparation time for selecting and preparing Living Books).

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Quiet and comfortable room with several small seating areas, Printed instructions for Living Books and Readers, Flipcharts and markers, Tea/coffee to create a welcoming environment, Consent forms or verbal consent script, "Book Titles" signs or name cards, Timer, Optional: audio recorders (only with consent), Reflection journal templates, Facilitator note (for Handbook only). Reflection journals must never be mandatory. Living Books should never be pressured to write or share reflections. Journals should be collected only with consent or kept by participants. Use reflections to inform organisational learning, not evaluation of individuals. Annexes and Tools: Living Library Instructions and Reflection Journals, Living Library Posters.

The Process:

- ✓ **STEP 1 — Selecting & Supporting Living Books (before the event):** Living Books are young people willing to share parts of their lived experience. Good practices: Invite youth voluntarily, never pressure anyone. Provide clear expectations: "You choose what to share. You can stop at any time." Conduct a pre-meeting to: Explain the method, Offer support, Help them choose their "Book Title" (e.g., "Starting Over," "Invisible at School," "Finding My Path," "I Wanted to Quit"). Ensure no triggering or harmful details are required. Offer a support person the youth can approach anytime.
- ✓ **STEP 2 — Setting up the Space (10 minutes):** Create mini "reading corners": 3–5 chairs per corner, Calm atmosphere, warm lighting, Posters displaying "Respect Rules", Optional soft music before and after the session.
- ✓ **STEP 3 — Opening the Living Library (10 minutes):** The facilitator explains: Purpose: to listen, to understand, to connect. Rules: Respect. Confidentiality. No judgment. No pressuring the Book to answer anything. The Book can "close" at any time. Provide printed sheets for Readers with respectful question starters: "Can you tell me more about…?" "What supported you during this experience?" "What would make it easier for youth like you to participate?"
- ✓ **STEP 4 — Reading Rounds (40–60 minutes):** Each round lasts 10–12 minutes. Readers rotate; Living Books stay in place. During each reading: Readers may ask questions like: What made it difficult to join youth programs? What kinds of support would have helped? How did organisations or institutions treat you? When did you feel included? Excluded? Living Books share as much or as little as they want.
- ✓ **STEP 5 — Short Break (5 minutes):** Offer water, coffee, and rest time for Books and Readers.
- ✓ **STEP 6 — Harvesting Insights (20 minutes):** After the reading rounds, Readers gather to reflect on: What did we hear? What surprised us? What barriers were mentioned repeatedly? What strengths or talents did the youth express? Use flipcharts titled: "Barriers", "Motivators", "Good Practices", "New Ideas". NEET youth can join or have a separate space depending on comfort level.
- ✓ **STEP 7 — Closing & Appreciation (10 minutes):** Facilitator thanks the Living Books, acknowledging their bravery. Offer each a small gesture of appreciation (certificate, voucher, symbolic item).
- ✓ **STEP 8 — Follow-Up (after the event):** Vital to ensure ethical use of stories. Summaries must be anonymous. Organisational staff integrate insights into Inclusion Action Plans. Assign a team member to follow up with youth if needed. Record concrete changes (e.g., new outreach practices, different communication channels). One staff member should be assigned responsibility for documenting anonymised insights and ensuring they are reflected in organisational planning.

Tips & Best Practices: The Living Library requires careful preparation to ensure safety, dignity, and meaningful participation — especially when working with young people who experienced vulnerability, exclusion, or trauma.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Internal evaluation questions for staff: What assumptions about NEET youth have changed for you? What barriers appeared across multiple stories? What strengths and talents emerged that we didn't expect? What specific organisational changes does this suggest? How can we better include youth in shaping our programs? Short reflection questions for Books (optional): "Did you feel heard?" "What made you comfortable or uncomfortable?" "Would you participate again?"

References & Additional Information: Internal Project Materials: Training 1, Day 3 (Living Library methodology), Inclusion & diversity strategy guidelines, and Toolkit for Working with NEET Youth (understanding barriers and emotions); "Engaged and Heard!" UNICEF guidelines for adolescent participation; Units 1 and 2 of this Handbook (HRBA Assessment and World Café).

SWOT Mapping for NEET Inclusion: A Structured Method for Community Analysis

Category: Methods & Techniques

Author: NVO Glas

Summary: This method provides a structured approach for mapping community factors that influence NEET youth inclusion. Using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, users can identify internal and external elements affecting opportunities, challenges, and resources for youth engagement. The method is adaptable for digital or paper-based use and supports strategic planning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the SWOT framework and its relevance to social and community analysis.
- Identify internal strengths and weaknesses of a community or initiative affecting NEET youth.
- Recognize external opportunities and threats in policy, social, and economic contexts.
- Analyse how these factors interact to support or hinder youth inclusion.
- Prioritize actionable factors and plan strategies for addressing gaps.

Topics: Community mapping and situational analysis, NEET youth inclusion barriers and enablers, Strategic planning and solution-oriented thinking, Stakeholder identification and engagement, Internal vs. external factors in social initiatives.

Target Group: Youth workers, trainers, and facilitators, Community groups or informal collectives, NGOs and organizations working on youth inclusion, Policy analysts, researchers, or planners assessing local needs.

Inclusion Considerations: Language accessibility: Use simple, non-technical terms; provide visual examples for clarity. Digital accessibility: Can be implemented on paper, flipcharts, or digital tools depending on resources. Physical accessibility: If in-person, ensure space allows easy collaboration and movement. Psychological safety: All observations are valid; there are no "wrong" answers. Contextual adaptation: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats should reflect the local context (e.g., visual templates with icons for each SWOT category can support users with limited literacy).

Practical Details: Estimated duration: 60–120 minutes (flexible depending on scope). Format options: Individual, small groups, or organizational teams; paper-based or digital implementation.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Paper or flipcharts divided into four quadrants (S, W, O, T)
- Sticky notes or cards in four colours (one per SWOT category)
- Pens, markers, or digital annotation tools
- Optional digital whiteboards or collaborative documents (e.g., Miro, Mural, Jam board, Google Docs/Sheets)
- Examples of SWOT analyses for guidance (printed or digital)

The Process:

1. **Introduce SWOT Method:** Define categories clearly (Strengths: Internal positive; Weaknesses: Internal negative; Opportunities: External positive; Threats: External challenges). Include real-world examples (e.g., strong local NGO networks as a strength, lack of public transport as a weakness).
2. **Identify Factors:** Brainstorm and list community factors under each SWOT category. Organize factors by perspective or theme (e.g., education, employment, digital participation).
3. **Map and Visualize:** Place brainstormed points onto the SWOT grid. Use colour coding for clarity (e.g., green = strengths, red = weaknesses). Indicate interactions, such as a weakness mitigated by an opportunity. Summarize key points per quadrant.
4. **Analyse and Prioritize:** Identify which factors are most critical to address. Highlight priority actions or strategic areas for intervention in each quadrant. Consider relationships between internal and external factors to inform planning.
5. **Reflection and Strategy Development:** Review the complete SWOT map and consider implications for action. Discuss which factors are actionable immediately, which challenges require longer-term planning, and how strengths can be leveraged to reduce weaknesses.

Tips & Best Practices: Be specific and describe factors clearly with examples. Include multiple perspectives to ensure diverse insights. Focus on actionable outcomes, not just listing points. Use visual aids or color-coding to improve clarity and understanding. Avoid common mistakes like confusing internal vs. external factors, overloading the grid without prioritization, or ignoring local context. For younger audiences, consider using pictograms or emojis. For large-scale analysis, split into multiple parallel SWOT groups.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Assess the clarity of categories, completeness of analysis, and feasibility of identified actions. Follow-up by refining SWOT maps over time to track changes, using findings to inform strategic planning or advocacy campaigns, sharing results with stakeholders, and integrating complementary tools (like stakeholder meetings). Key outcomes to assess include whether users are able to systematically map community factors affecting NEET youth inclusion, supporting strategic planning, informed decision-making, and the identification of actionable interventions.

Reflective Journaling for Empowerment: A Method for Personal Insight and Growth

Category: Methods & Techniques

Author: NVO Glas

Summary: This method introduces reflective journaling as a tool for personal insight, self-awareness, and empowerment. It guides participants in exploring experiences, emotions, and challenges, enabling them to identify strengths, clarify goals, and develop strategies for overcoming barriers. Reflective journaling supports NEET youth in understanding their own perspectives and taking proactive steps toward inclusion.

Learning Goals:

- Articulate personal experiences, challenges, and successes in writing.
- Identify individual strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth.
- Explore emotions and thought patterns connected to life and participation experiences.
- Develop personal strategies for inclusion, empowerment, and active engagement.
- Recognize how reflective practices can support long-term personal development.

Topics: Self-awareness and emotional reflection, Personal empowerment and goal setting, Coping strategies for challenges and barriers, Pathways for inclusion and active participation, Personal development and self-guided learning.

Target Group: NEET youth (18–30) seeking tools for personal growth and empowerment, Youth with fewer opportunities (including socially or economically marginalized groups), Youth workers or mentors interested in supporting personal insight and reflection.

Inclusion Considerations: Language accessibility: Use simple language prompts; allow participants to write in their preferred language. Literacy and writing support: Offer sentence starters, visual prompts, or audio recording options for those with lower literacy. Psychological safety: Encourage voluntary sharing only; journal entries are private unless participants choose to share. Digital vs. paper options: Journals can be digital (documents, apps) or physical notebooks, depending on access and preference. Pacing and flexibility: Participants can reflect at their own pace; allocate additional time if needed for deeper processing.

Practical Details: Duration: 60–90 minutes for an initial journaling session; ongoing practice recommended for sustained benefit. Group Size: N/A (can be individual, peer-supported, or small group reflection).

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Personal notebooks, journals, or digital devices for writing
- Writing tools: pens, markers, or typing devices
- Optional: prompts handouts, reflective worksheets, visual aids (mood charts, mind maps)
- Quiet, comfortable environment conducive to reflection
- Optional: safe space for voluntary sharing and group discussion

The Process:

1. **Introduction to Reflective Journaling:** Introduce the concept of journaling as a self-guided reflection tool for insight, empowerment, and personal growth. Present basic principles: honesty, privacy, consistency, and openness to self-exploration.
2. **Choosing Focus Areas:** Participants select areas of personal or social experience to explore (e.g., challenges in education/employment, personal strengths, barriers to inclusion, future goals). Encourage participants to define what is meaningful for them personally.
3. **Writing Prompts and Journaling:** Participants write reflections in response to prompts or freely explore thoughts (e.g., "Describe a time you overcame a challenge," "What support or resources would help you achieve your goals?"). Optionally, participants can create lists, mind maps, or use color-coding to highlight emotions and action steps.
4. **Group Sharing and Discussion (Optional):** Participants may choose to share reflections with peers or a mentor in pairs or small groups. Encourage listening without judgment and constructive feedback to highlight common experiences.
5. **Reflection and Goal Setting:** Participants review their journals to identify patterns, insights, or priorities. They develop personal action steps based on reflections (skills to develop, goals to pursue, strategies to overcome barriers). Journals can be revisited periodically to track growth.

Tips & Best Practices: Encourage participants to be honest and open; consistency is key to deepening insight. Allow the use of multiple formats (writing, drawing, or digital tools). Avoid common mistakes like overthinking, self-censoring, rushing reflections, or focusing exclusively on problems rather than strengths. For younger participants, use guided prompts or visual mood charts. For mixed-ability groups, allow peer support or collaborative reflection. *Real-world example:* A participant reflects on the challenge of attending training programs due to lack of transport. They identify personal resilience strategies, research online courses, and plan steps to access digital learning opportunities.

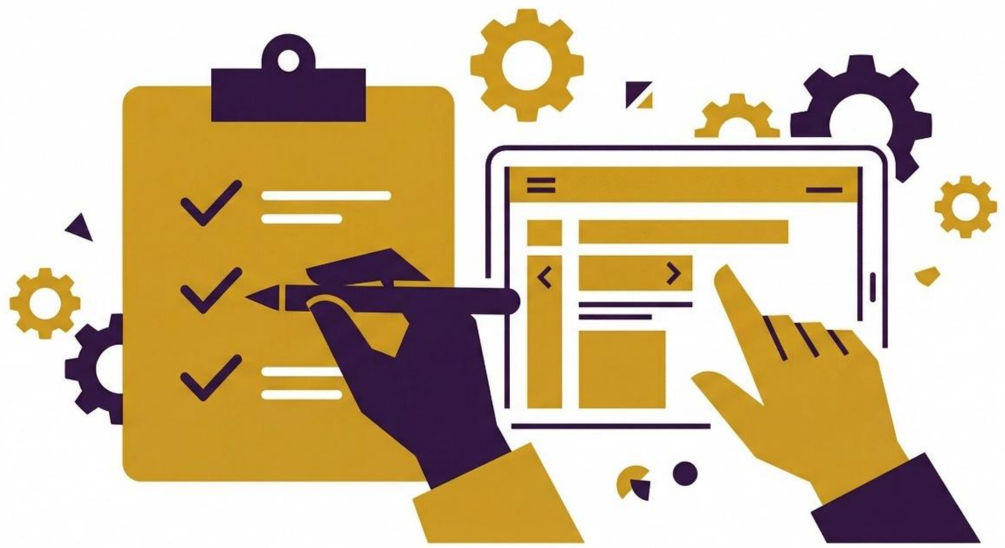
Evaluation & Follow-up: Evaluate by having participants review their journals and identify key insights or action steps. Use self-assessment questions like "What did I learn about myself?" or "Which strengths can I apply to overcome challenges?". Follow up by encouraging ongoing journaling, pairing it with peer support or mentorship, providing additional thematic prompts over time, and linking reflection outcomes to concrete community engagement actions. Key outcomes to assess include whether participants gain a structured method for self-reflection, empowerment, and actionable insight, fostering personal growth and equipping NEET youth with tools to navigate barriers, set goals, and enhance participation in their communities.

Category 3: Practical Tools

Tangible instruments, templates, checklists, or digital platforms for coordinators who need specific, practical fixes to administrative or logistical barriers.

In this section:

- **Inclusive Budgeting:** A Financial Planning Tool for Overcoming Barriers to Participation
- **Youth participation design & reflection tool for inclusive youth work**
- **Inclusive Human Rights–Based Self-Assessment Tool for Youth Organisations**
- **Digital Inclusion Starter Kit:** Making Online Youth Participation Accessible
- **Inclusion through information:** Why decentralized information matters
- **Inclusion Checklist:** Tips on how to make your project and/or space more inclusive
- **Co-Creating Change:** Developing an E-Petition as a Participatory Tool
- **Hart's Ladder of Participation:** Understanding Levels and Models of Youth Engagement



Inclusive Budgeting: A Financial Planning Tool for Overcoming Barriers to Participation

Category: Practical Tools

Author: Association "People's Parliament"

Summary: This practical tool provides youth organizations with a structured framework for anticipating and allocating funds to ensure adequate insurance coverage and overcome the hidden financial barriers of youth participation. Aligned with the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, it equips coordinators to financially plan for geographical, economic, social, and health-related needs, ensuring that youth with fewer opportunities are not implicitly excluded by out-of-pocket expenses or rigid administrative procedures.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the "hidden costs" of youth participation and how they disproportionately affect youth with fewer opportunities.
- Identify common geographical, health, economic, and social barriers that require dedicated financial backing.
- Apply an "Inclusive Budgeting Lens" to standard project grant applications and internal financial planning.
- Design a dedicated "Inclusion Fund" line item within project budgets and defend it to donors.
- Justify and secure dedicated salary lines for an Inclusion Coordinator to oversee all inclusive practices, logistics, and comprehensive support mechanisms.
- Develop transparent and dignified procedures for managing inclusion funds to directly procure necessary access services, while ensuring any personal support (like pocket money) is pre-financed for youth participants.

Topics: Financial planning for inclusion, Hidden costs of participation, Overcoming access and participation barriers, Human resource budgeting, The Inclusion Coordinator role, Grant writing and budgeting, Dignity in financial administration, Pre-financing vs. Reimbursement.

Target Group: Project managers, grant writers, NGO directors, inclusion coordinators, mentors, and youth workers responsible for project design, grant applications, and financial administration.

Inclusion Considerations: Ensure the budgeting process itself is informed by the realities of your target group - consult with marginalized youth to understand their actual out-of-pocket costs (e.g., childcare, specific dietary needs, escort travel). When implementing the budget, ensure that the funding mechanisms protect the privacy and dignity of the recipient. Never force a young person to publicly disclose their financial struggles to their peers.

Practical Details: Estimated time to learn and adapt the tool: 60–90 minutes. Format: Individual work by project coordinators and inclusion coordinators, or collaborative team planning during the grant-writing and project design phase.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Current or upcoming project budget templates (Excel/Spreadsheets)

- The "Hidden Costs Checklist" (embedded in The Process below)
- Previous project evaluation reports detailing reasons for participant drop-offs
- Guidelines from your target donors/funders

The Process:

STEP 1 — Map the "Hidden Costs" of Participation: Before drafting a traditional budget (venue, trainers, materials), use the following checklist to identify the hidden costs of participation for youth with fewer opportunities.

- *Outreach & Communication Costs:* Funding for face-to-face info sessions in marginalized communities, compensating local intermediaries who hold trust with hard-to-reach groups, and producing promotional materials in accessible formats (e.g., easy-to-read, Braille, translated into minority/sign languages).
- *Logistical Costs:* Rural/remote transport (taxis where buses don't run), funding for Preparatory Visits (allowing participants and an accompanying person to visit the project location in advance to build trust and assess accessibility), support and funded travel companions for first-time or reluctant travellers (e.g., youth who have never travelled internationally might need a professional travel organizer to handle all logistics and prevent costly mistakes), mobile data packages for online activities, childcare/dependant care stipends for youth with family responsibilities.
- *Health & Accessibility Costs:* Sign language interpreters, specific dietary premiums (allergies/medical diets), specialized travel and event insurance (e.g., comprehensive financial coverage for a participant using a wheelchair often carries a higher premium than standard policies), personal assistants/escort travel and all other costs (as assistants too stay in hotels with the people they help), the premium cost of booking fully accessible venues.
- *Social & Economic Costs:* Compensation for lost daily wages (for youth working informal day jobs), support for rural youth who need a replacement for daily agricultural or household duties (e.g., compensating temporary help to manage farm responsibilities during their absence), appropriate clothing or hygiene kits for residential events, passport or visa administrative fees, and purchasing travel tickets upfront (as economically disadvantaged youth simply cannot afford the initial out-of-pocket expense to be reimbursed later).

STEP 2 — Create the "Inclusion Support Fund" Budget Line Item: Instead of scattering these costs invisibly across the budget, consolidate them. Create a dedicated "Inclusion Support Fund" budget line item. Calculate this as a percentage (e.g., 5–10%) of your total activity costs. In your grant narrative, defend this line item to the donor by providing a clear narrative explanation of the anticipated costs. Explicitly list what this fund will cover—such as Preparatory Visits, professional travel organizers, personal assistants, specific insurance premiums, childcare stipends, or compensation for lost wages—while also explicitly requesting that this fund remain *flexible* to cover unforeseen accessibility needs (like an emergency taxi for a temporary injury). Link these directly to your project's inclusion objectives.

STEP 3 — Budget for Human Resources (The Inclusion Coordinator): Providing meaningful support—such as managing accessible logistics, coordinating with service providers, and providing holistic support to participants—requires significant administrative and emotional labour from your project team. Do not expect staff to do this as unpaid extra work. While the "Inclusion Support Fund" covers direct participant costs and external services, you must reflect the internal staff time required to manage these processes in the project's *Salary* or *Human Resources* budget lines. Use this as a strategic opportunity to explicitly write the **Inclusion Coordinator** into your grant proposal, explaining to the donor that their dedicated role is crucial for successfully implementing these inclusive practices.

STEP 4 — Design Pre-Financing Mechanisms (Avoiding the Reimbursement Trap): A critical administrative barrier is the standard NGO practice of *reimbursement* (where youth pay for their bus ticket first and the NGO pays them back a month later). Economically disadvantaged youth simply cannot afford to pre-finance their participation, and this barrier extends far beyond just travel tickets—they also require upfront pocket money to cover daily incidental expenses like local transit or meals. Plan your budget administration to include:

- Pre-purchased digital bus/train tickets sent directly to the youth.
- Prepaid mobile data cards.
- Cash advances and daily pocket money given on Day 1 of the activity.
- Direct billing with local taxi companies or transport providers.

Tips & Best Practices:

- **Establish Dignified Disbursement:** Once the funds are allocated, manage them carefully during implementation. Never force youth to ask for support or prove their financial hardship. Instead, create a standardized, confidential "Accessibility and Needs Form" sent to *all* participants upon acceptance into a program. Phrase questions normally: *"Do you require support with travel arrangements, internet access, or childcare to attend this event?"* By asking everyone, you remove the stigma of asking for financial help.
- **Don't assume "free" means accessible:** A free training still costs a young person with fewer opportunities transport money, a missed day of informal work, and the cost of lunch.
- **Look for Synergies:** If your primary grant cannot cover all identified needs (e.g., severe infrastructural accessibility costs), explore synergies with other local, regional, or European funds to cover the financial gaps.
- **Educate your donors:** Donors often push back on "unconventional" costs like childcare or mobile data. Use your grant narrative to educate them that these are not luxuries, but structural prerequisites for the participation of youth with fewer opportunities.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Traditional budgets track receipts, but inclusive budgets must track impact. When reporting back to the donor at the end of the project, do not simply hand over the invoices for pocket money or travel companions. Include a narrative section explaining *who* was able to participate solely because this fund existed. Evaluate the success of this tool by comparing the diversity and retention rates of participants in budget-adjusted projects versus past, standard projects. Follow-up actions include documenting which inclusion funds were most frequently used to improve future budget forecasting, sharing these financial strategies with partner organizations, and advocating with donor agencies to make "Inclusion Funds" a mandatory structural element of all youth grants.

Youth participation design & reflection tool for inclusive youth work

Category: Practical Tools

Author: Center for Bridging Communities (CBC)

Summary: This tool helps youth workers design, implement, and reflect on meaningful youth participation in activities involving vulnerable groups, including NEET youth. By combining a simple participation planning canvas with a participation reflection, the tool supports youth workers in creating inclusive processes where young people can actively influence decisions and activities.

Learning Goals:

- Understand how to intentionally design youth participation in activities and projects
- Identify barriers that prevent vulnerable youth from participating
- Apply practical strategies to support inclusive participation
- Reflect on the quality and level of youth participation achieved
- Improve participation practices over time

Topics: Youth participation in non-formal education, Inclusion of vulnerable youth groups, NEET youth engagement, Co-design and shared decision-making, Participatory youth work methods.

Target Group: Youth workers, facilitators, staff of youth organizations, project coordinators, and community organizations working with NEET youth or young people with fewer opportunities.

Inclusion Considerations: Youth participation tools must be accessible to young people with different backgrounds, abilities, and confidence levels. Use simple and accessible language when explaining participation opportunities. Ensure meeting spaces and digital platforms are fully accessible and welcoming. Be mindful of power dynamics and create a safe, respectful space where marginalized voices are encouraged and heard without judgment.

Practical Details: Duration: 30–60 minutes for planning and reflection. Format: Can be used individually by a youth worker, or collaboratively in a team setting during activity planning meetings.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Printed participation planning canvas (or a digital equivalent)
- Pens, markers, and sticky notes
- A quiet space for reflection and project planning

The Process:

1. **Define the activity or decision (10 min):** Identify the specific activity, project phase, or decision where youth participation is needed. Be clear on what can actually be influenced by the young people.
2. **Assess current participation levels (10 min):** Reflect on how youth are currently involved. Are they just being informed, or do they have actual decision-making power? Identify the gap between current practices and meaningful participation.
3. **Identify barriers to participation (10 min):** Brainstorm specific obstacles

that might prevent NEET or vulnerable youth from engaging. This could include a lack of accessible information, financial constraints, language barriers, or social anxiety.

4. **Design inclusive participation mechanisms (15 min):** Plan concrete actions to overcome the identified barriers. Decide how youth will be invited, how their input will be gathered (e.g., small groups, visual tools), and how they will be supported throughout the process.
5. **Implement the activity (ongoing):** Run the planned activity, ensuring that the inclusive mechanisms are put into practice. Focus on active listening and avoiding tokenism.
6. **Reflect after the activity (15 min):** Review the outcomes. Did youth have meaningful opportunities to contribute? What barriers still limited participation? What worked well in supporting youth involvement, and what could improve next time?

Tips & Best Practices: Start participation early in the process, not only during the evaluation phase. Be completely transparent about how youth input will influence decisions (manage expectations). Create safe and respectful environments for dialogue. Use participatory methods such as small groups, visual tools, or peer facilitation to make everyone feel comfortable. Avoid token participation where youth opinions are collected but never actually used. Document participation outcomes and always share the results with the young participants.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Youth workers can evaluate participation using simple reflection questions: Did young people genuinely influence decisions, or did they only provide feedback? Were vulnerable and NEET youth groups actively included in the process? Did participants feel heard and respected? Were any specific barriers successfully removed through this activity? Follow-up actions include adapting participation approaches for future activities, involving youth more actively in programme design, creating youth advisory groups or co-design sessions, and continuously sharing outcomes with participants to maintain engagement.

References & Additional Information:

- Council of Europe – Youth Participation
- Hart, R. (1992). Children’s Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship.
- UNESCO – Meaningful Youth Participation Toolkit

Inclusive Human Rights–Based Self-Assessment Tool for Youth Organisations

Category: Practical Tools

Author: Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Mostar

Summary: The tool is designed to directly improve organisational capacity to engage NEET youth and other young people with fewer opportunities in a meaningful and rights-based way. To equip youth organisations with a practical Human Rights–Based Approach (HRBA) tool for assessing how inclusive their structures, programs, communication, and decision-making processes are for youth with fewer opportunities, especially NEET youth. The tool guides organisations through self-reflection, identifying barriers, capacity gaps, and setting priorities for inclusive change, consistent with the steps introduced during Training 2 (situation analysis, bottlenecks, stakeholder mapping, values & goals).

Learning Goals:

- Explain the HRBA principles (participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, empowerment, legality).
- Identify rights-holders and duty-bearers within their local youth ecosystem.
- Assess organisational practices using a structured HRBA checklist.
- Detect bottlenecks and barriers affecting meaningful inclusion of NEET youth.
- Prioritise areas for improvement to feed into the organisation’s Inclusion Action Plan (IAP).
- Generate concrete follow-up recommendations for internal policy, practice, and project design.
- Participants will be able to better understand how organisational practices affect the everyday participation of NEET youth.

Topics: Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), Organisational assessment, Meaningful inclusion, Barrier identification, Capacity building.

Target Group: Youth workers, Inclusion coordinators, NGO staff and volunteers, Public sector youth officers, Members of youth councils or local youth boards. No prior HRBA knowledge is needed.

Inclusion Considerations: Provide printed and verbal instructions for participants with low literacy. Use visual icons, colour coding, and simplified ratings. Ensure the workshop venue is physically accessible. Provide transport support for participants who might need it. Avoid jargon; use youth-friendly examples. Use smaller groups if participants represent vulnerable groups themselves.

Practical Details: Duration: 2–3 hours (adaptable). Can also be conducted in shorter modules.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): HRBA Self-Assessment Checklist (provided in the Handbook as a template), Flipcharts & markers, Sticky notes, Printed handouts: HRBA overview, rights-holder/duty-bearer map, Optional: laptop/projector for visual guidance, Large sheets for scoring matrix (1–5 scale). Annexes & Tools: HRBA_Checklist_and_Heatmap, HRBA_Handout_Overview_and_Mapping.

The Process:

- ✓ **STEP 1 — Introduction to HRBA (20 minutes):** Objective: Ensure common understanding. Activities: Mini-presentation: "What is a Human Rights–Based Approach?" Based on the training materials where HRBA was introduced (Training 1 & 2). Key principles explained in simple examples related to youth work. Group discussion: "Where do we already apply HRBA without calling it HRBA?"
- ✓ **STEP 2 — Mapping Rights-Holders and Duty-Bearers (25 minutes):** Objective: Identify who should be involved and responsible in inclusion. Activities: Present the arch-model of rights-holders/duty-bearers (from UNICEF participation toolkit). Small groups map: Rights-holders (youth, NEET youth, subgroups, parents, volunteers etc.) and Duty-bearers (NGOs, public institutions, schools, employment services, municipalities). Groups share maps and discuss gaps. Outcome: Visual map to be used in the self-assessment.
- ✓ **STEP 3 — Organisational Inclusion Self-Assessment (60 minutes):** Objective: Rate current practices and identify problems. Participants assess their organisation using the HRBA Checklist in 5 domains. Domain 1 — Non-Discrimination & Accessibility: Are our activities accessible to youth with different needs (transport, disability, finances)? Do we unintentionally exclude certain groups? Domain 2 — Participation & Decision-Making: Are NEET youth invited into planning processes? Do their views influence decisions? Domain 3 — Transparency & Communication: Are opportunities clearly communicated using youth-friendly and accessible channels? Domain 4 — Accountability & Feedback Mechanisms: Is there a way for youth to safely give feedback or file a complaint? Domain 5 — Capacities of Staff & Partners: Do staff have the skills to work with youth with fewer opportunities? Instructions: Participants rate each statement from 1 (not at all) to 5 (fully). Scores are transferred to a large "heatmap" or radar chart. Each group selects 3 weakest areas that require action.
- ✓ **STEP 4 — Identifying Barriers & Bottlenecks (25 minutes):** Based on Training 2 (bottleneck analysis, situation analysis). Participants answer: What structural barriers limit inclusion? (rules, procedures, funding) What social barriers exist? (attitudes, stereotypes, stigma) What environmental barriers exist? (transport, location, digital access) What capacity gaps exist? (skills, tools, partnerships). These are placed on a "Wall of Barriers" and grouped thematically.
- ✓ **STEP 5 — Prioritisation & Action Planning (20–25 minutes):** Using simple prioritisation questions: Which barriers have the highest negative impact on NEET youth? Which ones are within our organisation's power to change? Which ones require partnerships with duty-bearers? Each group defines 3 priority actions for their Inclusion Action Plan (IAP), such as: adapting communication channels, modifying internal procedures, building staff capacity, partnering with employment offices or social services.
- ✓ **STEP 6 — Plenary Reflection (10 minutes):** Facilitator leads a reflection using guiding questions: What surprised you during the assessment? What will be the first realistic step we can take next week? What organisational change feels most achievable?

Tips & Best Practices: No prior HRBA knowledge is needed by participants, so keep the introductory explanations simple and directly linked to daily youth work.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Include short evaluation questions such as: What part of the self-assessment was most useful for you? What HRBA principle do you want to apply more in your work? What is one inclusion gap you didn't notice before? Do you feel more confident in identifying barriers for NEET youth?

References & Additional Information: Internal Project Materials: Training 1 (HRBA principles and causal/capacity analysis) and Training 2 (Stakeholder & partner identification); UNICEF Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming; "Engaged and Heard!" UNICEF guidelines for adolescent participation; Units 1 & 5 of this Handbook (linked methodologies).

Digital Inclusion Starter Kit: Making Online Youth Participation Accessible

Category: Practical Tools

Author: Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Mostar

Summary: The purpose of this unit is to equip youth organisations with a practical set of methods, checklists, and tools that make online participation accessible, meaningful, and safe for youth with fewer opportunities, including NEET youth. It is based on the digital engagement session from Training 1 Day 4 and on digital accessibility recommendations from UNICEF Digital Tools Tip Sheet. This unit helps organisations remove digital barriers (skills, devices, connectivity, literacy), adapt platforms and facilitation methods to different youth needs, use digital tools to support inclusion, increase youth engagement, and create safer digital spaces for vulnerable groups. The unit also supports organisations in deciding when digital tools are not appropriate and when offline or hybrid approaches are needed.

Learning Goals:

- Identify the main digital barriers that NEET youth face.
- Assess the accessibility and safety of digital tools and communication channels.
- Apply principles of inclusive digital facilitation.
- Adapt online activities to different literacy, connectivity, and disability needs.
- Implement simple steps to improve youth access: language, visuals, formats, timing.
- Choose and use digital tools that support participation and engagement.

Topics: Digital barriers, Online participation accessibility, Inclusive digital facilitation, Safe digital spaces, Digital tools selection.

Target Group: Youth workers and educators, NGO staff, Facilitators of online youth activities, Volunteers, Young people involved in co-design processes. Both beginners and experienced facilitators can use this kit.

Inclusion Considerations: Special adaptations for youth with fewer opportunities: Provide mobile data vouchers for participation. Offer offline alternatives (print materials, phone call versions). Schedule sessions at times that fit their reality (work, caregiving, responsibilities). Use “zero-pressure participation”: Youth can join to listen only. Translate or simplify text. Provide extra time or 1-on-1 technical orientation. Avoid assuming digital skills – always check first. Allow nicknames or initials for privacy.

Practical Details: Duration: This unit can be implemented as a 60–90 minute workshop, or a self-learning module for organisations, or a checklist to support project design and online sessions.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Internet connection, Digital devices (laptop, smartphone), Inclusive platform (Zoom, Teams, Jitsi, WhatsApp, Messenger, etc.), Visual templates, icons, screen-sharing tools, Printed accessibility checklist (provided in this unit). Annexes and Tools: Digital Inclusion Templates, Printed Accessibility Checklist.

The Process:

- ✓ **STEP 1 — Introduction: Why Digital Inclusion Matters (10 minutes):** Start with two questions: “Which young people do we NOT reach online?” “Who needs a different type of support to participate digitally?” Explain common digital exclusion barriers faced by NEET youth: Device barriers (shared devices, old phones, no webcam); Connectivity barriers (weak internet, expensive mobile data); Skill barriers (low digital literacy or confidence); Environmental barriers (no private space at home); Language barriers (unclear instructions, jargon); Accessibility barriers (visual, auditory, cognitive needs); Anxiety / confidence barriers (fear of being judged online). These barriers mirror the findings from the UNICEF Digital Tools guidance.
- ✓ **STEP 2 — Quick Digital Barriers Assessment (10 minutes):** Participants complete a rapid self-check using a checklist for youth participation: Do all youth have devices that work? Is the chosen platform data-friendly? Can someone participate without a camera? Can they participate with only audio or text? Are instructions simple, visual, and in youth-friendly language? Is a tech-support person available? Does the activity include youth who prefer offline communication? The result guides the selection of digital tools.
- ✓ **STEP 3 — Choosing Inclusive Digital Platforms (10 minutes):** Platforms with inclusive features: Zoom / Teams → captions, chat, reaction emojis, breakout rooms; Jitsi / Google Meet → browser-based (no download needed); WhatsApp / Viber → very low-data access; Messenger Rooms → fast setup, accessible on old phones; Google Forms → feedback, anonymous questions. Guidelines for choosing: If data cost is the problem → use WhatsApp / Messenger. If digital literacy is low → use simple links and voice notes. If disability access is needed → ensure captioning and keyboard navigation. If anonymity is needed → use Forms, Slido, Padlet. The listed platforms are examples; organisations should regularly review tools based on accessibility, cost, and data protection standards.
- ✓ **STEP 4 — Inclusive Online Facilitation Techniques (20 minutes):** Key inclusive behaviours: Use simple instructions (avoid jargon, combine text with visuals or screenshots). Offer multiple participation formats (speaking, writing in chat, using emojis, drawing on whiteboards, turning off the camera). Use "low-risk" warm-up questions (e.g., “Show how you're feeling using only emojis,” “Type one word that describes your day”). Provide time for silent reflection (helps youth with anxiety or slower processing). Create a “buddy system” (pair youth so they know they are not alone). Allow attendance without video (many NEET youth feel uncomfortable showing their background). Ask for consent before recording. Offer a tech-support person (as recommended in the UNICEF Digital Tools Tip Sheet before/during/after).
- ✓ **STEP 5 — Safe & Youth-Friendly Online Space Setup (15 minutes):** Include clear rules: Respect and confidentiality, No screenshots, Speak one at a time, Facilitator moderates chat to protect safety, If someone feels uncomfortable, they may leave temporarily. Tip: Provide two roles: Technical host and Facilitator host.
- ✓ **STEP 6 — Accessible Communication (10 minutes):** Examples of inclusive communication: Visual-first communication (use icons, simple images, short videos). Send instructions in multiple formats (text, audio recordings, step-by-step images, short clips demonstrating the platform). Consider language (use

simple vocabulary, avoid long paragraphs). Reduce cognitive load (break complex tasks into smaller steps).

- ✓ **STEP 7 — Evaluation & Feedback (10 minutes):** Use easy tools: "One-word check-out", Emoji polls, Quick Google Form, Audio feedback messages. Ask: What was easy? What was difficult? What could we improve next time?

Tips & Best Practices: The unit supports organisations in deciding when digital tools are not appropriate and when offline or hybrid approaches are needed. Avoid assuming digital skills — always check first, and regularly review tools based on accessibility, cost, and data protection standards.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Reflection questions for youth workers: Who still might be excluded from our digital space? What digital tool worked best for inclusion? How did we adapt the space to their needs? What can we improve before the next digital meeting? What new inclusive behaviour did you try today?

References & Additional Information: Training 1 Day 4: Digital Participation session; UNICEF Digital Tools Tip Sheet (before, during, after consultations); Unit 1 HRBA Self-Assessment (cross-check digital inclusion practices); Unit 2 World Café (can be replicated online); Unit 3 Living Library (adaptable to digital); National youth digital literacy materials, if available.

Inclusion through information: Why decentralized information matters

Category: Practical Tools

Author: Youth Center Drenas

Summary: This unit introduces a practical tool for sharing opportunities with young people through decentralized digital communities. Using the example of the "Rinia Kosovare" Viber Community, which connects over 7,000 young people in Kosovo, the unit demonstrates how NGOs and youth groups can disseminate information about youth opportunities without relying on costly websites or advertising campaigns. The tool helps ensure that information reaches young people directly and consistently.

Learning Goals:

- Understand how access to information influences youth participation and inclusion.
- Recognize the limitations of algorithm-based social media platforms for information dissemination.
- Create a decentralized digital information channel for youth opportunities.
- Use messaging platforms to reach young people who might otherwise miss important opportunities.
- Develop a simple strategy for managing and maintaining an information-sharing community.

Topics: Access to information, Youth inclusion, Digital communities, Opportunity sharing, Youth participation.

Target Group: Youth workers, NGOs, youth groups, and community organizations that aim to share opportunities such as training, scholarships, exchanges, and volunteering opportunities with young people, especially those with fewer opportunities.

Inclusion Considerations: Access to reliable information is one of the biggest barriers for youth with fewer opportunities. This tool is particularly useful for reaching young people from rural areas, low-income backgrounds, or communities that are not actively connected to institutional networks. Joining the community should always remain free, and messages should be written in clear and simple language. Consider sharing opportunities in more than one language when possible and avoid overly complex information formats. It is also important to post information regularly so that young people feel encouraged to stay engaged.

Practical Details: Estimated time to learn and set up the tool: 30–60 minutes. Community management requires ongoing updates and moderation.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): *Required tools:* A smartphone or computer; A messaging platform that allows communities (e.g., Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram); Basic internet access; A list of initial members (youth participants, volunteers, partners). *Optional:* A simple visual identity (logo or banner for the community); A short description explaining the purpose of the community.

The Process:

1. **Identify the Purpose of the Community:** Clearly define the goal of the

information channel. The purpose should be to share opportunities relevant to young people such as youth exchanges, volunteering programs, scholarships, trainings, internships, and community initiatives. For example, the "Rinia Kosovare" community was created to provide young people in Kosovo with regular updates on opportunities in education, youth work, and international mobility.

2. **Create the Community (Example: Creating a Viber Community):** Choose a messaging platform that allows community creation and large numbers of members. In the case of "Rinia Kosovare," a Viber Community was created because it allows large groups and ensures that messages reach all members directly. *How to create a Viber Community:* Open the Viber application on your smartphone. Tap the Chats section. Click the New Chat icon (usually located in the top right corner). Select Create Community. Enter a community name that clearly reflects its purpose (for example: Youth Opportunities Kosovo or Rinia Kosovare). Add a short description explaining what type of information members will receive. Upload a profile image or logo for the community (optional but recommended). Add the first members from your contact list (for example colleagues, volunteers, or young people who participated in previous activities). Once created, generate and share the community invitation link, which allows others to join freely. *The invitation link can be shared through:* social media posts, email newsletters, youth organizations, schools or universities, youth events and workshops. In the case of the "Rinia Kosovare" community, the invitation link was shared through youth networks and partner organizations, gradually growing the community to more than 7,000 young members who regularly receive information about opportunities. Because messages in messaging communities appear directly in members' chat lists, important information such as youth exchanges, scholarships, and trainings is less likely to be missed compared to posts on platforms that rely on algorithms.
3. **Invite Initial Members:** Start by inviting young people who are already connected to your organization or projects. These may include: Participants from previous youth activities, Volunteers, Partner organizations, Youth groups or clubs. Encourage members to invite other young people who may benefit from receiving information about opportunities.
4. **Share Information Consistently:** Post opportunities regularly so that members see the community as a reliable source of information. Examples of content include: Erasmus+ youth exchanges, Scholarships, Trainings and workshops, Volunteer opportunities, Youth competitions or calls for participation. Unlike social media platforms where posts may not reach everyone due to algorithms, messages in messaging communities are visible to all members.
5. **Moderate and Maintain the Community:** Ensure that the community remains organized and useful by: posting relevant information only, avoiding excessive or repetitive messages, responding to questions from members when possible, removing spam or unrelated content. Consistency and trust are key for maintaining an engaged community.

Tips & Best Practices:

- Keep messages short, clear, and easy to understand.
- Include direct links to applications or official information when sharing opportunities.

- Use emojis or simple formatting to make posts easier to read.
- Avoid overwhelming members with too many messages in one day.
- Encourage community members to share opportunities they find themselves, creating a collaborative information space.
- Periodically remind members of the purpose of the community and how they can benefit from it.
- *Privacy and Safety Considerations:* One advantage of Viber Communities is the protection of personal information. Members cannot see each other's personal phone numbers unless individuals decide to share this information themselves. This helps create a safer digital environment. Members can also send private messages to each other within the platform. However, if a member feels disturbed or receives unwanted messages, they have the right to block that user individually. If inappropriate behaviour continues or violates the community rules, members should inform the community administrators, who have the ability to remove or ban the user from the community. Maintaining clear rules and active moderation helps ensure that the community remains a safe and respectful space for all members.

Evaluation & Follow-up: To assess the impact of the information-sharing community, consider the following questions: How many members have joined the community? Are members actively viewing and reacting to the shared opportunities? Have young people applied to opportunities they discovered through the community? Do members share the community with others? Follow-up actions may include conducting a short survey among members to understand what types of opportunities they find most useful. Organizations can also collaborate with other NGOs to expand the reach of the community and ensure that even more young people have access to relevant information.

Inclusion Checklist: Tips on how to make your project and/or space more inclusive

Category: Practical Tools

Author: Youth Center Drenas

Summary: This practical tool guides youth workers, educators, and project coordinators to design a practical inclusion checklist or self-assessment sheet. Inspired by experiences from national training courses within the NOT NEAT TO BE NEET project, it emphasizes that inclusion doesn't always require big investments—small, intentional adjustments can make spaces and projects more welcoming. The checklist helps identify barriers, evaluate current practices, and plan low-cost improvements that ensure youth with fewer opportunities feel included. While this is ultimately a practical tool, the best inclusion checklists are not created by one person sitting alone at a desk; they are co-created with the team and the young people themselves. Use the following 60–75-minute session plan to guide your group in building a custom checklist that fits your specific space and community.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the concept of a self-assessment tool for inclusion.
- Identify key areas of projects, activities, and spaces that can be evaluated for inclusion.
- Design a simple, practical inclusion checklist that fits their organization or project context.
- Reflect on small, low-cost actions that improve accessibility and participation.
- Encourage ongoing evaluation and improvement through regular use of the checklist.

Topics: Inclusion self-assessment, Project and space accessibility, Barrier identification, Low-cost inclusion strategies, Reflection and action planning.

Target Group: Youth workers, NGO staff, educators, volunteers, and project coordinators interested in evaluating and improving inclusion in youth projects, spaces, or activities.

Inclusion Considerations: The checklist should include perspectives from diverse youth, especially those with fewer opportunities. Adapt the language of the checklist to be simple and accessible. Include areas for reflection on physical, social, cultural, and communication barriers. Ensure the checklist is flexible, allowing adaptation to different projects, spaces, or target groups.

To explicitly address health and logistical barriers, ensure the checklist evaluates physical accessibility (e.g., ramps, transport, accessible toilets), sensory and mental health needs (e.g., providing a "quiet room" for youth experiencing anxiety or sensory overload), and secure administrative processes for participants to privately share severe allergies or medical needs. Ensure the checklist is flexible, allowing adaptation to different projects, spaces, or target groups.

Practical Details: Duration: 60–75 minutes. Group size: 5–20 participants. Format: Workshop or methodology session; can be applied individually or in small groups.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): Flipchart or whiteboard, Markers and pens, Sticky notes or paper sheets, Example inclusion checklist template (optional). Room Setup: Tables for small group work, Wall space for sharing ideas.

The Process:

1. **Introduction – The Purpose of a Checklist (5 minutes):** Explain that inclusion is often shaped by small choices. A checklist helps teams systematically reflect on their projects, activities, and spaces to identify what is working and what can be improved. Emphasize that low-cost, intentional actions can make a big difference.
2. **Brainstorm Key Areas for Inclusion (10–15 minutes):** Ask participants to think about their project, activity, or space. In small groups, they list key areas to evaluate. Examples: Communication and language; Physical accessibility; Participation opportunities; Representation in visuals, materials, and examples; Social climate and interactions; Symbols or decor that signal inclusivity. Write ideas on sticky notes and group them into categories.
3. **Draft the Checklist (20–25 minutes):** Participants transform brainstormed ideas into specific, measurable items for a checklist. For each category, create 2–5 questions. Examples: Are all participants able to access the space without difficulty? Is the language in materials inclusive and easy to understand? Do activities give equal opportunities for everyone to participate? Are diverse identities and experiences represented in visuals, posters, or examples? Are quiet or marginalized participants actively encouraged to share their opinions? For each item, include a rating scale, such as: Fully included, Partially included, Needs improvement. Participants can also include a column for practical ideas to improve each item.
4. **Test and Share (15 minutes):** Have participants try the checklist on a recent project or activity to see if it captures relevant aspects of inclusion. Discuss what is missing, confusing, or needs adjustment. Encourage groups to adapt the checklist for their local context and target youth.
5. **Plan for Implementation (5 minutes):** Participants identify when and how the checklist will be used in their projects or spaces. Suggestions: Use it at the start of each new activity or project cycle; Include it as part of staff or volunteer planning meetings; Review the checklist monthly or quarterly to track improvements.

Tips & Best Practices: Keep the checklist simple, practical, and action oriented. Focus on small, low-cost actions rather than major changes. Involve youth themselves in developing the checklist—they often notice barriers adults overlook. Include questions about both visible and hidden barriers. Encourage regular reflection rather than a one-time assessment. Combine checklist evaluation with group discussions to generate ideas.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Debriefing Questions: Which areas of your project or space are most in need of improvement? Which small, practical actions could you implement immediately? How will you ensure the checklist is regularly used and updated? How can youth participate in evaluating inclusion? Follow-up Suggestions: Print or digitize the checklist for ongoing use. Encourage staff, volunteers, and youth to review the checklist together and plan concrete improvements. Periodically reflect on changes made, noting small successes and lessons learned.

Co-Creating Change: Developing an E-Petition as a Participatory Tool

Category: Practical Tools

Author: NVO Glas

Summary: This tool provides a structured framework for creating e-petitions as a means of formal civic participation and advocacy. It guides users in translating real-world problems into actionable requests for public institutions, ensuring clarity, feasibility, and compliance with institutional and legal standards. The tool is designed to be used either digitally or on paper and is adaptable across different countries and institutional contexts.

Learning Goals:

- Understand the concept and function of e-petitions as formal participatory mechanisms.
- Distinguish e-petitions from informal online activism (e.g., social media campaigns).
- Identify concrete problems suitable for institutional action.
- Transform broad social issues into precise, actionable requests.
- Map relevant institutions or stakeholders responsible for addressing specific issues.
- Structure e-petitions according to formal requirements.
- Apply ethical, legal, and respectful communication principles.
- Anticipate common reasons for rejection and adjust requests accordingly.

Topics: Digital democracy and civic participation, Problem analysis and policy-oriented thinking, Stakeholder mapping and institutional responsibilities, Ethical and legal standards in civic engagement, Inclusive advocacy mechanisms, Translating social issues into actionable requests.

Target Group: Individual users interested in civic participation, Youth or community groups aiming to address local issues, Organizations or collectives promoting inclusion, youth participation, or advocacy.

Inclusion Considerations: Accessibility: Can be used digitally or on paper to accommodate different technical capacities. Language: Instructions should use clear, simple, non-technical language. Adaptability: Can be applied to diverse problems, contexts, and institutional frameworks. Psychological safety: Encourages iterative improvement; mistakes are part of the learning process. Data protection: Supports safe handling of personal information or allows use of anonymized data.

Practical Details: Estimated duration: Flexible; can range from 1–3 hours depending on problem complexity. Format options: Individual use, collaborative small groups, paper-based or digital templates.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Digital e-petition platform or paper template replicating common petition structure
- Writing tools (computer, tablet, smartphone, or pen and paper)
- Optional: visual aids, flowcharts, or examples of accepted/rejected petitions
- Optional: collaborative tools such as shared documents or boards

The Process:

1. **Define the Problem:** Identify a concrete issue or barrier that requires institutional attention. Ensure the problem is specific, actionable, and within the authority of an identifiable institution.
2. **Narrow and Clarify:** Refine broad or general issues into precise statements. Specify the affected group, location/context, and main challenge. Verify that the issue can realistically be addressed by a public body.
3. **Map Responsible Institutions:** Identify institutions or stakeholders with authority to act on the problem. Determine the appropriate level (local, regional, national) and relevant program or policy context.
4. **Draft the E-Petition:** Structure the petition with: Title (Short and problem-focused); Description (Explains the issue, affected group, and consequences); Request/Call to Action (Specific, feasible measure); Responsible Institution (Entity with authority); Petitioner Information & Consent (Respecting privacy and data protection). Check draft against common rejection criteria.
5. **Review and Refine:** Iteratively review and improve clarity, feasibility, and alignment with institutional authority. Optional: compare with examples of successful or rejected petitions to guide refinement.
6. **Submission or Simulation:** Use a real digital platform if available, or submit as a paper or digital simulation. Track outcomes if real submission is done, or document results for learning purposes.

Tips & Best Practices: Focus on precise, actionable problems. Use clear and specific language. Align requests with the competence of the responsible institution. Test drafts through peer review or simulation. Visual templates help structure ideas clearly. Iterative refinement improves feasibility and clarity.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Assess clarity, feasibility, and institutional alignment of the petition. Follow-up by monitoring outcomes or responses if submitted, documenting lessons learned for future civic engagement, exploring other participatory or advocacy mechanisms, and maintaining digital or physical records for reflection and improvement. Key outcomes to assess include whether users are able to translate social problems into actionable e-petitions, fostering civic participation, advocacy skills, and understanding of institutional processes.

Hart's Ladder of Participation: Understanding Levels and Models of Youth Engagement

Category: Practical Tools

Author: NVO Glas

Summary: This tool uses Hart's Ladder of Participation to help users evaluate and understand the level of youth engagement in projects, initiatives, or community activities. By mapping activities to the ladder's eight levels—from non-participation to full youth-led decision-making—organizations, youth workers, and community planners can identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities to enhance meaningful youth involvement. The tool can be used for reflection, planning, or evaluation and is adaptable to both digital and paper formats.

Learning Goals:

- Understand Hart's Ladder of Participation and the spectrum of youth engagement.
- Identify which level of participation current projects or activities reflect.
- Recognize non-participatory practices versus genuinely empowering approaches.
- Plan interventions to move activities toward higher levels of youth decision-making and empowerment.
- Evaluate youth engagement processes and outcomes for inclusivity and effectiveness.

Topics: Youth participation frameworks, Hart's Ladder of Participation, Empowerment and decision-making, Reflective planning and assessment, Inclusive approaches to youth engagement, Evaluating social and community initiatives.

Target Group: Youth workers, trainers, and project coordinators, NGOs and community organizations engaging youth, Policymakers or institutions assessing program effectiveness, Any individual or team designing or evaluating youth-led activities.

Inclusion Considerations: Language accessibility: Use clear, simple explanations of the ladder's eight levels with practical examples. Visual accessibility: Provide diagrams, color-coded charts, or pictograms to illustrate ladder levels. Digital accessibility: Tool can be applied on paper, slides, or interactive digital platforms. Contextual adaptation: Examples and scenarios can be adjusted to different cultural, social, or organizational contexts. Psychological safety: Emphasize that identifying lower levels of participation is a diagnostic step, not criticism; the tool supports improvement. Use icons or images to depict each level for participants with limited literacy or language barriers.

Practical Details: Estimated duration for full use: 60–90 minutes (for mapping multiple activities or programs). Group size: 1–6 users (works individually or collaboratively). Delivery format: Paper-based, digital, or hybrid; flexible for self-assessment or team reflection.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Diagram of Hart's Ladder (8 levels)
- Flipcharts, large paper sheets, or digital whiteboards for mapping
- Sticky notes or index cards for activities/projects

- Pens, markers, or digital annotation tools
- Optional: Examples of youth engagement practices for discussion or reflection

The Process:

1. **Understand the Ladder Levels:** Present Hart's eight levels of participation: Manipulation, Decoration, Tokenism, Assigned but informed, Consulted and informed, Adult-initiated/shared decisions with youth, Youth-initiated and directed, Youth-initiated/shared decisions with adults. Highlight differences between non-participation (Levels 1–3) and genuine engagement (Levels 4–8). Optional visual: color-coded levels.
2. **Identify Activities or Projects:** List youth-related programs, events, or initiatives to assess. Each activity is represented on sticky notes, index cards, or digital objects.
3. **Map Activities to the Ladder:** Place each activity at the level that best represents its current participation approach. Use group discussion or individual reflection to decide on the appropriate level. Optionally, color-coded activities by priority or impact.
4. **Analyse Gaps and Opportunities:** Examine which activities fall in non-participatory levels (1–3) and consider steps to elevate them. Identify activities already at higher levels (6–8) and consider replicating practices elsewhere. Document potential interventions to enhance participation, e.g., co-decision mechanisms, youth councils, or advisory boards.
5. **Reflect and Plan Next Steps:** Record observations, insights, and improvement strategies. Reflection prompts: Which activities empower youth the most? Where is youth engagement minimal, and why? How can activities move up the ladder toward shared or youth-led decision-making? Optional: Track changes over time to monitor progress and impact.

Tips & Best Practices: Clearly differentiate non-participation vs. participatory practices. Use concrete examples from your context to anchor each level (e.g., users can identify that a program involving youth only as "consulted" could be redesigned to allow youth to co-decide). Combine visual and textual elements for clarity. Common pitfalls include misclassifying tokenistic activities as participatory, overlooking context-specific barriers, or focusing solely on the quantity of engagement rather than quality. For digital use, interactive whiteboards allow moving activities dynamically.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Evaluate by assessing the distribution of activities across ladder levels to understand participation gaps. Compare mapping results over time to track improvements in youth engagement, and evaluate whether planned interventions successfully increase youth decision-making. Follow up by reassessing activities after implementing new engagement strategies, documenting lessons learned for replication, and combining with complementary tools (e.g., SWOT Mapping, Reflection Journals) to integrate youth engagement planning with broader inclusion strategies. Key outcomes to assess include whether users are able to conduct a structured assessment of youth participation levels, highlight gaps, and provide guidance for enhancing meaningful engagement, supporting organizations in creating inclusive, empowering opportunities for young people.

Category 4: Methodologies & Approaches

Long-term frameworks, overarching principles, or programmatic designs. This section is for project managers and NGO coordinators who are designing future grants or long-term structural programs.

In this section:

- **Establishing the Inclusion Coordinator Role:** Guide for organisations working with young people
- **Overcoming Economic Barriers:** Outreach and Practical Support Strategies
- **Practical Tips on How to Reach and Engage NEET Youth**
- **How to Set Up a Job-Shadowing Program**

Establishing the Inclusion Coordinator Role - Guide for organisations working with young people

Category: Methodologies & Approaches

Author: Association "People's Parliament"

Summary: This methodology provides organisations working with young people with a strategic framework for formally establishing the "Inclusion Coordinator" role. Moving beyond ad-hoc inclusion efforts, this guide defines the coordinator's transformative mandate—acting as the focal point for outreach, accessibility, mentorship, and development of inclusive project proposals (such as ensuring inclusive budgeting and consulting youth to address their actual needs)—and provides actionable steps to integrate this vital position sustainably into the organisational structure and budget.

Implementation Goals:

- Understand the strategic and transformative function of an Inclusion Coordinator.
- Define the core responsibilities of the role, including tailored outreach, accessibility audits, and reinforced mentorship.
- Determine whether to upskill existing staff/volunteers or recruit externally, establishing a realistic model for part-time engagement.
- Plan for the strategic, continuous capacity building of the coordinator to ensure their skills remain relevant and supported.
- Integrate the role formally into organisational frameworks, budgets, and Inclusion Action Plans (IAPs), establishing the coordinator as the focal point for all IAP-related processes.
- Recognise the importance of dedicating human resources to prevent youth worker burnout by identifying sustainable financing mechanisms.
- Empower coordinators to act as catalysts for institutional change and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Topics: Organisational transformation, Human resources in youth work, The Inclusion Coordinator mandate, Inclusion Action Plans (IAPs), Systemic barrier removal, Strategic capacity building, Cross-sectoral partnerships, Preventing staff burnout, Financing inclusion.

Target Group: NGO directors, board members, project managers, HR personnel, and youth workers assuming the coordinator role.

Inclusion Considerations: Actively encourage the recruitment of young people with lived experiences of marginalisation (e.g., youth with fewer opportunities, youth from rural areas, or youth with disabilities) into the Inclusion Coordinator role, applying the principle of "nothing about us without us." Ensure the coordinator is provided with adequate mental health support and peer networks, as managing inclusion and structural barriers involves significant emotional labour.

Practical Details: Estimated time to implement: 2–4 weeks for initial role definition and integration; ongoing operational practice thereafter. Format: Organisational restructuring, strategic planning, and continuous implementation.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- The organisation's current operational chart and project budgets

- Job description templates
- The organisation's Inclusion Action Plan (IAP)
- Guidelines from the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy

The Process:

STEP 1 — Define the Transformative Mandate: Acknowledge that this role is not merely administrative. The Inclusion Coordinator is a transformative function. They act as the focal point ensuring that *all* phases of a youth project—from initial outreach and activity design to implementation and evaluation—are fully accessible to youth with fewer opportunities.

STEP 2 — Establish Core Responsibilities: Draft a clear job description tailored to your local context. Core responsibilities should include:

- *Project Design:* Acting as the focal point for developing inclusive project proposals, ensuring budgets reflect inclusion costs, and consulting youth directly to base projects on their actual needs.
- *Targeted Outreach:* Redesigning recruitment processes to remove jargon, lower bureaucratic thresholds, and engage youth directly in their communities (e.g., through decentralised digital channels or face-to-face meetings).
- *Accessibility Audits:* Ensuring physical venues, travel logistics, and digital platforms meet inclusion standards before projects begin.
- *Mentorship:* Providing "Reinforced Mentorship" for youth who need step-by-step guidance, emotional support, or preparation before travelling internationally.
- *Partnership Building:* Forging referral networks with external actors like social services, employment agencies, and specialised NGOs.
- *Inclusion Action Plans (IAPs):* Steering the development, implementation, monitoring, and continuous evaluation of the organisation's long-term Inclusion Action Plan.

STEP 3 — Determine Staffing (Internal vs. External): Decide who will fill this role. Because this is often a part-time engagement, many organisations choose to upskill existing, highly motivated staff or volunteers (for instance, those who have completed specific inclusion training or job-shadowing placements) by formally dedicating a specific percentage of their working hours to inclusion coordination. Alternatively, recruiting an external candidate—particularly someone with lived experience of systemic barriers—can bring invaluable new perspectives and networks to the organisation.

STEP 4 — Make the Formal Decision and Secure the Budget: As identified in regional research, a major barrier in youth work is the lack of dedicated human resources, leading to staff burnout. Do not treat this role as unpaid, extra work for existing staff. The organisation's leadership (board, assembly, or management) must make a **formal decision** to officially establish the Inclusion Coordinator position, which is a key operational step when drafting an Inclusion Action Plan (IAP). Since continuous governmental funding is often scarce, finance this part-time role by distributing the costs across multiple project grants. Allocate specific budget lines (such as fractional allocations of "Organisational Support", standard project management fees, and specific "Inclusion Support" grants for reinforced mentorship) to sustainably cover the coordinator's salary and operational costs.

STEP 5 — Conduct an Initial Inclusion Audit: Upon appointment, the new coordinator should act as a "critical friend" to the organisation. They should conduct a comprehensive Inclusion Audit of current practices, identifying previously "invisible" structural barriers (e.g., exclusionary reimbursement policies or inaccessible venues) and proposing concrete, cost-effective adjustments.

STEP 6 — Anchor the Role in the Inclusion Action Plan (IAP): Formally embed the coordinator's mandate and daily operational activities within the organisation's long-term Inclusion Action Plan. This ensures the role outlasts any single, short-term project cycle and becomes a permanent pillar of the organisation's strategy.

STEP 7 — Invest in Continuous Capacity Building: The role of an Inclusion Coordinator requires navigating complex social barriers and evolving policies. Organisations must strategically invest in the coordinator's continuous professional development. This includes actively seeking and financing opportunities for them to participate in complementary non-formal education trainings, cross-border networking events, and local or international job-shadowing placements. This continuous learning ensures their skills remain sharp, prevents emotional burnout, and consistently injects new, innovative inclusive methodologies back into the organisation.

Tips & Best Practices:

- **Avoid Tokenism:** Do not simply assign a title without granting power. Empower the Inclusion Coordinator with actual decision-making authority over project designs and inclusion budgets.
- **Break the Youth Work Bubble:** Encourage the coordinator to step outside traditional youth work circles. The most effective coordinators build robust, permanent national ecosystems by collaborating with formal institutions (schools, welfare offices).
- **Foster Peer Support:** Connect the coordinator with regional or international networks (such as the "Inclusion Coordinators Across Borders" network) to share best practices, exchange resources, and mitigate the isolation that can sometimes accompany this role.
- **Acknowledge Emotional Labour:** Recognise that supporting marginalised youth and constantly navigating structural barriers can lead to burnout. Protect the coordinator by ensuring they have access to regular debriefing sessions, realistic workload boundaries, and mental health support if needed.
- **Embed the Role Institutionally:** Ensure the coordinator is not isolated within a single, short-term project. Invite them to broad organisational strategy and board meetings so that an inclusive lens is applied to all of the NGO's future initiatives by default.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Evaluate the role's integration by tracking concrete organisational shifts: Has the participation rate of youth with fewer opportunities increased? Are physical and digital spaces measurably more accessible? Have new, cross-sectoral partnerships been formed? Follow up by conducting annual reviews of the job description, ensuring the coordinator receives continuous professional development, and systematically updating the Inclusion Action Plan based on the coordinator's on-the-ground findings.

Overcoming Economic Barriers: Outreach and Practical Support Strategies

Category: Methodologies & Approaches

Author: Association "People's Parliament"

Summary: This guide shows organizations how to practically support youth who face financial struggles. While budgeting tools handle the financial backend, this guide focuses on everyday actions: building trust in communities, making travel and events completely free, lending out equipment, and helping youth with paperwork. The goal is to make sure a lack of money never stops a young person from joining in.

Implementation Goals:

- Understand the daily challenges and travel problems faced by youth with low incomes.
- Move away from just posting on social media, and start talking to people face-to-face in the community.
- Plan activities so that youth never have to pay for travel or housing out of their own pockets.
- Lend out equipment, provide meals, and bring activities directly to isolated areas.
- Help youth fill out scary or confusing paperwork (like visas, passports, or applications).
- Make sure free time and social activities don't cost money, so everyone can join in.

Topics: Outreach and trust-building, Planning travel, Lending equipment, Help with paperwork, Equal social spaces, Mentorship.

Target Group: Youth workers, project managers, inclusion coordinators, mentors, and outreach officers.

Inclusion Considerations: Give support quietly to protect the participant's pride. Make sure youth never feel like they stand out or look different just because they need extra help. Build a group culture that values spending time together rather than spending money, especially during breaks.

Practical Details: Time needed: This should be an ongoing habit, especially when planning projects and reaching out to participants. Format: Practical guidelines and outreach tips.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- A list of key community contacts (like social workers, local leaders, and school counsellors)
- Simple ways to communicate (like Viber/WhatsApp groups or phone calls)
- Equipment you can lend out (like laptops, sleeping bags, or hygiene kits)
- Staff time set aside to mentor youth and plan travel

The Process:

STEP 1 — Build Trust in the Community: Youth from tough backgrounds often do not trust formal groups or think "free" programs have hidden costs. Do not just post on social media. Go into neighbourhoods and partner with people they already trust (like teachers, social workers, or local leaders). Explain the project face-to-face. Sometimes parents or schools think youth projects are an unnecessary distraction from work or school. Take time to explain exactly what skills the youth will learn to win their support. Also, use **Preparatory Visits**: invite nervous youth and someone they trust (a parent or friend) to visit the location before the project starts. Seeing the space and meeting the team early lowers fear and builds trust.

STEP 2 — Plan Cost-Free Travel: Do not make youth pay for things and wait to be paid back. Design your project so youth never have to touch their own money. Since many cannot afford to pay hundreds of euros for a bus or plane ticket upfront, rent a minibus to pick them up directly from their villages instead of asking them to take public transit. If you cannot rent a bus, give fuel vouchers to parents who drive them. If your rules force you to use a payback system, pay the youth back *in cash, on the spot during the event*, instead of making them wait weeks. Also, connect participants who live near each other so they can travel together. Having a "travel buddy" makes the trip easier and much less scary.

STEP 3 — Lend Equipment and Bring Activities to Them: Lack of money often means lacking the right gear. A young person might quit a computer class because they do not have a laptop, or skip a nature trip because they do not have a sleeping bag or a warm winter coat for a cold country. Create a "library" of items your organization can lend out. State clearly in your project invites that laptops, outdoor gear, or winter clothes will be provided to *anyone* who needs them, so they do not feel pressured to buy new things. *Go to them:* If youth cannot afford the time or money to travel to your city centre, bring the project to them. Setting up "mobile youth centres" or travelling workshops (like an art bus that visits villages once a month) completely removes travel problems.

STEP 4 — Help with Paperwork: Paperwork is a huge barrier for everyone. Getting a passport, applying for a visa, or filling out a long form in English can make youth give up. Assign a mentor to give one-on-one help. Sit down with the young person (in person or on a call) and help them gather papers, fill out forms, and get through the process step-by-step. This personal help builds confidence. Since many youth feel pressured to find a paying job right away, a mentor can also help them see how joining the project will help them get a better job in the future.

STEP 5 — Keep Social Time Free and Equal: Young people can easily feel left out during free time. For example, if the group decides to visit an expensive cafe during a break, youth with less money might feel alone or have to skip the activity. Youth workers should help plan these social moments. Organize free group activities for breaks (like a walking tour, a picnic with snacks you provide, or games at the youth centre). This way, making friends does not cost money.

Tips & Best Practices:

- **Change the Schedule to Fit Them:** Youth working informal jobs (like waiters, delivery drivers, or farm helpers) usually cannot miss a full week of work. Try planning shorter, focused events (1-2 days) or weekend activities. Also, always match your daily schedule with local bus times—do not plan a required evening event if the last bus to the villages leaves at 18:00.
- **Use Simple and Direct Messages:** Reach out using apps they already use

(like Viber or WhatsApp) instead of formal emails. Avoid using complicated NGO words. Use clear, friendly language to explain exactly what is provided for free.

- **Talk to Their Families:** For many youth, parents worry about the costs or safety of a project. Taking the time to speak directly with parents to assure them that the project is safe and completely free will help more youth join.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Check if these steps worked by looking at who applies: Are you reaching new youth outside your usual bubble? Watch if youth stay in the program—did helping them with paperwork stop them from quitting? Have friendly, one-on-one chats after the project to ask youth if they felt supported with travel and social activities. Use their answers to improve how you plan and reach out next time.

Practical Tips on How to Reach and Engage NEET Youth

Category: Methodologies & Approaches

Author: Center for Bridging Communities (CBC)

Summary: This methodology provides practical guidance for organisations seeking to improve outreach, engagement, and retention of NEET young people. It focuses on relationship-centred approaches and structural inclusion principles. By drawing on regional research, this guide also helps youth workers address psychological barriers, self-stigma, and the "motivation shift" necessary for long-term engagement.

Implementation Goals:

- Understand barriers affecting NEET youth engagement.
- Apply relationship-centred outreach approaches.
- Design more accessible and inclusive programmes.
- Avoid common exclusionary practices.
- Shift from passive participation to active co-design, involving youth in shaping activities.
- Understand the "motivation shift" (from social needs to skill-building) to keep youth engaged long-term.

Topics: Outreach and trust-building, Inclusion of NEET youth, Programme accessibility, Youth engagement strategies, Psychological inclusion and self-stigma, Peer-to-peer networks.

Target Group: Youth organisations and NGOs, Local authorities, Youth workers and programme staff, Service providers working with NEET youth.

Inclusion Considerations: Approaches should adapt to diverse NEET realities (rural, disability, care responsibilities, migration background). Guidance should be applied flexibly based on local context. Youth should be involved in adapting outreach strategies. Furthermore, regional research notes that youth facing long-term unemployment often struggle with self-stigma and a lack of confidence. Always avoid "deficit narratives" (focusing on what the youth lack) and instead focus on their potential and informal skills.

Practical Details: Estimated time to apply: Ongoing organisational practice. Can be integrated in programme design and outreach planning.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup):

- Basic knowledge of local youth context
- Existing or planned youth programmes
- Stakeholder relationships

The Process:

1. **Understand Local NEET Realities:** Identify barriers affecting youth in your context (access, trust, mobility, stigma). Regional research highlights that self-stigma, gender stereotypes, and fear of judgement heavily impact NEET youth. Acknowledge that long-term disengagement often leads to apathy; many youth genuinely believe that developmental programmes "aren't for people like them."
2. **Adapt Outreach Channels:** Engage youth in spaces they already use

(community, peers, online). Research shows that excessive, repetitive, or highly formal NGO information actually reduces youth interest and motivation. Do not overwhelm them with long emails; word-of-mouth and peer-to-peer invitations are proven to be the most effective way to break through initial scepticism.

3. **Build Trust Before Programmes:** Invest time in informal contact and relationship-building. Do not immediately invite a disengaged young person to a multi-day, intensive training. Invite them to drop by a youth centre just to hang out, or participate in a very brief, low-pressure local volunteering action first to ensure they feel safe and accepted.
4. **Reduce Participation Barriers:** Simplify entry requirements and remove costs or bureaucracy. Do not ask for complex "Motivation Letters" or European-format CVs for local youth activities—this immediately alienates youth who have been out of the education system. The application process should be a simple conversation or a very basic form.
5. **Involve Youth in Design:** Include NEET youth in shaping activities and communication. True inclusion means giving up some control. Do not just present a finished project to the youth; involve them in setting the rules of the space and deciding how to communicate with others. Ask them what their community needs, and build activities around their answers.
6. **Connect Opportunities:** Link programmes to employment, education, and services. Understand the "motivation shift." Regional data shows that youth initially join programmes for social reasons (to make friends or escape isolation). However, the reason they *continue* to participate is because they see tangible skill development. Actively link their new soft skills to local employment services or guide them back toward formal education.

Tips & Best Practices: Meet youth where they are physically and socially. Use trusted intermediaries (peers, youth workers). Be flexible in scheduling and pathways. Recognise informal skills and experiences. Maintain realistic commitments. Avoid deficit narratives and token participation.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Organisations may reflect: Are NEET youth actively reached or expected to come? Are barriers reduced or reinforced? Are youth involved in programme shaping? Follow-up actions include revising outreach strategy, testing new approaches, and partnering with community actors. Key outcomes to assess include whether organisations see improvements in NEET youth engagement, accessibility of programmes, trust and retention, and overall inclusion effectiveness.

References & Additional Information:

- OECD – Youth Inclusion, Council of Europe – Youth Work
- National Research Reports (Albania, BiH, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia) - *Not Neat to be NEET* project.

How to Set Up a Job-Shadowing Program

Category: Methodologies & Approaches

Author: Youth Center Drenas

Summary: This unit guides youth organizations and youth workers in designing and implementing a job-shadowing program, where participants can observe and learn from experienced staff or peers in a real-world work setting. Job-shadowing not only builds professional skills but also promotes inclusion, by giving youth with fewer opportunities direct access to learning, networks, and practical experience.

Implementation Goals:

- Understand the purpose and benefits of job-shadowing for youth inclusion and skill development.
- Identify potential roles, partners, and participants for a shadowing program.
- Design a structured plan for recruitment, matching, and mentoring.
- Develop tools for monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.
- Apply low-cost, practical approaches to make shadowing accessible for all participants.

Topics: Youth empowerment and professional development, Inclusion in practice, Program design and planning, Mentoring and guidance, Evaluation and follow-up.

Target Group: Youth workers, NGO staff, project coordinators, and educational institutions looking to implement inclusive learning opportunities through observation and mentorship.

Inclusion Considerations: Ensure participation is open to youth with fewer opportunities, including those from low-income, rural, or marginalized backgrounds. Address accessibility: provide support for travel, language, or any special needs. Match participants thoughtfully, considering skills, interests, and development goals. Establish safe spaces where participants feel comfortable asking questions and learning. Maintain clear communication about expectations, roles, and responsibilities.

Practical Details: Estimated duration to implement program: 1–3 months (preparation, shadowing, evaluation). Participant group size: 1–10 per organization per cycle (flexible depending on available mentors and resources). Format: In-person or hybrid, depending on organizational setup.

What You'll Need (Materials & Setup): List of potential mentors and participating departments; Shadowing schedule or timetable; Consent forms or agreements (especially for minors or external organizations); Feedback forms for both mentor and participant; Optional: badges, orientation materials, or reflection worksheets. Room/Space Setup: Workspaces or areas where participants can observe safely; Meeting space for orientation and reflection sessions.

The Process:

1. **Define Objectives (15–20 minutes):** Clarify what the job-shadowing program aims to achieve: skill development, exposure to youth work, networking, or inclusion of underrepresented youth.
2. **Identify Participants and Mentors (30–60 minutes):** List potential youth participants and mentors. Consider participants from diverse backgrounds to

promote inclusion. Mentors should be briefed on their role: observing, explaining tasks, guiding reflection.

3. **Design the Program Structure (30 minutes):** Decide on duration (e.g., 1 day, 1 week, or multiple shorter sessions). Plan which tasks or activities participants will observe. Include orientation and reflection sessions before and after shadowing. Ensure flexibility to accommodate special needs or adjustments.
4. **Recruitment and Matching (15–30 minutes):** Communicate opportunity to youth using accessible channels (social media, local youth centers, partner NGOs). Match participants with mentors based on interest, skill, or developmental goals. Provide guidance and clear expectations to both parties.
5. **Implementation (Varies):** Participants shadow mentors, observing daily work and processes. Encourage active reflection, asking questions, and discussing challenges. Mentors provide feedback and explain reasoning behind tasks or decisions.
6. **Reflection and Feedback (30–60 minutes):** Conduct group or individual reflection sessions: What did participants learn? How did the experience help them understand the field or organization? Which inclusion challenges were observed? Collect feedback from both participants and mentors for program improvement.
7. **Follow-up and Evaluation (15–30 minutes):** Summarize lessons learned and good practices. Encourage participants to share experience with peers or in their community. Use feedback to refine the program for the next cycle.

Tips & Best Practices: Keep shadowing opportunities structured but flexible, allowing participants to explore different areas. Pair participants and mentors carefully to maximize learning and comfort. Maintain open communication: ensure participants know who to contact if issues arise. Include reflection and debriefing sessions to turn observation into actionable learning. Focus on low-cost, practical approaches, ensuring no participant is excluded due to financial or logistical barriers. Celebrate participant achievements with certificates, recognition, or community sharing sessions.

Evaluation & Follow-up: Debriefing Questions: Did participants gain insights into the work and opportunities in your organization? Were underrepresented or marginalized youth able to participate fully? Which elements of the program were most effective in promoting inclusion? What improvements could be made for future cycles? Follow-up Suggestions: Encourage participants to apply skills or ideas learned in their own projects or communities. Create a network of mentors and participants for ongoing support. Conduct periodic review meetings to improve and expand program.

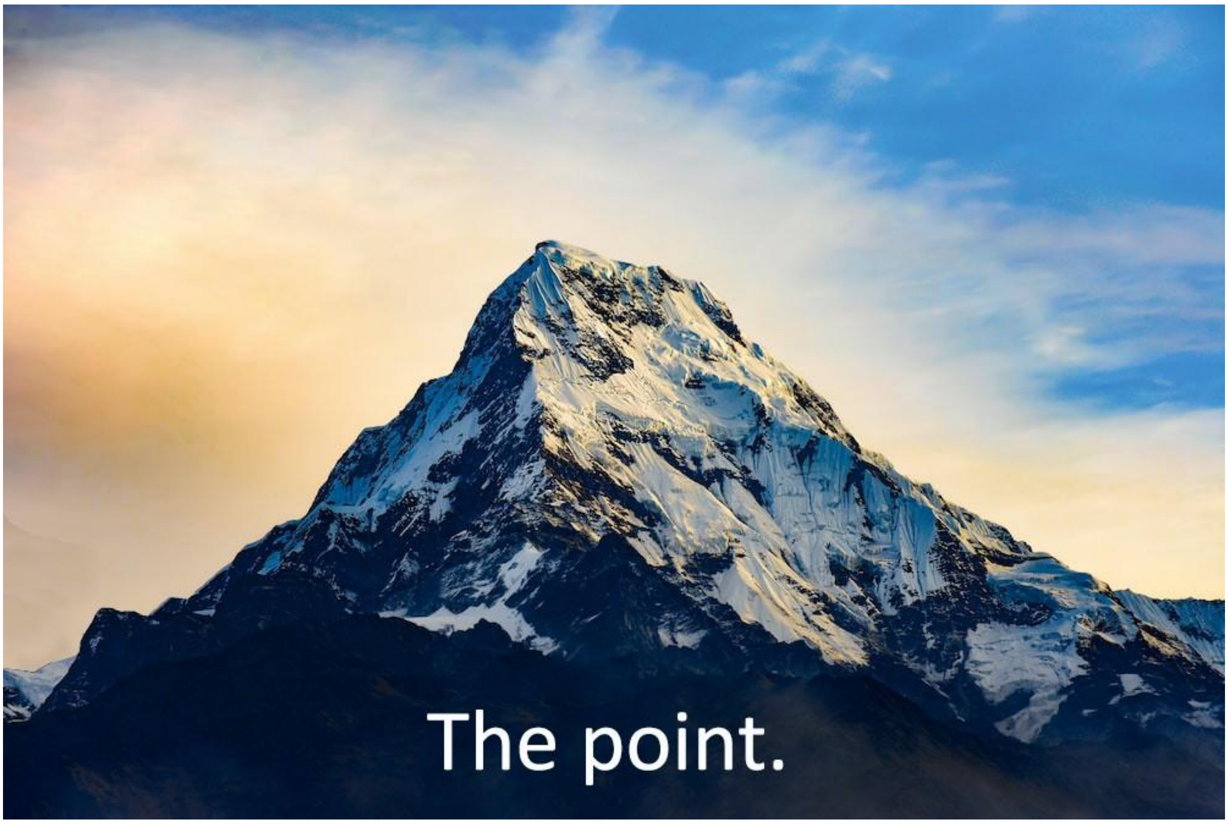
Conclusion: Building a New Standard for Youth Inclusion

This handbook began with a hard truth drawn directly from the grassroots realities of the Western Balkans: traditional, generic youth work often inadvertently leaves the most vulnerable young people behind. When projects rely on standard outreach or host activities in physically inaccessible venues, they build invisible walls that youth with fewer opportunities simply cannot climb.

Through the regional research in **Part 1**, we listened to both the marginalised youth who feel locked out of non-formal education and the youth workers who feel structurally overburdened when trying to help them.

In **Part 2**, we outlined a comprehensive capacity-building methodology to address this systemic gap. By focusing on the professionalisation of the "Inclusion Coordinator," we presented a clear framework for youth organisations to transition from treating inclusion as an ad-hoc afterthought to embedding it as a core operational strategy.

Finally, with the 27 practical working units provided in **Part 3**, the theoretical framework was translated into actionable, everyday youth work. You now possess the concrete tools needed to facilitate accessible workshops, manage inclusive budgets, structure continuous mentorship, and actively dismantle the barriers that keep NEET youth and other marginalised groups isolated.



The Path Forward

The ultimate goal of the '**Not Neat to be NEET**' project is to make the "**Inclusion Coordinator**" a standard, indispensable role within every organisation working with young people across Europe. True inclusion is not a passive open door; it is a proactive, well-budgeted, and professionally managed effort to reach those who are furthest away.

As you close this handbook, the real work begins. Thus, we strongly encourage you and your organisation to:

> **Adapt the tools:** Take the practical working units from Part 3 and tailor them to the specific cultural, linguistic, geographical contexts of your local communities.
>
> **Leverage the funding:** Use the strategies outlined here to confidently design accessible projects and secure inclusive funding, ensuring your future projects are financially accessible from day one.
>
> **Share the knowledge:** Train your peers, conduct your own internal capacity-building events, and help expand the cross-border network of dedicated inclusion professionals.
>
> **You no longer have to start from zero**. You now have the blueprints, the methodology, and the tools to ensure that your youth projects are truly accessible to all. It is time to dismantle the barriers, empower your youth workers, and ensure that no young person is ever left behind.

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