



TOOLKIT

Graphic Facilitation in working with young people



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

- **PROJECT TITLE:** Knowing the Drawing
- **ORGANISER:** „Leonard's” Foundation
- **PROGRAMME:** Erasmus+
- **PROJECT NUMBER:** 2025-1-PL01-KA153-YOU-000299112
- **TRAINING DATES AND LOCATION:** 16-25 January 2026, Tleń, Poland
- **PARTNERS:**



This material is one of the intellectual outputs of the project. It was developed on the basis of the experiences, exercises, and materials created during an eight-day training course on graphic facilitation for youth educators.



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INTRODUCTION

The material was developed as one of the outcomes of an **international training course for youth educators** focused on **graphic facilitation**, carried out within the **Erasmus+ programme**.

Over eight days, a group of participants from more than a dozen countries learned how to use **drawing, colour, and visual structure** to support **communication, creativity, and the learning process**.



The result of this collaborative work is a collection of **practical tips, techniques and inspiration** that can be used **in everyday work with young people**, regardless of whether you run workshops, group meetings, educational activities, or community projects.

You don't need to be able to "draw well" to start using graphic facilitation.

All you need is willingness, a few simple tools, and the courage to give it a try.



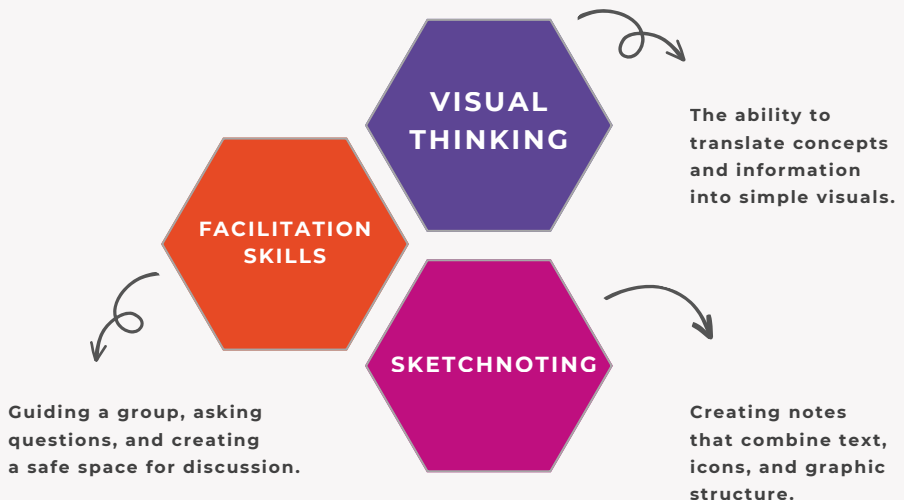
This material is an invitation to explore **visual thinking** as a more engaging way of working with a group.

WHAT IS GRAPHIC FACILITATION?

It is a method of supporting group work, communication, and decision-making processes through **drawing, colour, and visual structure** - created **live during a meeting, workshop, or discussion**.

Here, drawing serves as a **tool for organising thoughts** rather than as decoration.

Graphic facilitation combines several elements:

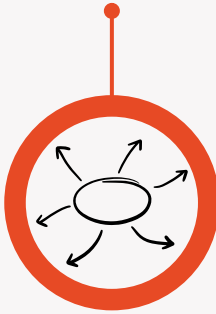


In practice, this can take the form of:



A poster
summarising
a workshop.

A mind map created
together with
the group.



A visual record of
a brainstorming
session on a board.



A simple infographic
explaining a complex
topic.

The key is that the visual is created as part of the process - **together with the group, not “for” the group.**

WHY USE GRAPHIC FACILITATION WHEN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE?

Young people live in a world **dominated by images** - from social media to messaging apps.

Visual language is a natural form of expression for them, often more accessible than long texts or formal presentations.

Graphic facilitation harnesses this natural tendency as an **educational tool**.



Benefits of introducing graphic facilitation into youth work:

It engages different learning styles.

People who learn better visually are given an equal place alongside those who prefer spoken or written language.

It lowers the barrier to self-expression.

A drawing, symbol, or metaphor can sometimes make it easier to express difficult emotions or opinions than speaking directly, especially in multicultural or multilingual groups.

It improves retention.

Information combined with images and visual structure is easier to recall than text alone.

It strengthens a sense of agency.

Young people who co-create a visual record of a discussion feel like active contributors to the process rather than just its recipients.

It develops transversal skills.

Creativity, teamwork, communication, and the ability to synthesise information - key competences emphasised in non-formal education.

It is inclusive.

It doesn't require advanced artistic skills or language proficiency, making it easier to include people who might feel less confident in more traditional formats.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT?

Each chapter focuses on one area of skills developed during the workshops - from basic shapes, lettering and colour to storytelling and the facilitation of entire group processes.

The chapters are arranged in the order in which these skills naturally develop: we begin with simple visual elements and finish with the ability to facilitate complete sessions using visual language.

However, you don't need to read the toolkit from cover to cover.

You can go directly to the chapter you need at a given moment - for example, when planning a specific activity with young people and looking for inspiration for a particular exercise.

Each chapter includes a short explanation of the technique and guidance on how to use it in educational practice.

BASIC

SHAPES

CHAPTER

ALL YOU NEED IS...



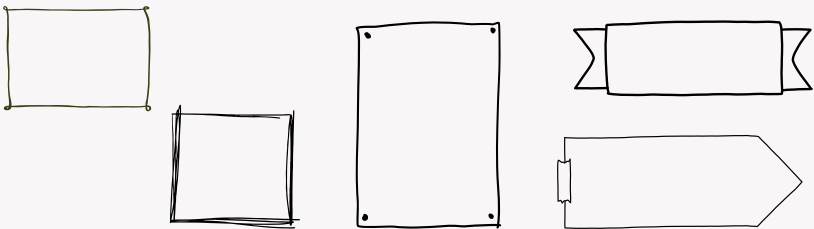
1

**FUNDAMENTALS OF
VISUAL THINKING**

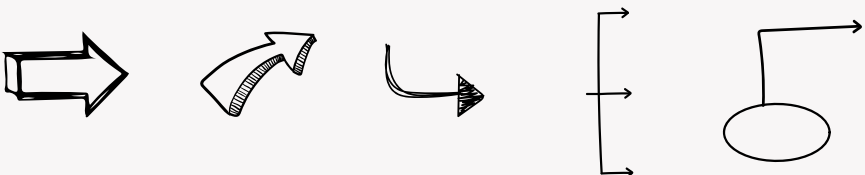
The starting point for graphic facilitation is mastering a few basic visual elements: shapes, frames, containers, arrows, and connectors.

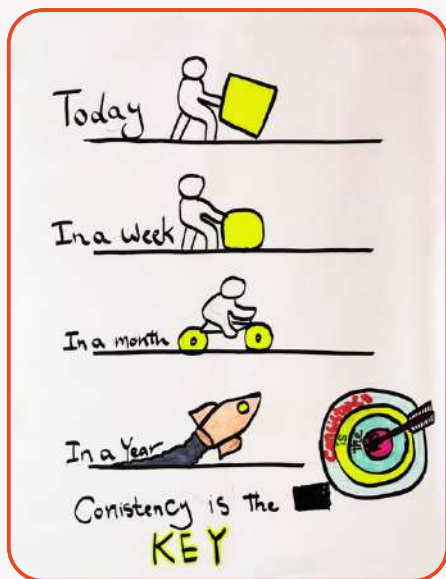
They form the alphabet from which all more complex visual formats are built - posters, mind maps, infographics, and visual notes.

Frames and containers help group information and create a visual hierarchy - elements placed within a clearly defined area are perceived as a coherent whole.



Arrows and connectors show relationships between elements: sequence, cause and effect, and dependencies.





Even the simplest drawing:

-  a square,
-  a cloud,
-  an arrow,

can communicate more in a fraction of a second than a sentence of text.



Tip for working with young people:

Visual alphabet exercise.

Ask the group to draw as many different frames, arrows and containers as possible in 5 minutes.

This exercise takes away the pressure of “being able to draw” and shows that everyone is already capable of creating a visual language.

MAJ Maj

Maj

MAJ

MAJ

CHAPTER

Maj Maj

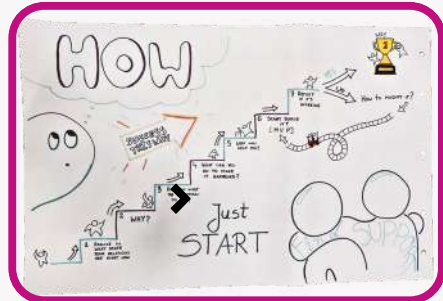
2

LETTERING AND TYPOGRAPHY

The way we write words **can convey just as much meaning as the words themselves.**

In graphic facilitation, a simple library of type styles is used - a few lettering variations that **help create a clear text hierarchy** on a poster or in visual notes. **For example:**

- regular lettering,
- UPPERCASE LETTERS FOR HEADINGS,
- "BUBBLE" LETTERS FOR EMPHASIS.



Good lettering doesn't have to be calligraphic -
it needs to be clear and consistent.

The heading should immediately draw attention, subheadings should organise the content, and smaller text should provide additional details.

This kind of hierarchy allows the viewer, whether a workshop participant or someone looking at the poster years later, **to understand what the content is about within just a few seconds.**



**Tip for working
with young people:**

Playing with fonts.

Ask participants to write one word in four different ways: regular lettering, uppercase letters, "3D" letters and decorative lettering.

This short warm-up exercise will help build their confidence before moving on to longer tasks.

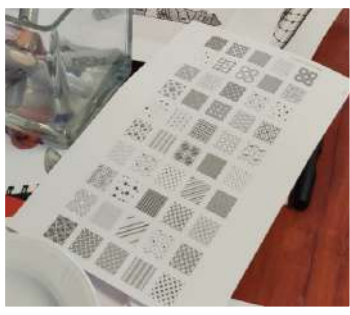
CHAPTER

3

COLOR, SHADOW AND TEXTURE

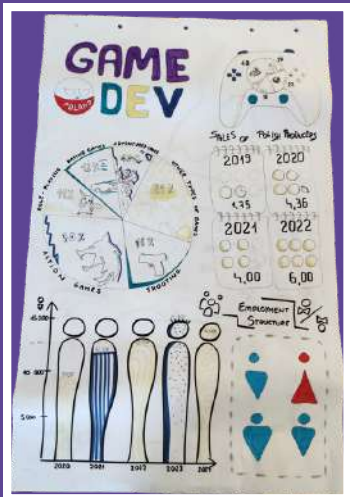
Colour, shading, and texture give drawings depth and character.

They make a flat sketch come to life.



A shadow beneath an object creates a sense of three-dimensionality.

Colour helps distinguish between different categories of information (e.g. using a different colour for each discussion topic).



Texture can emphasise the mood or meaning of a particular element.

In facilitation practice, **colour also serves an organisational function:**

- it can be used to mark priorities,
- group related topics,
- highlight the most important conclusions from a discussion.

However, it is worth using colour consciously and sparingly, because too many colours can be just as distracting as too few can make the message feel flat.



**Tip for working
with young people:**

The 4-colour rule.

Introduce a simple rule of “a maximum of 3 colours + black” during the first colour exercises - this helps reduce visual clutter and teaches participants to choose colours intentionally.

GROUP PROCESS

CHAPTER

4

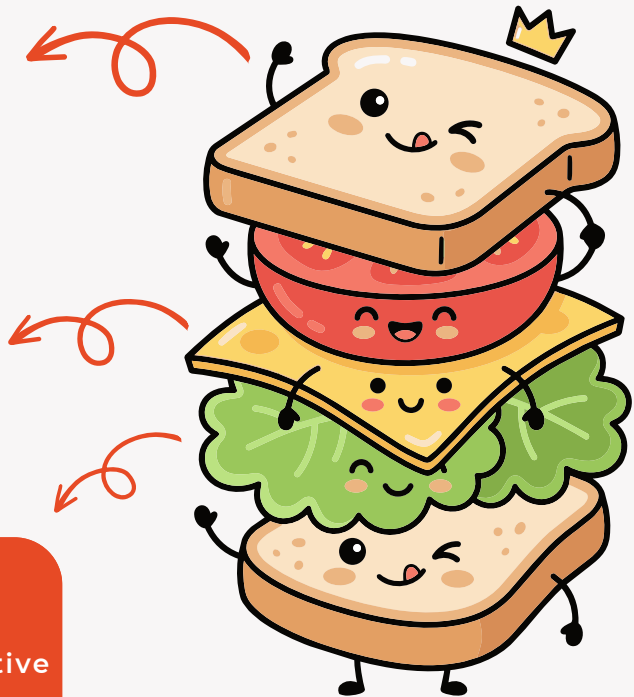
CREATING POSTERS - THE SANDWICH MODEL

One tried-and-tested practical exercise is creating a poster using the so-called **sandwich model** - building the composition layer by layer, just like making a sandwich.

Start with the “base”
(page layout,
main frames).

Then add
the “filling”
(text, icons,
symbols).

Finish with the
“extras” (colour,
shading, decorative
details).



This model **structures the creative process** and makes even a **complex poster manageable step by step**, without the feeling of being overwhelmed by a blank page.

This exercise effectively brings together all the elements introduced earlier - **shapes, lettering, and colour - into one coherent whole.**



Tip for working with young people:

Set specific time limits for each stage.

Break the poster-making process into clear time blocks:

- 10 minutes for sketching the layout,
- 15 minutes for text and icons,
- 10 minutes for colour.

Time limits help the group focus on taking action rather than striving for perfection.

EMOTIONS

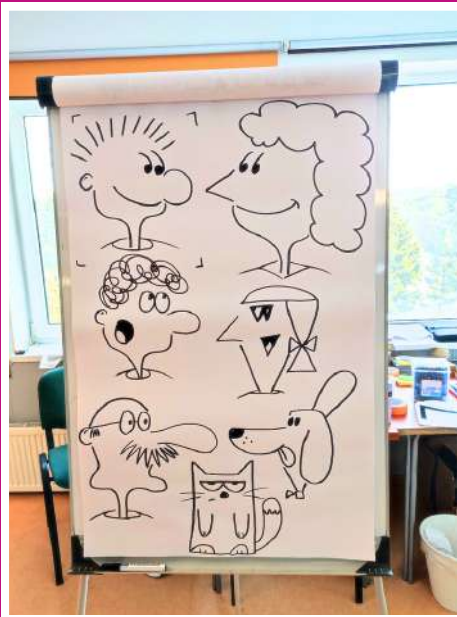
CHAPTER

5

FACES AND EMOTIONS

The ability to quickly draw faces that express emotions **is one of the most universal tools available to a facilitator.**

A simple circle with a few lines showing raised eyebrows, downturned corners of the mouth, or wide-open eyes **can instantly communicate joy, surprise, sadness, or frustration.**



When working with young people, this skill has a double value:

- ✔ it allows you to quickly visualise emotions that arise within the group (e.g. at the beginning or end of a session - “How are you feeling today?”),
- ✔ it can serve as a starting point for a conversation about emotions and emotional intelligence.



Tip for working with young people:

Visual mood check-ins.

Use simple drawings of faces as a way to check the group's mood at the beginning and end of a session.

Participants draw a facial expression that reflects how they are feeling, creating space for a short round of sharing.

PEOPLE

1. Stickman

2. ! - person

CHAPTER

3. - person

4. ★ - person

6

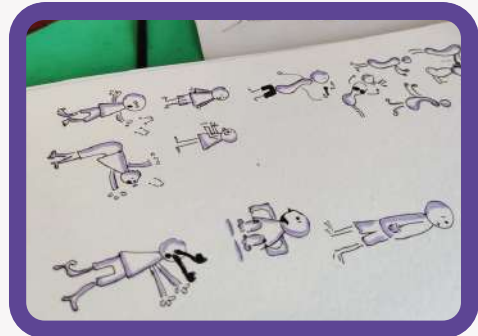
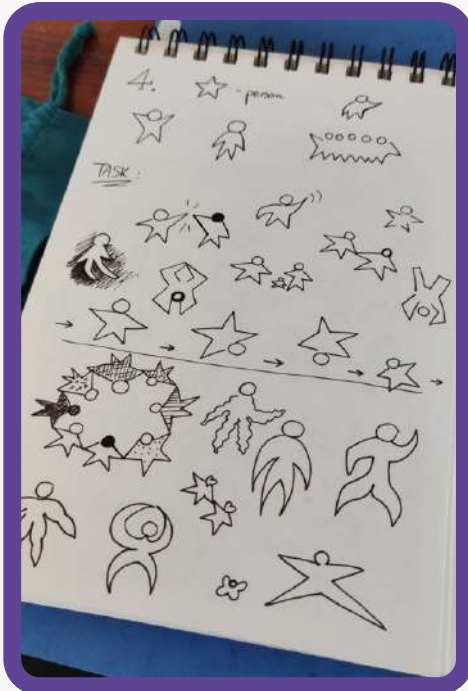
5. Mr. BEAN

6. - person

PEOPLE AND CHARACTERS

Drawing people and characters in graphic facilitation is based on **simplification rather than realism.**

The aim is to capture proportions and a distinctive pose with just a few lines - creating a figure that is immediately clear and recognisable, even if it doesn't resemble any specific person.



This skill is particularly useful for visualising:

- roles and target groups,
- scenarios, for example showing a “typical participant” in a project,
- different perspectives in a discussion,
- stages of a social process involving people.



Tip for working with young people:

Start with a basic character.

Teach the group one universal basic character (a few lines = head, torso, arms, and legs) that can easily be modified by adding emotions, gestures, or elements of clothing.

This significantly lowers the barrier to entry compared with trying to draw realistic people.

CHAPTER

7

VISUAL VOCABULARY

A visual vocabulary is a personal collection of **symbols, icons, and simple illustrations** that can be reused in many different contexts, for example:

- when working with young people,
- during workshops,
- during presentations,
- when planning projects.



It is a kind of facilitator's toolkit - the richer the vocabulary, the faster and more confidently you can visualise new content.

Building your own visual vocabulary is an ongoing process and is worth developing gradually, adding new symbols whenever you come across a concept that is difficult to draw straight away.





Over time,
this creates
a personal visual
alphabet that is
ready to use
in any context.



**Tip for working
with young people:**

Creating a shared visual vocabulary.

Together with the group, create a shared visual vocabulary for a specific topic, such as mental health, human rights, or ecology.

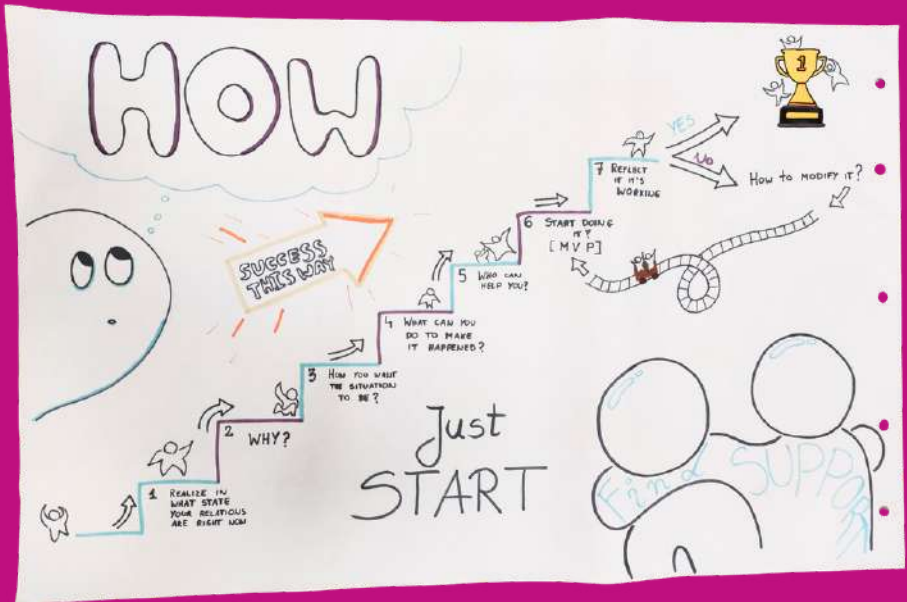
Each person suggests one symbol, and the final collection can be reused during future sessions.



COMPOSITION AND VISUAL NOTE - TAKING

Composition is the way we organise content on a page - in other words, **how we build a visual hierarchy and combine text with images into a coherent and readable whole.**

Good visual notes aren't a random collection of drawings, but **a carefully planned structure that guides the viewer's eye from the most important information to the details.**



In practice, this means **consciously planning the page layout before you start drawing.**

It means deciding in advance **where the title will go, where the main topics will be placed, and where to leave space for additional notes.**

Good composition ensures that even a page filled with a lot of information remains clear and easy to follow.



**Tip for working
with young people:**

Creating a page template.

Before participants start taking visual notes, ask them to sketch a simple page template with several frames for the main content blocks.

This simple habit can significantly improve the quality of the final visual notes

INFOGRAPHICS

#GRID#

CHAPTER

9

INFOGRAPHICS AND DATA VISUALIZATION

Infographics make it possible to present information and data in a **clear, structured and visually appealing way**.

This is particularly useful when we want young people to **better understand statistics, survey results, or comparisons**.

A well-designed infographic **guides the viewer through the data step by step** instead of overwhelming them with numbers.

The key is to choose the right visual format for the type of data, for example:



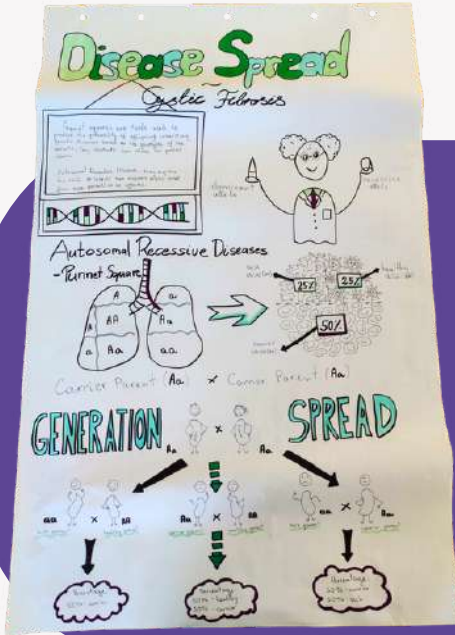
a bar chart for comparisons,



a timeline for processes,



proportional icons to show scale.



Simplicity is also important - it is better to communicate one main idea in an infographic than to try to include all the available data at once.

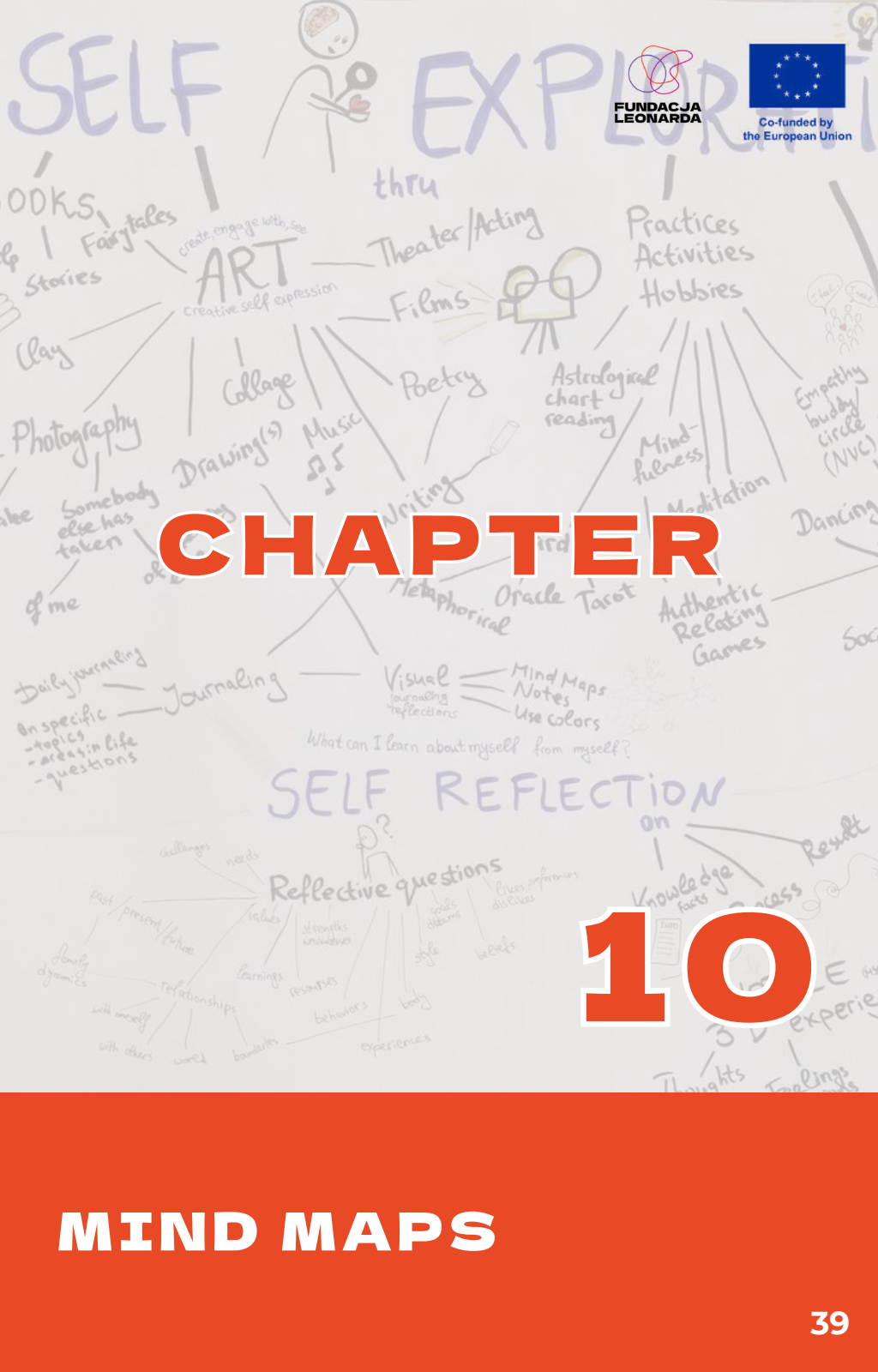


Tip for working with young people:

Visual and analytical thinking combined.

Instead of presenting ready-made information, ask the group to collect some simple data themselves, for example through a short group survey and then work together to design a visual representation of the results.

This exercise develops both analytical and visual thinking.



CHAPTER

10

MIND MAPS

They are one of the most versatile visual tools, **useful both for brainstorming and for summarising complex topics.**



In group work, a mind map created together on a large sheet of paper **becomes a living record of the discussion.**



Everyone can add their own branch and the complete map reflects the diversity of perspectives within the group.

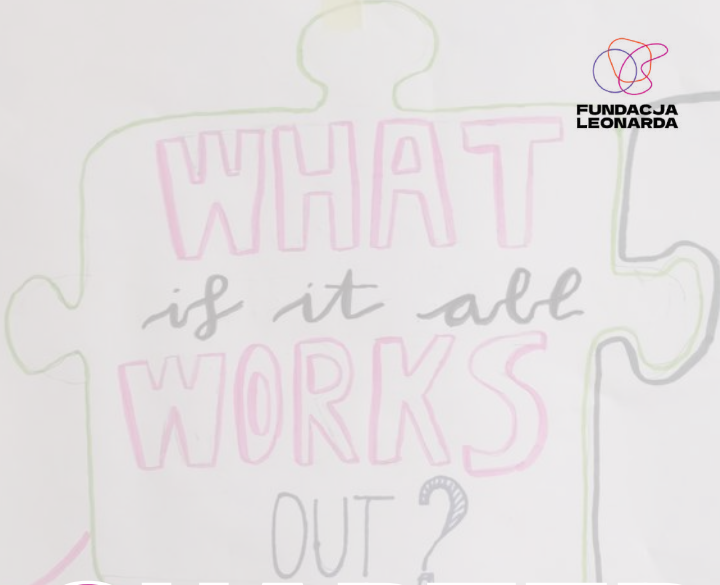


Tip for working with young people:

Mind mapping in practice.

Use a mind map as a tool for planning a group project.

The central topic represents the project goal, the main branches represent areas of activity, and the smaller branches represent specific tasks and the people responsible for them.



WHAT
if it all
WORKS
OUT?

CHAPTER

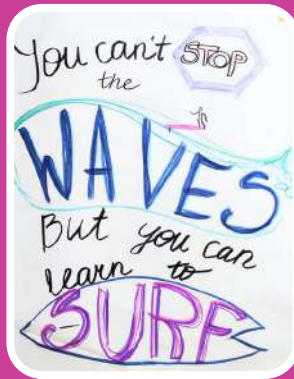
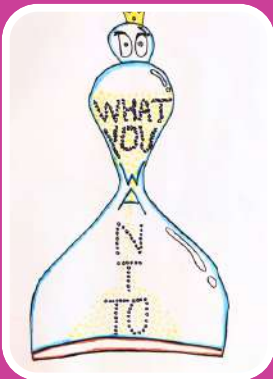


11

**VISUAL METAPHORS
THAT SUPPORT
LEARNING**

Visual metaphors make it possible to communicate complex ideas in a simple and memorable way, for example:

- the learning process as climbing a mountain,
- a team as a tree with roots and branches,
- a challenge as a bridge to cross.



A well-chosen metaphor works like a mental shortcut - a single image can convey a meaning that would otherwise require several sentences to explain.

Metaphors can also be a tool for empathy - they allow participants to find their own personal meaning in a broader topic, as everyone interprets an image slightly differently through the lens of their own experiences.



Tip for working with young people:

Reflection through metaphor.

At the end of a longer project or programme, ask participants to draw a metaphor that represents their experience, for example: "If this project were a journey, what would it look like?".

This is a highly engaging and meaningful evaluation tool.

VISUAL STORYTELLING

2. PREPARE
VISUALS

(ICONS, METAPHORS
& OBJECTS)

1. WRITE
STEPS

(KEYWORDS &
TITLES)

CHAPTER

3. CHOOSE
LAYOUT

(CLEAR STEPS, STRUCTURE,
FLOW)

MY
STORY

5. Tell your
STORY

12

VISUAL STORYTELLING

Visual storytelling uses the power of images to communicate ideas and build a narrative.

A story told through drawings, for example in the form of a short comic strip, **engages the audience emotionally and makes the message much easier to remember than text alone.**

In youth work, visual storytelling can be used for:

Exploring difficult topics.

For example, turning a personal experience into a visual story.

**Visual
storytelling**

Presenting project outcomes.

Instead of giving a traditional presentation, the group can tell their story in the form of a comic strip.



Tip for working with young people:

Creating a short comic strip.

Give the group a short, simple story, such as a fairy tale or anecdote, and ask them to turn it into 4-6 comic panels.

The limited number of panels encourages participants to summarise the story and select the most important moments in the narrative.



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See it - Believe it - Act it

Current State



On paper,
everything looks fine.
But inside, you know
stn is hissing

Ted X
TALKS

CHAPTER



When you
Draw your future,
you feel it.
Joy. Purpos. Connect



You feel
there is hope.
Yet you repeat the
same behaviors
The obs ARE
g to f

Ask Your Brain:
What is the boldest
step?
Take one small
action today.



To change
your life,
You must first
it. A n change
how
understands



13

GRAPHIC RECORDING

Graphic recording is the skill of visually capturing spoken contributions, discussions, or presentations **live, as they happen.**

It is one of the more demanding skills in graphic facilitation because it **requires listening, analysing and drawing at the same time.**

Key skills needed for graphic recording include:

- ✓ quickly identifying the most important messages,
- ✓ synthesising information quickly,
- ✓ confidently using the visual vocabulary and composition skills introduced earlier.

The result is a shared visual record that the group can return to after the meeting.



Tip for working with young people:

Getting comfortable with time pressure.

Start with exercises in pairs - one person tells a short story, for example based on a film, while the other records it visually in real time.

This is a safe way to become more comfortable with the time pressure typical of this type of visual note-taking.

CHAPTER

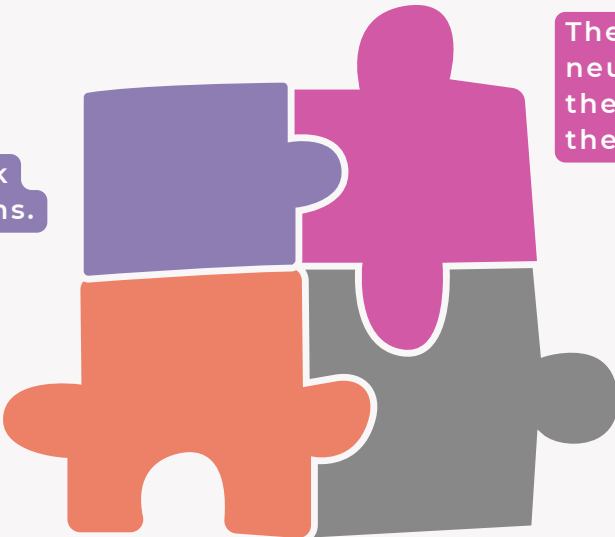
14

GRAPHIC FACILITATION IN PRACTICE

The real power of graphic facilitation

becomes apparent when all the skills learned earlier - **composition, icons, lettering, metaphors and storytelling** - come together in a coherent process of working with a group.

A graphic facilitator **does more than just draw.**
Above all, they guide the group.



They ask
questions.

They remain
neutral about
the content of
the discussion.

They observe
the group
dynamics.

They adapt
the visual language
to the participants'
needs.

Effective graphic facilitation is based on three pillars:

- ✓ **clarity** - the visual must be easy to understand at first glance,
- ✓ **neutrality** - the facilitator reflects what the group says rather than imposing their own interpretation,
- ✓ **flexibility** - the willingness to change the approach depending on what is happening within the group.



Tip for working with young people:

Create a ready-to-use question framework.

Before leading a session using graphic facilitation, prepare a few key questions that will help you visualize the discussion in real time (e.g. "What is the biggest challenge?" or "What do you imagine the solution could look like?").

Having a ready-to-use question framework makes it easier to facilitate the group and draw at the same time.

CHAPTER

15

**ENERGIZERS
AND ICEBREAKER
ACTIVITIES**

The creative process in graphic facilitation **works best in an atmosphere of safety, trust and positive group energy.**

Below are several tried-and-tested activities worth using before or during visual workshops.



OPENING ROUNDS WITH A MOOD CHECK-IN

A short round in which each person uses one word or gesture to describe how they feel at the beginning of the session.



CONCEPT CHARADES

An activity that starts with simple words and gradually moves on to more complex concepts - a great way to warm up the group before exercises that require visual interpretation.



SPEED FRIENDING

Participants talk in pairs for a short time about assigned topics and then switch partners - an excellent exercise for breaking the ice at the beginning of a group activity.



MOVEMENT ENERGIZERS

Short, dynamic exercises that get participants moving, especially useful after longer periods of focused drawing.



TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN SMALL GROUPS

Short, practical challenges that require collaboration and creativity (e.g. building something together using available materials) - they help build the trust needed to share creative work.



Tip for working with young people:

Help the group relax right from the start.

When planning a graphic facilitation session, set aside the first 10-15 minutes for an energizer or an opening round.

Positive energy at the beginning directly encourages participants to feel more confident about experimenting creatively.

CASE STUDY - PARTICIPANTS' PROJECTS

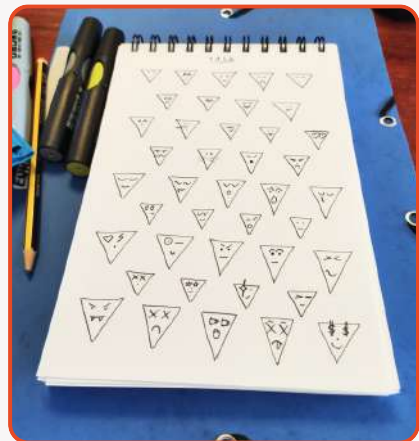
During the final stage of the workshops, participants **independently planned and created their own visual projects, combining all the techniques they had learned.**

The range of topics was broad and demonstrated **how versatile graphic facilitation can be:**

- **mind maps** organizing complex subject areas,
- **visual representations of key educational concepts** presented in a clear and accessible visual form,
- **visual learning pathways** for educational courses, including a course developed as part of the Erasmus+ programme,

- **posters** addressing health and social issues, including mental health, sustainable lifestyles, and language education,
- **comics and narrative sketches** exploring personal and social topics,
- projects directly related to **graphic facilitation itself and group dynamics.**

Following the presentations, **structured peer feedback sessions** were held, during which the group discussed **what worked particularly well in each project** and identified areas for further development.

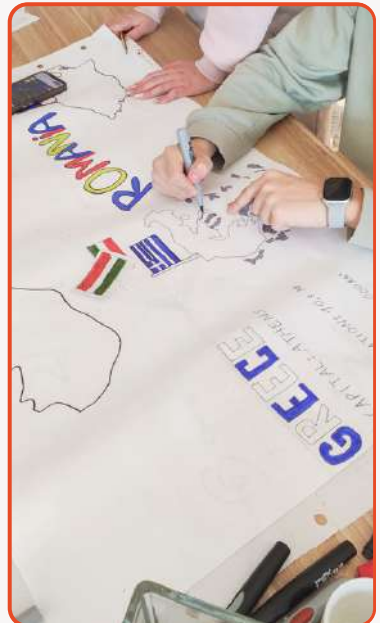












HOW TO GET STARTED? CHECKLIST FOR A YOUTH EDUCATORS

You don't need to wait for the perfect moment or have advanced artistic skills to start using graphic facilitation in your work with young people.

Here are a few practical steps to get started:

- ✔ **Start with yourself** - practise basic shapes, lettering and simple icons on your own before introducing them to group work.
- ✔ **Build a basic toolkit** - a few markers, a fineliner, and large sheets of paper are enough to get started.
- ✔ **Choose one technique at a time** - you don't need to introduce everything at once. Start, for example, with a mood check-in during opening rounds.

- ✔ **Create with the group, not for the group** - invite young people to co-create rather than simply look at finished visuals.
- ✔ **Don't judge the aesthetics** - in graphic facilitation, clarity and the process matter more than how attractive the drawing looks.
- ✔ **Keep learning as you go** - expand your visual vocabulary after each session by adding new symbols that you found yourself needing.
- ✔ **Give yourself permission to make mistakes** - first attempts are rarely perfect, and that is a natural part of the creative process.



RESOURCES, INSPIRATION AND NEXT STEPS

It is also worth remembering that graphic facilitation is a skill **that develops primarily through practice.**

Regular, even short drawing sessions - such as **taking visual notes during team meetings, sketching project ideas, or keeping your own visual journal** - are the most effective way to become more confident and fluent in using this visual language.

On the next page, you will also find specific recommendations, **such as books, social media accounts, and graphic facilitation communities**, which may be useful as you continue developing the skills you have gained.

BOOKS	SOCIAL MEDIA	COMMUNITIES	COURSES
Mike Rohde, <i>The Sketchnote Handbook</i>	Doug Neill, <u>"Verbal to Visual"</u> 	IFVP - <u>International Forum of Visual Practitioners</u> 	<u>Bikablo</u> 
Brandy Agerbeck, • <i>The Graphic Facilitator's Guide</i> • <i>The Idea Shapers</i>	Heather Martinez, <u>"Lettering Tips Tuesdays"</u> 	<u>Sketchnote Army</u> 	<u>Visual Facilitators</u> 
David Sibbet, • <i>Visual Meetings</i> • <i>Graphic Facilitation: Transforming Group Process with the Power of Visual Listening</i>	Hashtags on Instagram and LinkedIn: <i>#sketchnoting,</i> <i>#visualfacilitation,</i> <i>#graphicfacilitation</i>	<u>The Center for Visual Facilitation</u> 	<u>Visual Thinking School</u> 
Dan Roam, <i>The Back of the Napkin</i>	<u>ImageThink</u> 	<u>SALTO-YOUTH Toolbox</u> 	<u>Udemy - Master Graphic Facilitation: Draw for Trainings & Meetings</u> 
Dave Gray, Sunni Brown, James Macanufo, <i>Gamestorming</i>	<u>Sarah Firth</u> 	<u>EUViz</u> 	<u>Facilitator School</u> 
Martin Haussmann, <i>seria bikablo - Visuelles Wörterbuch / Visual Dictionary</i>	<u>Mike Rohde</u> <u>Sketchnote Lab</u> 		<u>u-school</u> 
The School of Life, <i>Drawing as Therapy</i>			<u>Visual Thinking Strategies Institute®</u> 
			<u>IFVP Institute®</u> 
			<u>Grove Consultants International</u> 

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We hope that graphic facilitation will become part of your everyday work - bringing you joy, making difficult conversations easier, and helping young people feel **that their voices truly matter**.

Thank you for being part of this story!



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