

Pass It On

A Youth Participation Toolkit



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Civic Sparks

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INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of the manual

Young people do not become active citizens by memorising institutional structures or legal definitions. They become active citizens by practicing participation: discussing real issues, expressing their opinions, negotiating different perspectives, organising initiatives, and seeing that their involvement can generate visible change in their school, youth centre, or community. Civic education becomes meaningful when it moves from theory to lived experience.

This manual was developed as a practical guide for strengthening participatory civic education through peer-to-peer approaches. It was created in the context of the project “**Civic Sparks: from Awareness to Action in Youth Cooperation**” (C-SPAAYC), a **Small-scale Partnership in Youth (KA210-YOU)** funded under the **Erasmus+ Programme**, running from September 2025 to February 2027.

The project brings together three organisations from three European countries, united by a shared commitment to youth civic participation:

- **National Youth Foundation (FNT)** — Romania
- **Stiftung wannseeFORUM** — Germany
- **Service national de la jeunesse (SNJ)** — Luxembourg

This transnational partnership ensures that the manual benefits from diverse perspectives, tested methodologies, and institutional expertise across different European contexts — combining FNT’s grassroots reach in Romania, WannseeFORUM’s innovative civic-cultural education approach, and SNJ’s policy-driven youth programming.

Key Purpose

To provide a practical framework for designing and implementing participatory civic education activities based on peer-to-peer methodology — moving from awareness-based discussions to action-oriented civic engagement.

The project addresses a clearly identified need: while youth civic participation has gained increasing attention across Europe, a significant gap remains between young people’s intention to participate and their actual engagement in democratic processes. Many young people lack adequate knowledge about democratic systems, feel disconnected from decision-making processes, and struggle with misinformation and political disillusionment. At the same time, youth workers and educators often lack structured methodologies and innovative tools to teach civic engagement effectively.

Civic Sparks responds to these challenges through three concrete objectives:

Objective 1: Increase youth engagement in civic activities by involving 300 young people from 3 communities through structured civic education programmes — including workshops, debates, and community-based initiatives that foster democratic values, critical thinking, and active citizenship.

Objective 2: Strengthen institutional collaboration for youth development by establishing partnerships between youth organisations and local authorities in 3 countries, facilitating knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and coordinated efforts to engage young people at the local and international levels.

Objective 3: Promote sustainable tools for civic education by reaching over 300 young people, 140 youth professionals, and 15+ stakeholders across 3 countries with digital toolkits, best practice guides, and interactive learning materials designed to make civic education more accessible and engaging.

The manual combines non-formal education principles, experiential learning, guided reflection, active group work, and shared responsibility, with the peer-to-peer methodology, where young people themselves facilitate learning for and with other young people. Its intention is to support environments where young people do not simply express opinions, but gradually learn how to transform ideas into action.

This document is designed to function as a **working tool**. It can be used to plan workshops, train peer educators, design civic initiatives, or structure youth-led projects in both urban and rural contexts. It is not a theoretical framework to be read and shelved. It is a resource meant to be adapted, annotated, and used in the field.

More specifically, the manual offers structured guidance for preparing **youth ambassadors and peer educators** who can facilitate civic activities with other young people. It provides activity models that connect civic themes to real-life contexts, helping participants understand how democratic values operate in everyday situations.

The manual also supports the creation of **inclusive learning environments**, where young people with different backgrounds and levels of experience can participate meaningfully. The project specifically prioritises inclusion by ensuring that young people from diverse backgrounds, including those from socio-economically disadvantaged communities, can actively participate. Whether a young person is engaging in civic education for the first time or has already facilitated workshops and organised community events, this manual offers tools adapted to their journey.

Another core purpose is to help institutions and organisations **avoid tokenistic practices**. Participation should not mean simply asking young people for opinions without integrating their input. It should not mean inviting young people to a meeting without giving them genuine influence over the outcome. Throughout this manual, meaningful participation is presented as a practice that requires transparency, shared responsibility, and a willingness to redistribute power.

2. Target audience

This manual is addressed to a diverse group of actors who share a common goal: strengthening youth participation through peer-to-peer education.

Youth ambassadors and peer educators

Young people aged 14–35 who want to lead discussions, organise civic initiatives, and inspire others in their communities. Whether you are facilitating your first workshop or designing your own project, this manual gives you the tools, the structure, and the confidence to take the next step. You are not just a participant in this process — you are the driving force behind it.

Youth workers and educators

Professionals working in youth centres, schools, or NGOs who aim to prepare young facilitators and introduce participatory methods into their practice. The project has identified that many educators and youth workers lack structured methodologies and access to innovative resources to engage young people meaningfully. This manual provides you with a tested methodology for training peer educators, along with ready-to-use activities and facilitation guides that you can adapt to your group and context.

Institutions and public authorities

Decision-makers interested in developing meaningful youth participation mechanisms and structured dialogue with young people. The project facilitates collaboration between youth organisations and local authorities across different European contexts — and this manual offers concrete examples of what genuine youth participation looks like in practice, helping you move beyond consultative formats toward shared decision-making processes.

NGOs and civil society organisations

Organisations that want to develop or strengthen participatory youth programmes focused on democratic engagement and active citizenship. The models, activities, and strategies in this manual can serve as building blocks for new programmes or as enrichment tools for existing ones. The cross-national approach of Civic Sparks ensures that these tools are adaptable across different European contexts.

Remember

Although written for facilitators and institutions, the central focus of this manual remains young people themselves — particularly those who may feel disconnected from decision-making processes or who have had limited opportunities to participate. Every chapter, every activity, and every recommendation in this manual exists to serve one purpose: creating spaces where young people can grow as active citizens.

Young people are not the future of democracy. They are part of its present. And this manual is one of the tools that can help them; and the adults who work alongside them, make that present more participatory, more inclusive, and more meaningful.

CHAPTER 1

Why such a manual is needed

Youth civic participation is often mentioned in strategies, projects, and policies. It sounds important, and it is. But what does it really mean in everyday life? And why does it need a dedicated manual?

This chapter explores three connected ideas: what participation actually means and why it matters, what the current reality of youth civic engagement looks like across Europe, and why non-formal education is one of the most effective ways to help young people become active citizens.

1. What is youth participation?

At its core, youth participation means that young people are not just observers of society. They are part of it. They have ideas, concerns, questions, and solutions — and they have the right and the ability to influence the world around them.

Participation begins when a young person feels that their voice matters. It grows when they are given space to speak, to question, to propose, and to act. And it becomes meaningful when their contribution leads to real change, even small change, in their school, youth centre, neighbourhood, or community.

Youth participation does not look the same everywhere. It can take many forms: a group of young people organising a debate about local issues, a student council proposing changes in school rules, volunteering for a community cause, launching a digital awareness campaign, or meeting with local authorities to discuss youth needs.

But participation is not simply about being present. It is about having **influence**.

The origins: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969)

The concept of participation as a question of power was first articulated by Sherry R. Arnstein in her landmark 1969 article. Arnstein wrote: “citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future.” In other words, participation without the redistribution of power is an empty ritual — it allows those in power to claim that all sides were considered, while making it possible for only some of those sides to benefit.

Arnstein proposed a typology of participation arranged as a **ladder with eight rungs**, each corresponding to the extent of citizens' power in determining decisions:

Level	Rungs	What It Means
Non-participation	1. Manipulation 2. Therapy	The objective is not to enable people to participate, but to enable powerholders to “educate” or “cure” participants. People are directed, not heard.

Level	Rungs	What It Means
Tokenism	3. Informing 4. Consultation 5. Placation	Citizens may hear and be heard, but they lack the power to ensure that their views will be heeded. There is no follow-through, no assurance of changing the status quo.
Citizen Power	6. Partnership 7. Delegated Power 8. Citizen Control	Citizens can negotiate, share decision-making seats, or obtain full managerial power over programmes and decisions that affect them.

This ladder was designed for **adult citizens** in the context of urban planning and public policy in the United States. It is a simplification, Arnstein herself acknowledged that, but it introduced a fundamental idea that remains relevant today: there are significant gradations of participation, and knowing these gradations makes it possible to cut through the rhetoric and understand what is really happening when someone claims that people “were consulted.”

Hart’s Adaptation for Children (1992)

In 1992, Roger Hart adapted Arnstein’s ladder in a publication commissioned by UNICEF titled *Children’s Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*. It is important to note that **Hart’s work focuses specifically on children** — primarily pre-adolescents and younger teenagers — and on the adult-child power dynamic within educational and community settings.

Hart argued that democratic participation cannot be taught as an abstraction — it can only be acquired gradually through practice. His core insight was that children are often included in events, campaigns, and public occasions, but their ideas do not genuinely shape the final decisions. As he wrote: “Children are undoubtedly the most photographed and the least listened to members of society.”

Hart described three forms of **non-participation** that are particularly visible when working with children:

- **Manipulation** — children carry placards or participate in actions they do not understand, under the guise of participation.
- **Decoration** — children are given t-shirts, asked to sing or dance at an event, but have little idea of what it is about and no say in its organisation.
- **Tokenism** — children are apparently given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about the subject, little opportunity to formulate their own opinions, and no meaningful follow-up.

While Hart’s framework was developed for **children**, the patterns he described — especially tokenism — are equally relevant when working with **young people**. In youth work, tokenism takes slightly different forms: a young person invited to a panel discussion without preparation or follow-up, a youth representative on a board who is never asked for input, or a consultation where opinions are collected but never integrated. The mechanisms are the same, even if the context is different.

Including Youth: Botchwey et al. (2019)

The most relevant adaptation of the ladder for the purposes of this manual comes from Botchwey, Johnson, O’Connell, and Kim (2019), who specifically addressed the question: **how do youth, not children, participate in decision-making processes that affect them?**

Their research, published in the Journal of the American Planning Association, recognised that young people face unique barriers to participation that are different from those faced by both adults and children. Unlike adults, youth are often not considered “citizens” in the traditional sense — they may not be able to vote, they lack institutional power, and they are rarely present in the formal spaces where decisions are made. Unlike children, however, youth have the cognitive development, social awareness, and motivation to engage in complex decision-making — if they are given the appropriate pathways.

Botchwey et al. proposed **three new rungs** on the ladder, located between “placation” and “partnership,” that reflect the reality of youth participation:

Rung	Direction of Power	What It Means for Youth
Consent	Power granted by adults	Youth are given permission and access to participate in a process. An adult — a mentor, teacher, or youth worker — provides the entry point and supports the young person’s involvement.
Advocacy	Power sought by youth	Youth actively push for inclusion. They identify issues that matter to them and seek a seat at the table, sometimes creating their own platforms when institutional ones are not available.
Incorporation	Power shared	Youth ideas and contributions are formally integrated into the final outcomes. Adults may retain decision-making authority, but the process visibly reflects youth input.

These rungs are particularly important for this manual because they describe the **realistic middle ground** where most youth participation happens. Few youth programmes begin at “partnership” or “citizen control.” Most begin somewhere between placation and partnership — and the goal of a good civic education programme is to help young people move upward on this ladder over time.

What is tokenism?

Tokenism happens when participation is only symbolic. Young people are included in appearance — in meetings, consultations, campaigns, or public events — but their ideas do not genuinely shape the final decisions. Participation becomes a formal step rather than a meaningful process. It is often unintentional, which makes it even more important to recognise. A youth representative on a committee who is never asked for input, a consultation where feedback is collected but ignored, a photo opportunity with no follow-up — these are all forms of tokenism.

From theory to practice: using the ladder as a self-assessment tool

The participation ladder — in any of its versions — is not just a theoretical model. It is a **practical self-assessment tool** that any facilitator, organisation, or institution can use to evaluate how meaningfully young people are included in their processes.

Meaningful youth participation requires transparency, shared responsibility, and genuine openness to change. It means that adults and institutions are willing not only to listen, but also to adapt, negotiate, and sometimes shift power.

It also means asking important questions:

Who makes the final decision?

How are young people's contributions integrated into the outcome?

What changes — concretely — because young people were involved?

If the answers to these questions are vague or absent, participation may be closer to tokenism than anyone intended — regardless of how well-meaning the process was.

2. The current context of youth civic participation

Youth civic participation in Europe has gained increasing attention in recent years, as democratic institutions and civil society recognise the essential role young people play in shaping the future of democracy. Young people aged 15–29 represent a significant segment of the European population, accounting for approximately 16.3% of the total population (Eurostat, 2021).

Key Data

64% of young people reported that they intended to vote in the 2024 European Parliament Elections, while 48% had taken civic action such as signing petitions, participating in demonstrations, or contacting political representatives (Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy, 2024). However, voter turnout among those under 25 dropped by 6%.

The gap between intention and actual participation is one of the most important findings in recent youth research. It suggests that, while young people recognise the importance of democratic engagement, **structural barriers, political disillusionment, and a lack of trust** may limit their active involvement in formal democratic processes.

The European policy framework

The European Union has explicitly prioritised youth participation through its **Youth Strategy 2019–2027**, which is built around three words: **Engage, Empower, Connect**. The Strategy places youth participation at the forefront of youth policy and is complemented by the **European Youth Goals** — a set of objectives developed with young people themselves.

The **Erasmus+ Programme** and the **European Solidarity Corps** further build upon this policy base by setting the objective of enhancing youth participation in democratic life. The Civic Sparks project is directly aligned with these priorities, addressing the Erasmus+ horizontal priority of **common values, civic engagement, and participation**, and the youth-specific priority of **promoting active citizenship and young people's sense of initiative**.

According to the EU's Youth Participation Strategy developed by SALTO Participation & Information, young people are increasingly involved in "alternative forms" of participation — including youth activism, community volunteering, online activism, and youth social movements such as the climate activism movement. At the same time, many young people still feel disconnected from democratic structures and institutions, and there is an ongoing need to enable them to participate both directly and indirectly.

The context on the ground

These challenges are not abstract — they are lived realities in communities across Europe.

In many countries, despite a growing youth civil society and increasing visibility of young activists, many young people — especially those in rural areas or from disadvantaged backgrounds — have limited access to civic education and few structured opportunities to participate in decision-making. Youth organisations work to bridge this gap, but the need for structured, scalable civic education tools remains urgent.

In some contexts, civic education and youth social work have traditionally operated as separate fields. There is a recognised need for innovative methodologies that bring these fields together in practice — combining civic education with cultural, digital, and community-based approaches.

Elsewhere, national youth agencies play a crucial role in implementing youth policies, but the challenge remains to move from institutional support to genuine youth-led participation.

The common thread across all these contexts is clear: young people need more than awareness. They need practical skills, safe spaces, and structured opportunities to practice participation. And the adults who work with them need better tools, tested methodologies, and peer exchange to make this happen.

This manual is one response to that need.

3. The role of non-formal education in shaping active citizens

If youth participation is about having a voice and influence, then education is one of the main ways young people learn how to use that voice. But not all learning happens in classrooms.

Formal Education	Non-Formal Education	Informal Education
Structured learning in schools and universities with official curricula, certified teachers, and recognised diplomas.	Organised and intentional learning outside school: workshops, youth exchanges, training courses, community projects, volunteering.	Natural everyday learning through conversations, social media, personal experiences, and community life.

These three forms of education are not in competition — they are complementary. A young person might learn about democracy in a history class (formal), develop facilitation skills in a youth centre workshop (non-formal), and form their civic identity through conversations with friends and family or through social media engagement (informal).

Non-formal education is particularly powerful in civic education for several reasons:

It connects knowledge with action. While formal education often teaches civic concepts in the abstract, non-formal education creates opportunities for young people to practice what they learn — by organising events, debating real issues, designing community projects, or facilitating sessions for their peers.

It creates space for genuine participation. In a well-designed non-formal education setting, young people are not just recipients of information — they are co-creators of the learning process. They help set the agenda, choose the topics, and shape the outcomes. The learning environment itself models the democratic values it seeks to teach.

It builds transversal competencies. Critical thinking, collaboration, communication, empathy, conflict resolution — these are not subjects that can be taught through lectures alone. They develop through repeated experience in group settings where young people must negotiate, listen, argue, and find common ground.

It is adaptable and responsive. Unlike formal curricula, which change slowly, non-formal education can be adjusted in real time to respond to the needs, interests, and energy of the group. A facilitator can shift the programme based on what is happening in the community, in the news, or in the room.

It creates inclusive spaces. Non-formal education can reach young people who are disengaged from formal education or who come from backgrounds where civic participation is not a family tradition. By meeting young people where they are — in youth centres, community spaces, or online — non-formal education lowers the barriers to participation.

It models democracy in practice. When young people co-create group rules, share facilitation responsibilities, give and receive feedback, and make collective decisions about their own learning, they are experiencing democracy — not as a theory, but as a daily practice.

Key Insight

Active citizenship does not develop overnight. It grows through repeated experiences of engagement, reflection, dialogue, and responsibility. Non-formal education provides exactly these experiences — in a structured yet flexible environment where young people can learn by doing, fail safely, and grow at their own pace.

This manual is built on these principles. Every activity, every facilitation guide, and every recommendation in the chapters that follow is rooted in non-formal education methodology — because we believe that young people learn participation best by practicing it.

CHAPTER 2

Why it is important to work where young people are?

The most carefully designed civic education activity will have limited impact if it takes place in a space where young people do not feel comfortable, welcome, or understood. The setting is not a logistical detail — it is a pedagogical condition. Where civic education happens shapes how young people engage with it, how deeply they reflect, and how confident they feel to speak, question, and act.

This chapter explores three connected ideas: why proximity and psychological safety matter for effective civic learning, how young people already practice elements of active citizenship in their everyday lives, and how facilitators can adapt their interventions to different local contexts without losing the participatory core.

1. The importance of proximity and safe environments

When we talk about proximity in civic education, we are not simply referring to physical distance. Proximity has three dimensions, and all three must be present for a civic education activity to be effective.

Physical proximity means meeting young people in the spaces they already inhabit — their school, their youth centre, their neighbourhood, their community hall, or even their favourite online platform. It means reducing the logistical barriers that prevent participation: long travel distances, unfamiliar locations, inaccessible venues. If a young person has to cross the city to attend a workshop in a building they have never visited, participation has already become an effort before the session begins.

Emotional proximity means using language that young people recognise and relate to. It means choosing topics that connect to their real concerns — not abstract policy discussions, but questions that emerge from their daily experience. It means building a relationship of trust between facilitator and group, where curiosity is welcomed and mistakes are treated as part of learning, not as failures to be corrected.

Cultural proximity means being aware of the social, economic, and cultural context of the group. A session designed for university students in an urban centre will not work the same way in a rural community where young people have different routines, different access to information, and different relationships with local institutions. Proximity requires observation, listening, and a genuine willingness to adapt.

Proximity in practice

In a school setting, proximity means starting discussions from what young people already know: the school rules, who decided them, and whether students had any say. The question “Who makes the rules here?” is both familiar and genuinely civic.

In a youth centre, proximity can mean turning a problem into a learning opportunity. If attendance at activities is low, that itself becomes a topic for civic exploration: Why do some young people not participate? What would make them want to? Who decides what activities are offered?

In a rural community, proximity means connecting civic themes to local realities: access to public transport, the availability of digital infrastructure, the distance to the nearest library or cultural space. These are not abstract policy issues — they are the daily life of young people.

Creating psychologically safe environments

Proximity brings young people into the room. But psychological safety determines whether they will speak once they are there.

A psychologically safe environment is one where young people can express opinions without fear of ridicule, punishment, or exclusion. It is a space where disagreement is possible, where questions are encouraged, and where every participant — regardless of their background, experience, or level of confidence — feels that their contribution is valued.

Psychological safety does not happen by accident. It is built intentionally, through specific practices:

Co-created group rules. Instead of imposing rules from above, the facilitator invites the group to define together how they want to work. What does respect look like in this group? How do we handle disagreement? What happens if someone needs a break? When young people co-create the rules, they are already practicing democratic decision-making — before the formal session even begins.

Facilitation that models curiosity, not judgment. The way a facilitator responds to a contribution sets the tone for the entire group. If a young person shares an opinion and the facilitator evaluates it — “That’s wrong” or “That’s not what we’re looking for” — other participants will quickly learn to stay silent. If, instead, the facilitator asks follow-up questions — “What made you think that?” or “Can you tell us more?” — the group learns that thinking out loud is safe.

Explicit attention to inclusion. Some participants will naturally speak more than others. A safe environment is not just one where people can speak — it is one where quieter voices are actively invited. This can be done through small group work, written reflection before discussion, paired exchanges, or simply by checking in with those who have not spoken.

Creating safety in practice

Imagine a session that explores how misinformation spreads on social media. A young person mentions that they recently shared a post that turned out to be false. How the facilitator responds in this moment defines the safety of the space.

A question like “Why did you share it?” puts the participant on the defensive. A question like “What made that post feel convincing?” opens a space for honest reflection — and invites the whole group to think about how misinformation works, without singling anyone out.

Safety is not about avoiding difficult topics. It is about creating conditions where difficult topics can be explored without fear.

The SALTO Youth Participation Toolkit emphasises that creating inclusive environments also requires identifying and removing barriers that may not be immediately visible. Some young people face economic barriers (cost of transport, materials). Others face social barriers (discrimination, language, disability). Some face cultural barriers (activities scheduled at times that conflict with family or religious obligations). Genuine inclusion means anticipating these barriers and actively working to reduce them — not waiting for those who are excluded to explain why they cannot attend.

What barriers — visible or invisible — might prevent some young people in your community from participating?

How can you design your sessions so that participation does not depend on resources, confidence, or connections that not everyone has?

2. Civic education in the everyday lives of young people

One of the most common assumptions in civic education is that young people need to be taught about participation from scratch — as if they arrive at a workshop with no prior experience of collective action, negotiation, or responsibility. In reality, young people practice elements of active citizenship every day. They simply do not call it that.

Consider what happens in ordinary situations:

A group of friends divides tasks for a school project. They discuss who will do what, negotiate deadlines, manage disagreements about the approach. This is **collective decision-making** — one of the foundational skills of democratic participation.

A young person sees a classmate being treated unfairly and speaks up. They may not use the language of “human rights” or “advocacy,” but they are **questioning a power structure** and taking a position — which is at the heart of civic engagement.

A group of young people organises an event at their school — a concert, a fundraiser, a cultural afternoon. They plan, coordinate, take responsibility, and deal with the consequences of their decisions. This is **civic initiative** — the same set of skills required to design and implement a community project.

A young person creates content on social media about an issue they care about — climate change, mental health, local injustice. They are participating in **public discourse**, shaping narratives, and influencing their peers.

The role of the facilitator is not to teach young people how to participate. It is to **name what they are already doing**. It is to help them recognise that the skills they use in their daily lives — negotiation, cooperation, critical thinking, initiative — are the same skills that active citizenship requires. When young people realise that they are already practicing civic engagement, participation stops being something distant and institutional. It becomes something familiar and personal.

Key Insight

The facilitator's task is not to introduce civic engagement as a new concept, but to make visible what is already happening. Every time a young person expresses an opinion, organises something with others, questions an unfair situation, or takes responsibility for a shared space — they are already a civic actor. The facilitator names it, reflects on it, and amplifies it.

Digital spaces as civic arenas

For many young people, social media is the first — and sometimes the only — space where they encounter public debate. They follow news, share opinions, engage with campaigns, sign petitions, and discuss social issues with peers online. Digital spaces are not a substitute for civic participation — they are one of its most active arenas.

But digital participation also brings specific challenges. Misinformation spreads quickly, and the mechanisms that make content engaging are not always the mechanisms that make it accurate. Young people are both consumers and distributors of information — and this dual role carries responsibility.

A facilitator working with young people can use digital spaces as a starting point for civic reflection:

How do you decide whether to share something online? What questions do you ask before clicking “share”?

When you see a piece of information that makes you feel strongly — anger, outrage, excitement — what does that tell you about the content?

What responsibility comes with having an audience, even a small one?

These are not abstract media literacy questions. They are civic questions — questions about responsibility, influence, and the quality of public discourse. By connecting digital behaviour to civic values, facilitators help young people see that their online presence is not separate from their role as citizens. It is part of it.

Small actions matter

Civic engagement does not begin with large-scale campaigns or policy proposals. It begins with small, concrete actions that are within a young person's reach: organising a cleanup in the neighbourhood, starting a

support group for classmates, proposing a change to how decisions are made in a student council, creating an awareness post about a local issue.

These small actions matter for two reasons. First, they are **real** — they produce visible results that young people can point to and feel proud of. Second, they are **formative** — they require the same skills that larger civic actions demand: planning, cooperation, communication, persistence, and the ability to deal with setbacks.

The danger is in romanticising small actions as sufficient in themselves. They are not. A recycling initiative at school is valuable, but it does not address the structural causes of environmental degradation. A peer support group is meaningful, but it does not replace the need for institutional mental health services. The role of the facilitator is to validate small actions as genuine starting points — and to help young people see them as steps toward larger engagement, not as endpoints.

From small actions to bigger questions

A group of young people organises a park cleanup. The facilitator can use this as a springboard for deeper civic reflection: Who is responsible for maintaining public spaces? Why was this park neglected? What would need to change so that the cleanup is no longer necessary? These questions transform a one-time action into a civic learning experience — connecting personal initiative to structural understanding.

3. Adapting interventions to the local context

One of the core principles of this manual is that civic education must be relevant to the lives of the young people it serves. This means that the same activity — the same set of objectives, the same participatory methods — may look very different depending on where and with whom it is implemented.

Adaptation is not simplification. It is not about making activities “easier” for some groups or “harder” for others. It is about ensuring that the content, format, and language of each session connect meaningfully to the reality of the participants. A discussion about local governance will take a different shape in a city where young people interact regularly with municipal services than in a rural community where the nearest administrative office is an hour away.

One effective model for contextual adaptation uses a dual-layer structure: the methodology and facilitation techniques remain consistent across all contexts, but the specific content and implementation format are adapted by local coordinators and peer educators to reflect the realities of their communities. A peer educator in a city implements the same thematic cycle as one in a rural village — but the activities they design look different, because the contexts are different.

This principle applies to any facilitator using this manual. The activities in Chapter 5 are designed to be adaptable. But adaptation requires three things: understanding the context, consulting the participants, and maintaining the participatory core.

Understanding the context

Before planning a session, a facilitator should spend time observing and understanding the environment they are working in. This means asking practical questions:

- What spaces are available? (A classroom, a youth centre, an outdoor area, an online platform?)
- What time constraints exist? (A 40-minute school period, a 2-hour afternoon workshop, a full-day programme?)
- What is the group's previous experience with civic education? (First encounter, some experience, or already active?)
- What local issues matter to the participants? (Transport, digital access, safety, employment, education quality?)

Context	What Adapts	Example
Urban school	Duration is shorter (30–50 min), topics connect to school life, institutional approval may be needed	A structured debate about student representation in school decision-making
Youth centre	Format is freer, duration is longer, topics are chosen by participants	A collaborative planning session for a community-based civic initiative
Rural community	Topics connect to local resources and challenges, participation may need more outreach effort	A discussion about access to public services, digital infrastructure, or transport

Consulting the participants

The most effective form of contextual adaptation is also the simplest: **ask young people what matters to them**. Before deciding on a topic or designing an activity, a facilitator can use a brief consultation — a short questionnaire, a round of open questions, or even an informal conversation — to understand what issues the group finds relevant.

This is not only a practical strategy. It is itself an act of participation. When young people are consulted about the content of their own learning, they experience — from the very first moment — that their opinions shape the process. This is one of the most powerful ways to model the democratic values that civic education aims to teach.

Some peer education programmes build this principle directly into their structure. Peer educators conduct regular consultation activities — mini-surveys, informal focus groups, collecting suggestions from classmates — to ensure that the civic topics they address reflect the concerns of their peers, not only the priorities of the programme.

What would change if you asked your group to choose the topic of the next session?

How might the discussion be different if young people helped design the questions, not just answer them?

Maintaining the participatory core

Adaptation is flexible. But it is not limitless. Regardless of the context, duration, or group, certain principles must remain intact for the activity to be genuinely participatory:

Young people contribute to decisions, not just to discussions. They help define the agenda, shape the outcomes, and evaluate the process. Participation means influence, not just presence.

The facilitator guides, but does not direct. In every context — school, youth centre, community — the adult's role is to create conditions for young people to lead, not to deliver content that young people receive passively.

Reflection is part of the process. Even the shortest session should include a moment of debriefing — a space where participants can name what they learned, what they felt, and what they want to do next. Without reflection, action remains experience. With reflection, it becomes learning.

Key principle

Adaptation means making civic education relevant to the lives of the young people it serves — not reducing its ambition. The format may change, the duration may vary, the setting may differ. But the core remains the same: young people think, speak, decide, act, and reflect — together.

Working where young people are is not a compromise. It is a pedagogical choice. It reflects the understanding that civic learning is most effective when it is anchored in real life — in the spaces, relationships, and questions that young people already navigate every day. The role of the facilitator is to enter those spaces with respect, to listen before designing, and to trust that young people already have the capacity for civic action. What they need is not instruction. It is a space where that capacity can be named, practiced, and expanded.

CHAPTER 3

The adaptability of the manual

No two groups of young people are the same. A group of 15-year-olds in a rural school has different rhythms, interests, and reference points than a group of 30-year-olds in a youth centre in a capital city. A first-time participant has different needs than someone who has already facilitated sessions themselves. A 40-minute school period demands a different approach than a full-day workshop.

This chapter is about adaptation — and it comes with a clear message: **you have permission to change things**. The activities in this manual are not scripts to be performed exactly as written. They are structures to be adapted, recombined, and reshaped to fit the reality of the group in front of you. But adaptation is not improvisation. It follows principles, and it has limits. This chapter will help you understand what to change, what to protect, and how to make those decisions with confidence.

1. What makes an educational intervention adaptable?

An adaptable educational intervention is one that maintains its **pedagogical core** — the learning objective, the participatory method, the reflective process — while allowing its **form** to change. The form includes elements like duration, language, physical materials, group size, and the specific context in which the activity takes place.

This distinction matters because it protects what is essential. The objective of an activity about the participation ladder, for example, is for young people to understand that participation has different levels and that not all forms of involvement give them genuine influence. That objective remains the same whether the session lasts 30 minutes or two hours, whether it takes place in a classroom or a community hall, and whether the participants are 14 or 34. What changes is how the facilitator gets there — the pace, the examples, the level of abstraction, the depth of the debrief.

Adaptation vs. Improvisation

Adaptation is intentional. It is based on knowing your group, understanding your context, and making deliberate choices about what to modify and why. Improvisation is reactive — it happens when the facilitator has not prepared for the context and makes changes on the spot without a clear pedagogical reason.

Adaptation asks: “What does this group need, and how can I adjust the activity to meet that need while keeping the learning objective intact?” Improvisation says: “This isn’t working, let me try something else.” Both happen in practice — but only the first one should be planned for.

2. Choosing activities based on Age, experience, and context

When selecting and adapting activities, three variables matter most: the age of the participants, their level of experience with civic education and non-formal methods, and the context in which the session takes place. In

practice, these three variables combine — a facilitator works with a specific age group, at a specific experience level, in a specific setting. But it helps to understand each variable separately before combining them.

Age

Young people between 14 and 35 are not a homogeneous group. A 14-year-old and a 30-year-old are at vastly different stages of cognitive, emotional, and social development, and the activities that engage them effectively differ accordingly.

Age Group	How They Learn Best	What Works
14–16 years	Concrete thinking, need for clear structure, motivated by games, visual stimuli, and group dynamics	Simulations, role-play, movement-based activities, visual exercises, storytelling. The participation ladder works well as a physical exercise where participants literally arrange themselves on a scale.
17–20 years	Abstract thinking is developing, strong interest in identity and fairness, beginning to question authority and systems	Debates, case study analysis, short group projects, scenario-based discussions. The same participation ladder becomes a tool for analysing real situations from their school or community.
21–25 years	Developed critical thinking, diverse life experiences, growing professional identity, capacity for self-directed learning	Designing their own civic initiatives, facilitating sessions for younger groups, advocacy planning, meetings with decision-makers. The participation ladder becomes a diagnostic tool they apply to institutions they interact with.
26–35 years	Strong analytical capacity, established professional and personal experience, interest in systemic impact, capable of mentoring others	Leading training programmes, institutional advocacy, policy dialogue, designing and evaluating civic education initiatives, mentoring younger peer educators.

These are not rigid categories. A 16-year-old with significant civic experience may engage more like a 20-year-old. A 28-year-old encountering non-formal education for the first time may benefit from approaches typically used with younger groups. Age is a starting point for planning, not a ceiling.

Level of Experience

The group's prior experience with non-formal education and civic engagement determines how much structure the facilitator needs to provide and how much autonomy the group can handle.

Level	Profile	What Works	Facilitator's Role
Beginners	First contact with non-formal methods, group is newly formed, participants may be uncertain or shy	Ice-breaking activities, visual and movement-based exercises, discussions guided with clear questions, short sessions with frequent breaks	Highly active: structures the session closely, models participation, asks direct questions, creates safety actively

Level	Profile	What Works	Facilitator's Role
Intermediate	Have participated in workshops before, some experience with reflection, group has begun to form its own dynamics	More complex simulations, short design projects, peer discussions, deeper debriefing with open-ended questions	Moderately active: provides the framework but gives space for the group to take initiative
Advanced	Can facilitate sessions themselves, have civic experience, can reflect critically on processes and power dynamics	Peer-to-peer facilitation, initiative design, advocacy actions, meetings with institutional actors, mentoring of less experienced peers	Primarily supportive: offers feedback, creates opportunities, connects the group with resources and networks

The Buddy-Seminars model, used in working with high school students preparing to mentor younger pupils, demonstrates this progression clearly. Participants begin as learners — acquiring facilitation skills, conflict resolution techniques, and group management methods. By the end of the programme, they are practitioners — running sessions, making decisions, and adapting their approach based on what they observe in their groups. The facilitator's role shifts accordingly: from instructor to coach to supporter.

Context

The setting in which a session takes place shapes everything from the duration and format to the topics that feel relevant and the degree of formality expected.

Context	Specific Constraints	How to Adapt
School	Fixed duration (40–50 min), institutional approval may be needed, connection to curriculum expected, formal environment	Keep sessions compact and focused. Use one activity per session with a clear debrief. Connect civic themes to school life. Work in pairs or small groups to maximise participation within time limits.
Youth centre	Voluntary participation, heterogeneous groups, flexible space and time, informal atmosphere	Use longer formats (90 min to half-day). Allow participants to co-decide the theme. Experiment with methods — creative, physical, digital. Build multi-session sequences that develop over time.
Community / outdoor	Limited materials, informal setting, topics connected to local realities, outreach may be needed to bring participants together	Design activities that require no special equipment. Use local issues as starting points. Combine sessions with community-based actions (walks, mapping, interviews with local actors).

Combining the Three Variables

In practice, you never work with just one variable. You work with a group of 15-year-old beginners in a school (structured, visual, 40 minutes) or a group of 22-year-old intermediates in a youth centre (analytical, co-designed, 90 minutes) or a mixed-age group of 17-to-30-year-olds in a rural community (concrete, local, flexible). The tables above are tools for thinking — not formulas. Use them to plan, then adjust based on what you observe in the room.

3. Scaling Duration and Depth

One of the most common adaptation decisions is about time. The same topic — say, understanding civic participation — can be explored in 30 minutes, 90 minutes, or over multiple days. The question is not which format is “better” — each serves a different purpose and a different context.

Format	Duration	What It Includes	When to Use It
Short session	30–45 min	Brief introduction to the theme + one focused activity + quick debrief (3–5 minutes)	First exposure to a topic, school settings with fixed periods, events where civic education is one element among several
Standard session	60–90 min	Warm-up + main activity + extended debrief with open-ended questions	Regular workshops in youth centres, training sessions, dedicated civic education programmes
In-depth workshop	3–6 hours or multi-day	Multiple connected activities, deeper reflection, action planning, peer facilitation practice	Camps, intensive training programmes, preparation of peer educators, multi-day exchanges

What stays the same across all formats

Regardless of whether a session lasts 30 minutes or three days, certain elements must remain present:

The learning objective is clear. Even in a short session, the facilitator knows what the group should take away. “After this session, participants will be able to distinguish between tokenistic and genuine forms of participation” is a clear objective that can be achieved in 30 minutes with a well-chosen activity or in three hours with a richer, multi-layered approach.

Participation is active. No format should reduce young people to passive listeners. Even in a 30-minute session, participants should speak, move, decide, or create — not just receive information.

Reflection happens. This is perhaps the most important principle in the entire manual.

The debrief is not optional

When time runs short, the first thing facilitators tend to cut is the debrief. This is understandable — but it is a mistake. The debrief is not a bonus at the end. It is the moment where experience becomes learning. Without reflection, an activity remains an experience. With reflection, it becomes civic education.

If you have only 30 minutes, shorten the activity — not the debrief. Even three focused questions at the end (“What did you notice? What surprised you? What would you do differently?”) can transform a quick exercise into a meaningful learning moment.

Scaling up: what changes with more time

When you move from a short session to a standard session, you gain space for a warm-up activity, which helps the group settle, build trust, and transition into the topic. You also gain space for a more thorough debrief — one that connects the activity to participants’ real lives and explores what they might do with what they learned.

When you move from a standard session to a multi-day programme, something qualitatively different becomes possible. Participants can build on previous sessions. They can try facilitating themselves. They can design initiatives, test them, and reflect on the results. The relationship between facilitator and group deepens, and the group develops its own culture and dynamics. This is the space where peer educators are formed — not in a single workshop, but through sustained practice with room for growth and error.

One effective way to structure this progression is through a cyclical model: each cycle includes a series of training sessions of 90 minutes each, followed by mentoring and then implementation. Over multiple cycles per year, peer educators progress from learning about civic themes to designing and running their own activities. The duration of each session is fixed, but the depth of engagement grows with every cycle.

If you had to cut your planned session from 90 minutes to 40 minutes, what would you keep and what would you let go? Why?

What becomes possible in a multi-day programme that is impossible in a single session?

4. Adapting the same activity to different contexts

The best way to understand adaptation in practice is to see it applied. Below are two activities from this manual, each shown in three variants — adapted for different contexts, audiences, and time constraints. In each case, the pedagogical core remains the same. The form changes.

Activity: the participation ladder

The standard version of this activity invites participants to explore the different levels of participation — from manipulation and tokenism to genuine youth-led decision-making — through a combination of visual positioning, group discussion, and reflective debrief.

Variant A — School Setting (14–16 years, 40 minutes)

Duration adapted: 40 minutes (one school period)

What changes: The activity is simplified into a movement-based exercise. The facilitator reads short scenarios aloud and participants physically position themselves on an imaginary scale from “no real participation” to “full participation.” After each scenario, 2–3 participants explain their position.

What stays the same: The core distinction between tokenistic and genuine participation. Participants must evaluate, take a position, and justify it.

Debrief (5–7 min): “Which scenario surprised you most? Have you experienced something similar at school? What would need to change for students to have more influence?”

Materials: No special materials needed — only an open space where participants can move.

Variant B — Youth Centre (17–25 years, 90 minutes)

Duration adapted: 90 minutes

What changes: After a brief warm-up, the facilitator introduces the theoretical framework — Arnstein’s levels, adapted for youth — using a visual handout or projected diagram. Participants then work in small groups: each group receives a real-world case study and maps it onto the ladder. Groups present their analysis to the plenary.

What stays the same: The analytical framework and the connection between theory and lived experience. Participants do not just learn about the ladder — they apply it.

Debrief (15 min): “What did your case study reveal about how decisions are made? Where on the ladder would you place your own experience of participation in this youth centre? What would it take to move one rung higher?”

Materials: Printed or projected ladder diagram, case study handouts, flip chart paper, markers.

Variant C — Rural Community (mixed ages, 60 minutes, outdoor or informal space)

Duration adapted: 60 minutes

What changes: The facilitator begins with an open question: “Think of a decision that was made recently in your community. Were young people involved in that decision?” Participants share examples in pairs, then the facilitator introduces the ladder as a way to map what they described. The group collectively places 3–4 local situations on a large ladder drawn on the ground with chalk or tape.

What stays the same: The framework, the reflective process, and the connection between the ladder and participants’ own lives.

Debrief (10 min): “What did you notice about how decisions are made here? Is there one situation where young people could have more influence? What would be the first step?”

Materials: Chalk or tape for drawing the ladder on the ground, or large paper if working indoors.

Activity: The Electoral Campaign

The standard version of this activity divides participants into groups, each of which designs and presents a civic campaign focused on a community issue. It develops skills in persuasion, planning, cooperation, and public communication.

Variant A — School Setting (15–17 years, 50 minutes)

Duration adapted: 50 minutes

What changes: The scope is narrowed. Instead of a full campaign, each group focuses on one element: a campaign slogan, a 1-minute pitch, or a poster. The issue is connected to school life. Groups have 20 minutes to prepare and 3 minutes each to present. The class votes on the most convincing pitch.

What stays the same: The experience of identifying an issue, formulating a position, and communicating it persuasively to an audience.

Materials: A4 paper, markers, timer.

Variant B — Youth Centre (18–28 years, 2 hours)

Duration adapted: 2 hours

What changes: The activity expands to include research, strategy, and audience analysis. Each group identifies a real community issue, researches it briefly, develops a campaign strategy (target audience, key message, communication channels), and creates a 3-minute presentation with visual support. After presentations, the full group discusses: Which campaign was most convincing? Why?

What stays the same: The connection between a real issue and a communicative, strategic response.

Materials: Phones or tablets for research, flip chart paper, markers, projector if available.

Variant C — Rural Community (mixed ages, 90 minutes)

Duration adapted: 90 minutes

What changes: The activity is anchored in a specific local issue identified by the group. Groups design a campaign that could actually be implemented in their community — a petition, a social media post, an open letter to the local council, a community event. The facilitator helps each group think about feasibility. The session ends with each group presenting a concrete plan.

What stays the same: The experience of translating concern into communicative action.

Materials: Large paper, markers, templates for campaign plans.

The Adaptation Checklist

Before running any activity from this manual in a new context, ask yourself these questions

- 1. Is the activity accessible? (timing, location, cost, language)*
- 2. Is the space welcoming and safe — physically and psychologically?*
- 3. Are the topics explained in ways that are understandable to this specific group?*
- 4. Are the methods fun, engaging, and appropriate for the participants' age and experience?*
- 5. Are diverse opinions valued? Will all contributions be heard?*
- 6. Do young people have opportunities to lead — not just participate?*
- 7. Is there a genuine commitment to using what emerges from the session — or is this consultation without follow-through?*

If the answer to any of these is “no,” you have found the point where adaptation is needed.

Adaptability is not a weakness of a manual — it is a strength. A manual that can only be used in one way, with one type of group, in one setting, is a manual that will quickly become irrelevant. A manual that trusts its facilitators to observe, decide, and adjust — while holding firm to its participatory principles — is a manual that will be used, shared, and improved over time. The activities in Chapter 5 are designed with this trust in mind. The tables, examples, and checklists in this chapter are your tools for making that trust operational.

CHAPTER 4

How to Prepare Young People for Peer-to-Peer Education

There is a moment in every well-run civic education programme when something shifts. A young person who began as a participant — listening, responding, gradually becoming more confident — steps into the role of facilitator. They stand in front of a group of peers, open a discussion, guide a reflection, manage a difficult moment. They are not a teacher, not a trainer, not an expert. They are a peer — and that is exactly what makes them effective.

This chapter is the most methodological in the manual. It covers what peer-to-peer education is and why it works, what qualities a peer educator needs and how those qualities develop, what the stages of preparation look like in practice, what role the adult plays throughout this process, and what mistakes to watch for. It is written for youth workers, educators, and coordinators who want to prepare young people to lead — not for young people to read about themselves, though they are welcome to.

1. What Is Peer-to-Peer Education?

Peer-to-peer education is a structured approach in which trained young people facilitate learning, discussion, and reflection among other young people of a similar age or background. It is not teaching — there is no hierarchy between instructor and student. It is not informal conversation — there is a clear learning objective and a facilitation method. It is something in between: a deliberate process in which the messenger is as important as the message.

Why It Works

Three characteristics make peer education particularly effective for civic learning:

Credibility. A young person talking about participation, rights, or community engagement carries a different kind of authority than an adult in the same role. Not more authority — different authority. When a 19-year-old facilitator shares how they organised a local campaign, participants do not hear a lesson. They hear a possibility. The implicit message is: *someone like me did this, so maybe I can too.*

Shared language. Peer educators communicate using references, humour, and cultural codes that resonate with their audience. They know which examples feel real and which feel imposed. They know when a concept needs a meme and when it needs a story. This does not mean they “simplify” content — it means they translate it into a register that connects.

Relational equality. In a traditional educational setting, the power relationship between teacher and student creates a certain dynamic: one speaks with authority, the other receives. In a peer setting, this hierarchy dissolves. Participants are more likely to ask questions, disagree, share personal experiences, and engage honestly when they do not feel they are being evaluated by someone above them. This is particularly important in civic education, where the topics — power, justice, representation, rights — require honest conversation.

Peer Education Is Not a Shortcut

Peer-to-peer education is powerful, but it is not effortless. It works when peer educators are well-prepared, when they receive ongoing support, and when the adults around them understand their role. Without preparation, a peer session can become a poorly facilitated discussion that reinforces misunderstandings rather than building understanding. The method is only as strong as the investment behind it.

It is also essential to understand that peer-to-peer does not mean the adult disappears. It means the **adult's role changes**. The adult shifts from being the person who delivers content to being the person who creates the conditions for a young facilitator to succeed. This shift — from leading to supporting — is one of the most important transitions in the entire process, and it is discussed in detail in Section 4 of this chapter.

2. The Profile of a Peer Educator

What does a good peer educator look like? The answer is not a checklist of prerequisites. It is a set of qualities that can be developed over time, through practice, feedback, and reflection. Some young people will arrive with several of these qualities already strong. Others will develop them gradually during the training process. The point is not to select for perfection, but to create conditions for growth.

Quality	What It Looks Like in Practice
Curiosity and openness	Explores different perspectives without rushing to judge. Asks questions before offering answers. Finds genuine interest in viewpoints that differ from their own.
Active listening	Creates space for others to speak. Does not interrupt. Reflects back what they hear. Makes participants feel that their contribution was received, not just tolerated.
Reliability and respect	Shows up prepared. Respects confidentiality. Follows through on commitments to the group. Treats every participant — including the quietest — with equal attention.
Creativity and adaptability	Adjusts the activity when the energy in the room changes. Does not panic when things do not go exactly as planned. Finds alternatives rather than forcing the original approach.
Capacity for reflection	Can analyse what went well and what did not, both during and after a session. Receives feedback without defensiveness and offers it without judgment.
Empathy	Understands that every participant comes with a different background, a different level of confidence, and a different set of experiences. Adapts their tone and approach accordingly.
Responsibility	Takes their role seriously — not as a performance, but as a commitment. Understands that how they facilitate affects the learning and safety of the group.

This is a growth framework, not a selection exam

No one has all seven qualities fully developed before they begin. A young person who is deeply curious but struggles with time management, or who listens beautifully but is terrified of speaking to a group — they are not unqualified. They are at the beginning. The purpose of the training process described in this chapter is to develop these qualities progressively, through practice and feedback, not to test for them at the door.

A note on **diversity in peer educator teams**: the most effective teams are those that reflect the diversity of the groups they serve. A team composed entirely of university-educated, urban, confident young people will struggle to connect with participants from different backgrounds. Actively recruiting peer educators from varied ages (within the 14–35 range), contexts (rural and urban, school and community, employed and unemployed), and life experiences makes the team more relatable, more creative, and better equipped to reach young people who might otherwise feel that “this is not for people like me.”

3. The Stages of Preparation

Preparing a peer educator is not a single event — it is a process. It happens in stages, each building on the previous one, and it combines theoretical understanding with practical experience. The three stages described below can be delivered in a concentrated programme of 3–5 days, or distributed over several weeks with practice sessions in between. The duration depends on the context, but the sequence matters: foundations first, then skills, then integration.

Stage 1: Building Foundations

Focus	Core concepts of civic education and participation, understanding the peer educator role, group dynamics, self-awareness
Duration	1–2 days
Expected outcome	The young person understands the conceptual framework and identifies with the role of peer educator

This is where the young person moves from “participant” to “someone preparing to facilitate.” The stage covers three things: **what** they will be facilitating (civic participation, democratic values, community engagement), **why** it matters (the arguments from Chapters 1 and 2 of this manual), and **who** they are becoming (the peer educator role and what it involves).

Recommended exercises for this stage:

“What does civic engagement mean to you?” — Participants position themselves on a spectrum from “not civically engaged” to “highly engaged” and explain their position. This is not a test — it is a mirror. It helps future peer educators recognise their own relationship to civic participation before they facilitate others’ reflection on the same topic.

“Features to Benefits” — Participants list the features of a programme or initiative (what it is, what it offers) and then convert each feature into a benefit for young people (why they should care). This exercise develops the ability to communicate in terms that resonate with peers rather than in institutional language.

Group agreements co-creation — The group collectively defines how they want to work together during the training: what respect means, how they handle disagreement, what happens when someone needs a break. This models the same democratic process they will later facilitate with their own groups.

Stage 2: Facilitation Skills

Focus	Guiding discussions, managing group dynamics, handling conflict, ensuring equal participation, conducting debriefs
Duration	1 day
Expected outcome	The young person can facilitate a simple session with support

This is the most practical stage. It focuses on the **how**: how to open a session, how to give clear instructions, how to manage time, how to respond when a participant dominates the conversation, how to bring a quiet voice into the discussion, and — most importantly — how to facilitate a debrief that transforms an activity into a learning experience.

Recommended exercises for this stage:

Micro-facilitation practice — Each participant facilitates a 10-minute exercise with a small group, followed by structured feedback. The exercise is kept intentionally simple so that the focus is entirely on facilitation skills, not on content mastery.

“Difficult moments” role-play — Participants practise responding to challenging situations: a participant who refuses to engage, a disagreement that becomes personal, a moment when the facilitator does not know the answer. One effective approach is to use structured scenarios where trainees role-play different peer educator profiles — enthusiastic but disorganised, timid and uncertain, discouraged after a setback — and practise supportive responses.

Debrief workshop — The group practises formulating debrief questions: questions that open reflection rather than close it, that connect the activity to real life, that invite honesty. The three essential debrief questions — “What did you notice? What surprised you? What would you do differently?” — are introduced as a minimum structure that works in any context.

Stage 3: Communication and Teamwork

Focus	Active listening, nonviolent communication, public speaking, giving and receiving feedback, working as a team
Duration	1 day

Expected outcome	The young person can facilitate independently and exchange constructive feedback with peers and mentors
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This stage develops the relational skills that make peer education sustainable. A peer educator who can facilitate a single session is useful. A peer educator who can listen to feedback, adjust their approach, support a co-facilitator, and communicate with clarity over time is transformative.

Recommended exercises for this stage:

Structured feedback practice — Using the model: “I appreciate that... / I observe that... / I suggest that...” Participants give feedback to each other on their micro-facilitation from Stage 2. The structured format prevents feedback from becoming vague (“It was great!”) or personal (“You were nervous”).

Active listening pairs — One person speaks for 3 minutes about a topic they care about. The other listens without interrupting, then reflects back what they heard. The speaker confirms or corrects. Then they switch. This deceptively simple exercise builds the foundation of all facilitation.

Team facilitation planning — Pairs or trios design a 30-minute session together, dividing roles (who opens, who explains the activity, who leads the debrief), anticipating challenges, and practising transitions. This prepares them for the reality that peer facilitation often works best in teams.

Practice Before the Real Thing

Between stages — and especially after Stage 2 — peer educators should have the opportunity to practise facilitating a real session with an adult present. This supervised practice is not a test. It is a learning opportunity. The adult observes, takes notes, and facilitates a debrief afterward. The peer educator experiences what it feels like to lead a group, encounters real reactions (not training-room simulations), and receives specific, constructive feedback before facilitating on their own.

One effective way to structure this progression is through a cyclical model spread over several months. Imagine a programme where each cycle includes training, mentoring, and implementation — meaning peer educators do not simply “graduate” from a training week and then work alone. They cycle through learning and practice repeatedly, with increasing complexity and autonomy. After several cycles, a peer educator earns a more advanced status. Some are eventually invited to become mentors themselves — supporting newer peer educators through the same process they experienced. This kind of cyclical model shows that preparation is not a phase that ends. It is a rhythm that continues.

4. The Role of the Adult

The most difficult shift for an adult supporting peer education is learning when not to act. The instinct to step in — to correct, to improve, to rescue — is natural and well-intentioned. But every time an adult takes over a moment that a peer educator could have managed, the peer educator loses an opportunity to grow.

The Adult's Role

Your role is to guide, not to direct. You create the conditions for young people to lead, while maintaining a safety net and supporting reflection. You are not absent — you are intentionally present in a way that empowers rather than controls.

What the Adult Does — Before, During, and After

Phase	What the Adult Does
Before the session	Prepares materials together with the peer educator — not for them. Helps the peer educator rehearse the activity, anticipate difficult moments, and think through logistics. Asks: “What’s your plan if the group is quiet? What if someone disagrees strongly? What do you need from me during the session?”
During the session	Observes without intervening unless there is a safety concern or a major blockage the peer educator cannot resolve. Takes notes for the debrief. Sits in the group, not at the front. Resists the urge to “add” to the peer educator’s explanations — even when they could be better. Intervenes discreetly only when necessary: a quiet word, a written note, a pre-agreed signal.
After the session	Facilitates a structured debrief with the peer educator — not an evaluation, but a reflection. Uses the model: “What did you notice? What went well? What would you change?” Offers specific, constructive feedback. Identifies next steps for growth. Celebrates what worked.

The Dependency Trap

One of the most common patterns in peer education programmes is what might be called the **dependency trap**: the adult steps in every time something does not go perfectly, and the peer educator never develops real autonomy. The peer educator learns that when things get difficult, someone else will handle it. This is comfortable for both parties — the adult feels useful, the peer educator feels safe — but it undermines the entire purpose of the approach.

Breaking this pattern requires deliberate restraint. It means accepting that a session facilitated by a peer educator will sometimes be less polished than one led by an experienced adult. It means understanding that the learning that happens through struggle — the moment when a facilitator pauses, regroups, and finds their own way forward — is more valuable than a flawless performance guided by an invisible hand.

This does not mean the adult never intervenes. There are situations where intervention is both appropriate and necessary:

- A participant is being discriminated against or excluded, and the peer educator has not addressed it.
- The activity has stalled completely and the peer educator is visibly distressed, not just uncertain.
- Incorrect information is being shared that could cause harm.
- A safety concern arises that the peer educator is not equipped to handle.

In these cases, the adult acts — but afterwards, they debrief the intervention with the peer educator: what happened, why the adult stepped in, what the peer educator could have done, and what they would do next time.

Mentoring as a Practice

The most effective form of adult support is regular, structured mentoring. Not mentoring as an occasional check-in, but mentoring as a deliberate practice with a clear structure.

A four-step mentoring model that has proven effective in peer education contexts could look like this:

1. Opening (3–5 minutes) — “How are you?” Not as a formality, but as a genuine check-in. The mentor acknowledges the peer educator as a whole person, not just a role.

2. Reflection (7–10 minutes) — “What happened since we last talked? What did you notice? What surprised you?” The peer educator speaks. The mentor listens. If the peer educator says “I don’t know,” the mentor waits — five to ten seconds of silence can be more productive than a follow-up question.

3. Planning (10–15 minutes) — “What’s next? What do you want to do, and how?” The mentor helps make the plan concrete and realistic. Key questions: “Who is your audience? When and where exactly? What could go wrong? On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you?” If the answer is below 7, they adjust together.

4. Closing (3–5 minutes) — “What is your specific next step?” The peer educator states a concrete commitment. The mentor confirms support and availability.

Think of the last time you supported a young facilitator. Did you step in because the situation required it — or because you could have done it better?

What would change if your first response to a peer educator’s struggle were always a question, not a solution?

5. Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Every peer education programme makes mistakes. What matters is not avoiding them entirely — that is impossible — but recognising them early and having strategies to address them. The mistakes below come from the experience of various peer education programmes, including the Civic Sparks project, and from international peer education literature. They are presented not as failures to be ashamed of, but as patterns to be aware of.

Mistake	Why It Happens	What to Do Instead
The adult takes over the session when something goes wrong	Anxiety about the quality of the session, impatience, genuine desire to help	Let the peer educator work through the difficulty. Intervene only for safety or complete blockage. Debrief the moment afterward — it becomes the richest learning experience of the day.

Mistake	Why It Happens	What to Do Instead
The debrief is shortened or skipped	Time runs out, the facilitator sees it as optional, the group seems tired	Plan the debrief as a core component, not an add-on. If time is short, shorten the activity — never the debrief. Even three focused questions at the end are better than none.
Activities are too complex for the group's level	The facilitator overestimates the group's readiness, or chooses an activity they find interesting rather than one suited to the participants	Always assess the group before choosing the activity. When in doubt, go one level simpler than you think is necessary. A well-facilitated simple activity is more valuable than a poorly facilitated complex one.
The peer educator receives no feedback after the session	The adult forgets, avoids difficult conversations, or assumes the session went well enough	Establish a fixed ritual: every session facilitated by a peer educator is followed by a debrief, no exceptions. Use the structured feedback model to keep it constructive and specific.
Training is theoretical but there is no supervised practice	The training programme runs out of time, or assumes that knowledge equals readiness	Build at least one supervised practice session into the training. The peer educator facilitates a real activity with a real group while the adult observes. The gap between “knowing how” and “doing it” is where the real learning happens.
The same 1–2 people dominate the peer educator team	Natural group dynamics, confidence imbalances, facilitator convenience	Rotate roles deliberately: who opens, who leads the activity, who facilitates the debrief. Use pair and small-group formats that distribute voice. Check in individually with quieter team members.
Peer educators over-promise and under-deliver	Enthusiasm without realistic planning, desire to impress	During mentoring, ask: “On a scale of 1–10, how sure are you that you can do this?” If the answer is below 7, adjust together. It is better to plan a small activity and execute it well than to announce something ambitious and not follow through.
Reports become a burden rather than a learning tool	Peer educators see reporting as bureaucracy, not reflection	Reframe reporting as a personal growth tool. The most valuable question is not “how many people attended” but “what did I learn?” Encourage immediate documentation — within a day, not a week — while the experience is still fresh.

A Final Thought on Mistakes

The best peer educators are not those who never make mistakes. They are those who reflect on them, learn from them, and try again. The same is true for the adults who support them. If a mentoring session feels uncomfortable, if a debrief reveals something that did not work, if a peer educator expresses doubt — those are not signs that the process is failing. They are signs that the process is working. Growth happens at the edges of comfort, not at its centre.

Preparing young people for peer-to-peer education is one of the most impactful investments a civic education programme can make. A well-prepared peer educator does not just deliver a session — they model the possibility of youth-led action. They show their peers that young people can facilitate, can lead, can take responsibility, and can create spaces where democratic values are not only discussed but practised. The adults who support this process do not lose their importance. They gain a different kind of importance: the importance of stepping back so that someone else can step forward.

CHAPTER 5

Activity Models and Types

This chapter is the practical heart of the manual. It contains 29 ready-to-use activities, organised into four categories — **Actions**, **Information**, **Consultation**, and **Promotion** — each documented with clear objectives, step-by-step instructions, facilitation guidance, debrief questions, and adaptation variants. You do not need to use all of them. You do not need to follow them in order. Browse the index below, choose the activity that fits your group, your context, and your objectives — and adapt it using the principles from Chapter 3. The last two activities are extended multi-day seminar formats, grouped at the end of the chapter.

Each activity has been tested in the context of the Civic Sparks project and draws on methods developed through youth participation programmes across multiple European countries. The activities range from 5-minute individual conversations to 50-minute group workshops and multi-day residential seminars, and from beginner-level introductions to advanced peer-educator training.

How to Use This Chapter

Start with the index table to find an activity that matches your needs. Check the duration, level, and category. Read the full activity description before facilitating. Pay special attention to the facilitation guide and debrief questions — they are what transform an exercise into a civic learning experience. For guidance on adapting any activity to a different age group, setting, or duration, refer to Chapter 3.

Activity Index

Nr.	Title	Category	Duration	Level
1	What Does Civic Engagement Mean?	Actions	50 min	Beginner
2	Civic Engagement or Not?	Actions	50 min	Beginner
3	The Civic Detective	Actions	50 min	Beginner
4	Different Salaries	Actions	50 min	Intermediate
5	Guess the Right	Actions	50 min	Intermediate
6	Flower Power	Actions	50 min	Intermediate
7	The Road to the Land of Equality	Actions	50 min	Intermediate
8	Human Rights Bingo	Actions	50 min	Beginner
9	Where Do You Stand?	Actions	50 min	Intermediate

Nr.	Title	Category	Duration	Level
10	The Electoral Campaign	Actions	50 min	Intermediate
11	Democratic Connections	Actions	50 min	Intermediate
12	Sparkville	Actions	50 min	Intermediate
13	The Ladder of Participation	Actions	50 min	Intermediate
14	Making Every Voice Heard	Actions	50 min	Beginner
15	Playing with Images	Actions	50 min	Beginner
16	One-on-One Information Conversation	Informing	5–10 min	Beginner
17	Group Information Presentation	Informing	10–15 min	Beginner
18	Informative Social Media Post	Informing	15–20 min	Beginner
19	The Information Stand	Informing	15–20 min	Beginner
20	One-on-One Consultation	Consultation	5–10 min	Beginner
21	Small Group Consultation	Consultation	10–15 min	Beginner
22	Online Survey	Consultation	15–25 min	Beginner
23	Participatory Consultation Activity	Consultation	30–40 min	Intermediate
24	Promotion Conversation	Promotion	5–10 min	Beginner
25	Group Promotion Presentation	Promotion	10–15 min	Beginner
26	Social Media Promotion	Promotion	15–20 min	Beginner
27	Promotion Event	Promotion	20–30 min	Intermediate
28	The Student Council Seminar	Extended	2 days	Intermediate
29	The Buddy Seminar	Extended	5 days	Advanced



Actions

Workshop-based activities where young people explore civic themes through experience, reflection, and collective action. These activities cover civic engagement, human rights and social justice, democracy and political participation, and communication and advocacy. Each is designed as a facilitated group session of approximately 50 minutes.

Activity 1

What Does Civic Engagement Mean?

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Defining active citizenship, recognising forms of civic participation

Materials: Open space for movement, list of statements for the facilitator, optional tape to mark a line on the floor

Objectives

- Participants understand that civic engagement takes multiple forms — from small everyday actions to organised collective initiatives.
- Participants identify their own position in relation to civic engagement and can articulate why.
- Participants recognise that civic participation is not limited to formal or institutional actions.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator explains that civic engagement includes a wide range of actions — not just voting or volunteering, but also expressing an opinion, helping a neighbour, questioning an unfair rule, or creating something that benefits others. The session will explore where each participant sees themselves.
- 2. (5 min) Exercise explanation** — The facilitator marks an imaginary line across the room: one end represents “Not civically engaged at all,” the other “Highly civically engaged.” Participants will hear a series of statements and physically position themselves on the line based on how much the statement applies to them.
- 3. (25 min) Moving debate** — The facilitator reads statements one by one. After each, participants move to their chosen position on the line. The facilitator invites 2–3 participants to explain their placement.
- 4. (10 min) Guided discussion** — The facilitator brings the group together and opens a reflection on what they noticed: Were there statements where the group clustered together? Were there statements that divided them?
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — The facilitator summarises that civic engagement is a spectrum, not a binary. Every position on the line is a valid starting point, and the first step toward greater engagement is awareness.

Facilitation Guide

Create a safe, non-judgmental space. There are no “right” positions on the line. If a participant positions themselves at the low end, do not challenge them — ask them what they see as a barrier to engagement. Encourage explanation over debate: the goal is reflection, not persuasion. If the group is shy, start with easier statements before moving to more personal ones.

Debrief Questions

- Why did you choose that position? What influenced your decision?
- Were there statements that made you hesitate? Why?
- What barriers might prevent someone from being more engaged?
- What would need to change — in your school, community, or life — for you to move further along the line?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (30–40 min)	Reduce to 5–6 statements. Focus on school-related civic themes: “I have a say in the rules at my school.” Use a corridor or gym for movement.
Youth centre (60 min)	Add a second round where participants create their own statements for the group. Extend the debrief to include action planning.
Community / outdoor	Draw the line with chalk on the ground. Use statements about local issues: transport, public spaces, services.
Younger group (14–16)	Use simpler, more concrete statements about helping peers, family, or school.
Older group (25–35)	Include statements about professional and institutional engagement: advocacy, policy, volunteering infrastructure.

Activity 2

Civic Engagement or Not?

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Defining civic engagement, critical thinking about community action

Materials: Open space, two signs (“YES” and “NO”) placed on opposite sides of the room

Objectives

- Participants develop critical thinking about what constitutes civic engagement.
- Participants understand that civic engagement is not always clear-cut — context and intention matter.
- Participants can articulate arguments for and against classifying specific situations as civic engagement.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator explains that civic engagement comes in many forms, and sometimes it is not immediately obvious whether a specific action counts as civic engagement.
- 2. (5 min) Exercise explanation** — Two zones are marked: “YES — this is civic engagement” and “NO — this is not civic engagement.” The facilitator will read scenarios, and participants must physically move to the zone that reflects their judgment.
- 3. (25 min) Classification exercise** — The facilitator reads scenarios one by one. After each scenario, the facilitator asks 2–3 participants from each side to explain their position. The facilitator does not provide a “correct” answer.
- 4. (10 min) Reflection** — The group discusses: What criteria did you use to decide? Did intention matter? Did impact matter? Can something be civic engagement even if the person does not think of it that way?
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — The facilitator summarises that civic engagement is broader than most people think, and that developing the ability to analyse actions critically is itself a civic skill.

Facilitation Guide

Encourage respectful disagreement. The scenarios are deliberately ambiguous — that is the point. If the group is unanimous on a scenario, play devil’s advocate with a follow-up question. Avoid giving your own opinion. The richest learning happens when participants discover that the same action can be interpreted differently depending on context, intention, and impact.

Debrief Questions

- Which scenario was the hardest to classify? Why?
- Did you change your mind during the discussion? What convinced you?
- What makes an action “civic” — the intention behind it, the impact it has, or something else?
- Can someone be civically engaged without knowing it?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (30–40 min)	Reduce to 5–6 scenarios focused on school life. Use classroom space with corners for YES/NO.
Youth centre (60 min)	Ask participants to write additional scenarios from their own experience. Add a “grey zone” in the middle for ambiguous cases.
Community / outdoor	Use scenarios about local issues: reporting a broken streetlight, attending a town hall, starting a neighbourhood chat group.
Younger group (14–16)	Use simpler, more concrete scenarios about helping classmates, standing up to bullying, participating in school decisions.
Older group (25–35)	Include workplace and institutional scenarios: whistleblowing, union participation, civic journalism.

Activity 3

The Civic Detective

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, groups of 3–5 participants

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Problem identification, civic awareness, taking initiative

Materials: A4 paper, pens or markers

Objectives

- Participants develop observation skills for identifying real problems in their school or community.
- Participants learn to analyse a problem: who is affected, why it matters, how frequent it is.
- Participants formulate concrete, step-by-step responses to civic problems.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator explains that civic engagement begins with observation. Before you can act, you need to see — and understand — what is happening around you.
- 2. (5 min) Group formation** — Participants form small groups of 3–5 people.
- 3. (15 min) Investigation** — Each group identifies one real problem from their school or community. They write it down and answer: Who is affected? Why does it matter? Is this frequent or isolated? Who has the power to change it? What is one concrete step?
- 4. (15 min) Presentations** — Each group presents their problem and their analysis. The facilitator asks the audience follow-up questions.
- 5. (10 min) Reflection and conclusions** — The facilitator connects the presentations to the broader concept of civic engagement: identifying a problem is the first step toward addressing it.

Facilitation Guide

Guide groups toward realistic, observable problems — not global issues. If a group says “pollution,” ask: “Where? What kind? Who is affected in your school or neighbourhood?” Help groups move beyond complaints to understanding root causes and identifying concrete actions.

Debrief Questions

- What surprised you about the problems your classmates identified?
- Were there problems you had not noticed before?

- What is the smallest action you could take to begin addressing one of these problems?
- What happens if nobody does anything?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Focus exclusively on school-related problems. Groups can walk around the school for 5 minutes to observe before the discussion.
Youth centre (60–90 min)	Extend the investigation phase. Groups go out into the community for 15 minutes to observe and photograph problems, then return to present.
Community / outdoor	Conduct the entire activity as a neighbourhood walk. Groups identify problems in real time and discuss them on location.
Younger group (14–16)	Provide a list of categories to help focus: safety, fairness, inclusion, facilities, rules.
Older group (25–35)	Ask groups to also identify the institutional actors responsible and draft a brief action proposal.

Activity 4

Different Salaries

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Economic inequality, fair compensation, human rights in the workplace

Materials: A4 paper, pens, role cards (prepared by facilitator with different job descriptions and salaries)

Objectives

- Participants experience and reflect on wage inequality through a simulated exercise.
- Participants connect economic inequality to human rights principles.
- Participants develop perspective on systemic versus individual causes of inequality.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator introduces the topic: not everyone is paid equally for their work, and the reasons go beyond individual qualifications.
- 2. (10 min) Exercise explanation** — Participants receive role cards assigning them different jobs with different salaries. The facilitator assigns a task that all participants must complete equally.
- 3. (20 min) Main activity** — Participants complete the task. The facilitator distributes “payment” (symbolic: tokens, candy, or points) unequally based on the role cards.
- 4. (10 min) Discussion** — The facilitator asks: How did it feel to be paid more or less than others for the same work? Is this fair? What human rights are at play?
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — The facilitator connects the experience to wage gaps based on gender, ethnicity, geography, and other factors — and to the human right to fair remuneration.

Facilitation Guide

Monitor emotional reactions carefully. Some participants may feel genuinely frustrated by the inequality in the exercise — that is the point, but it must be processed in the debrief. Be prepared to explain that the exercise is a simulation. Acknowledge that real-world inequality is more complex, but the emotional response participants felt is real and valid.

Debrief Questions

- How did it feel to receive less (or more) than others for the same work?

- What determined your “salary” in this exercise? Was it fair?
- Where do you see this kind of inequality in real life?
- What could be done — at a community, national, or institutional level — to make things more fair?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Simplify role cards. Connect to pocket money or part-time job experiences.
Youth centre (60 min)	Add a research component: groups investigate real wage gap data for their country.
Community / outdoor	Use local examples: agricultural workers vs. office workers in the same region.
Younger group (14–16)	Frame as a game with clear, simple roles. Focus on the feeling of fairness rather than economic analysis.
Older group (25–35)	Include labour rights, collective bargaining, and policy-level responses in the debrief.

Activity 5

Guess the Right

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Human rights, rights identification, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Materials: Cards with scenarios on one side and the corresponding right on the other, A4 paper, pens

Objectives

- Participants become familiar with specific human rights from the Universal Declaration.
- Participants learn to identify which rights apply in concrete everyday situations.
- Participants understand that rights are interconnected and relevant to their daily lives.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator explains that human rights are not abstract legal texts — they apply to situations we encounter every day.
- 2. (10 min) Exercise explanation** — The facilitator distributes scenario cards to small groups. Each card describes a concrete situation. Groups must discuss: Which human right is involved? Why does it matter?
- 3. (20 min) Main activity** — Groups analyse their scenarios, write down their answers, and prepare to present. The facilitator circulates and prompts with questions.
- 4. (10 min) Presentations and discussion** — Groups present their analyses. The facilitator reveals the corresponding right and facilitates discussion.
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — The facilitator summarises that human rights are practical tools, not just declarations — and that knowing them is the first step toward defending them.

Facilitation Guide

Prepare scenario cards in advance using situations relevant to participants' lives. Include both obvious cases (denial of education) and ambiguous ones (surveillance cameras in schools). Do not penalise wrong guesses — every guess is an opportunity for discussion. Emphasise that multiple rights often apply to the same situation.

Debrief Questions

- Which scenario surprised you the most?
- Were there situations where you could not identify the right? What made them difficult?

- Have you experienced a situation where one of these rights was relevant to your own life?
- What can you do when you see a right being violated?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Use scenarios from school life: grading fairness, expression, privacy, access to resources.
Youth centre (60 min)	Groups create their own scenarios after the first round, testing each other.
Community / outdoor	Use scenarios about local issues: access to public services, housing, digital infrastructure.
Younger group (14–16)	Use simpler scenarios. Focus on rights to education, safety, play, and fair treatment.
Older group (25–35)	Include scenarios about workplace rights, digital privacy, refugee rights, and political participation.

Activity 6

Flower Power

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Peaceful protest, social movements, creative activism

Materials: A4 and A3 paper, coloured markers, images of historical peaceful protests (optional), magazines for collage (optional)

Objectives

- Participants understand the history and power of peaceful activism and social movements.
- Participants explore creative forms of civic expression beyond traditional protest.
- Participants design their own symbolic or visual message for a cause they care about.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator introduces the concept of “flower power” — the idea that peaceful, creative action can challenge injustice without violence. Brief mention of historical examples.
- 2. (10 min) Group discussion** — The facilitator asks: “What forms of peaceful protest have you seen? What made them effective?” The group shares examples.
- 3. (20 min) Creative activity** — Participants work individually or in pairs to create a visual symbol, poster, or collage representing a cause they care about. The only rule: the message must be peaceful, constructive, and clear.
- 4. (10 min) Gallery and discussion** — Participants display their creations. The group walks through the “gallery” and the facilitator invites reactions.
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — The facilitator connects the exercise to the broader idea that activism does not require aggression — it requires clarity, creativity, and courage.

Facilitation Guide

Ensure materials are accessible and do not require artistic skill — this is about the message, not the art. If participants say they “can’t draw,” suggest using words, symbols, or collage from magazines. Celebrate all contributions equally.

Debrief Questions

- What cause did you choose and why?

- What makes a peaceful message more powerful than a violent one?
- Have you ever seen creative activism in your community or online? What impact did it have?
- What would you want decision-makers to see in your poster?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Focus on school-level campaigns: anti-bullying, inclusion, environmental awareness.
Youth centre (60–90 min)	Extend to include a group campaign design: participants choose one cause and create a full visual campaign together.
Community / outdoor	Create messages in public space: chalk art, temporary installations, community boards.
Younger group (14–16)	Provide templates and examples. Focus on simple, visual messages.
Older group (25–35)	Analyse the strategy behind successful campaigns. Add a component on digital activism and social media campaigns.

Activity 7

The Road to the Land of Equality

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Equality, social justice, overcoming barriers, inclusive society

Materials: Large paper (flip chart), markers, coloured post-its

Objectives

- Participants explore what equality means in practice — not just in principle.
- Participants identify concrete barriers to equality in their community.
- Participants envision and plan steps toward a more equal environment.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator asks: “If there were a ‘Land of Equality,’ what would it look like? And what would you need to travel through to get there?”
- 2. (10 min) Group work setup** — Small groups each receive a large sheet of paper. They draw a road from “Here” to “The Land of Equality.” Along the road, they must place: obstacles, bridges, and milestones.
- 3. (20 min) Road mapping** — Groups work together to fill their road maps. The facilitator circulates and prompts with questions.
- 4. (10 min) Presentations** — Each group presents their road. The facilitator highlights common themes across groups.
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — The facilitator emphasises that equality is not a destination you arrive at once — it is a continuous journey.

Facilitation Guide

Encourage specificity. “Discrimination” is a valid barrier, but “girls in our school not being taken seriously in student council discussions” is more useful for generating action. If groups focus only on obstacles, remind them that bridges and milestones matter too.

Debrief Questions

- Which barrier felt most personal or real to you?
- Were there bridges that surprised you — things that already exist and help?

- What would be the first concrete step your group could take on this road?
- Who needs to be involved for the journey to succeed?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Focus the road on equality within the school: access, voice, fair treatment, inclusion.
Youth centre (60 min)	Groups choose a specific dimension of equality (gender, economic, geographic) and create specialised roads.
Community / outdoor	Use chalk to draw the road on the ground. Participants physically walk through it and place cards at each point.
Younger group (14–16)	Provide categories for barriers and bridges. Use drawings and symbols rather than text.
Older group (25–35)	Add a policy component: what institutional changes would remove the biggest barriers?

Activity 8

Human Rights Bingo

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Human rights, rights recognition, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Materials: Bingo cards (prepared by facilitator with human rights descriptions in each square), pens, small prizes (optional)

Objectives

- Participants learn to recognise and name specific human rights.
- Participants discover connections between rights and their daily lives through conversation.
- Participants engage with the topic in a low-pressure, social format.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator explains that this is not a typical quiz — it is a social game. Each bingo card contains descriptions of situations related to human rights.
- 2. (5 min) Rules** — Each participant receives a bingo card. To complete a square, they must find a different person for each one, have a conversation of at least 30 seconds, and write the person's name in the square.
- 3. (25 min) Game** — Participants move around the room, talking to each other. First to complete a row or full card calls "Bingo!"
- 4. (10 min) Debrief** — The facilitator asks which squares were easiest and hardest to fill, and invites volunteers to share interesting conversations.
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — Human rights are not distant legal concepts — they appear in our everyday interactions and experiences.

Facilitation Guide

Prepare bingo cards with a mix of personal experience squares and knowledge squares. The goal is conversation, not speed — if participants rush to fill squares without actually talking, pause and remind them that the conversation is the point.

Debrief Questions

- Which conversation was most interesting or surprising?
- Were there squares you could not fill? Why?

- Did this game change how you think about human rights — as something distant or something personal?
- Which right do you think is most at risk in your community?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (30–40 min)	Reduce the card to 9 squares (3×3). Use school-relevant situations.
Youth centre (60 min)	After the game, groups design their own bingo cards for a different audience.
Community / outdoor	Play in a public space with community members as additional conversation partners.
Younger group (14–16)	Use simpler, more concrete descriptions. Include visual symbols on the cards.
Older group (25–35)	Include squares about workplace rights, digital privacy, and institutional participation.

Activity 9

Where Do You Stand?

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Personal values, moral positioning, rights and responsibilities

Materials: Open space, signs marked “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” on opposite walls

Objectives

- Participants identify and articulate their personal positions on complex social and civic issues.
- Participants engage with perspectives different from their own in a respectful format.
- Participants understand the connection between personal values and civic action.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator explains that civic life requires taking positions on issues that are not always black and white.
- 2. (5 min) Setup** — Two signs are placed on opposite walls: “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree.” The space between represents the spectrum.
- 3. (25 min) Positioning rounds** — The facilitator reads statements one at a time. After each statement, the facilitator invites 2–3 participants from different positions to explain their reasoning.
- 4. (10 min) Reflection** — The facilitator asks: On which statement did you feel most strongly? Was there a moment when someone’s argument made you reconsider?
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — The facilitator connects the experience to civic life: democratic participation requires the ability to take a position, to listen to others, and sometimes to change your mind.

Facilitation Guide

Choose statements that generate genuine disagreement without being divisive. Avoid topics that are too personal or painful. Create a norm at the start: “We are here to understand each other’s reasoning, not to win an argument.” If one side of the room is empty, challenge the group. This activity works best when the facilitator does not reveal their own position.

Debrief Questions

- Which statement was the easiest to position yourself on? Which was the hardest?

- Did you move during any round? What made you reconsider?
- What did you learn about how other people think about these issues?
- How do you decide where you stand when an issue is genuinely complex?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Use 4–5 statements about school-relevant topics: grading, rules, student representation.
Youth centre (60 min)	Add a round where participants write their own statements for the group.
Community / outdoor	Use statements about local issues: infrastructure, services, development.
Younger group (14–16)	Use simpler, more concrete statements. Avoid politically charged topics.
Older group (25–35)	Include policy-level statements about governance, media, and institutional accountability.

Activity 10

The Electoral Campaign

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Democratic participation, elections, political communication, persuasion

Materials: A4 paper, markers, timer

Objectives

- Participants experience the process of building a civic campaign: identifying an issue, formulating a message, and persuading an audience.
- Participants develop critical thinking about political communication and persuasion techniques.
- Participants understand the connection between campaigns and democratic participation.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator explains that in a democracy, campaigns are one of the main ways citizens learn about issues and candidates.
- 2. (5 min) Group formation and briefing** — Participants form groups of 3–5. Each group must design a campaign for a cause they care about.
- 3. (20 min) Campaign design** — Groups work together to develop their campaigns. The facilitator circulates and asks prompting questions.
- 4. (15 min) Presentations and vote** — Each group delivers their pitch. After all presentations, the full group votes for the most convincing campaign.
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — The facilitator discusses: What makes a message persuasive? How do you tell the difference between persuasion and manipulation?

Facilitation Guide

Encourage creativity but also substance — a catchy slogan without a clear cause is an opportunity to discuss superficial vs. meaningful campaigning. If groups choose very broad topics, ask them to narrow. The voting component adds energy and motivation.

Debrief Questions

- What made the winning campaign convincing?

- Was there a difference between campaigns that appealed to emotion and those that appealed to facts?
- How do you recognise manipulation in real-world campaigns?
- If you could run a real campaign in your community, what would it be about?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Each group campaigns for one change in school policy. Keep pitches to 1 minute.
Youth centre (90 min)	Extend to include poster design and a “media” component: groups create a social media post alongside their pitch.
Community / outdoor	Campaign topics must relate to a real local issue. Final pitches are delivered to a panel of community members if possible.
Younger group (14–16)	Narrow the scope: campaign for one change in the classroom or school. Provide a template for the campaign elements.
Older group (25–35)	Add audience analysis and communication strategy. Groups identify target demographics and tailor their message accordingly.

Activity 11

Democratic Connections

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Democratic institutions, governance structures, representation, civic access

Materials: Large paper (flip chart), markers, printed diagrams of local/national government structure (optional)

Objectives

- Participants understand how democratic institutions connect citizens to decision-making.
- Participants identify the levels of governance relevant to their lives and how to access them.
- Participants recognise that democratic engagement is not limited to voting.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator asks: “Who makes the decisions that affect your daily life? Do you know their names? Do you know how to reach them?”
- 2. (10 min) Mapping exercise setup** — Groups receive large paper and are asked to place themselves at the centre. Around them, they map every institution, body, or person that makes decisions affecting them.
- 3. (20 min) Group mapping** — Groups work on their maps. The facilitator circulates and challenges assumptions.
- 4. (10 min) Presentations** — Groups present their maps. The facilitator highlights gaps: institutions where no connection exists.
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — Democracy is not just a system — it is a set of connections that citizens can activate.

Facilitation Guide

Bring real information: the name of the local mayor, the contact details of the youth council, the website of the local authority. When participants say “I have no connection to that institution,” help them explore whether that is truly the case or whether the connection exists but is unused.

Debrief Questions

- Were there institutions you had never thought about before?
- Where is the strongest connection between you and a decision-maker? Where is the weakest?

- What would it take to strengthen one of those weak connections?
- What surprised you about how decisions are made?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Focus the map on school governance: principal, school board, student council, parents' association.
Youth centre (60 min)	Add a step where groups identify one concrete action they can take to strengthen one connection.
Community / outdoor	Combine with a community walk: visit the local council building, the library, or a public notice board.
Younger group (14–16)	Provide a pre-drawn map with blank labels. Participants fill in the names and connections.
Older group (25–35)	Include EU-level institutions and international governance. Discuss lobbying, policy advocacy, and formal consultation mechanisms.

Activity 12

Sparkville

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Community governance, democratic decision-making, collective problem-solving

Materials: Sparkville scenario cards (prepared by facilitator), A4 paper, pens, flip chart

Objectives

- Participants experience democratic decision-making in a simulated community context.
- Participants understand the complexity of governing a community with limited resources and competing needs.
- Participants develop negotiation, argumentation, and compromise skills.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator introduces Sparkville: a fictional small town facing several challenges. Participants are the town’s citizens, and they must decide together how to respond.
- 2. (10 min) Scenario presentation** — The facilitator presents the scenario: Sparkville has a limited budget and must choose between three competing proposals. Groups or individuals are assigned to represent different community interests.
- 3. (20 min) Deliberation** — Groups prepare their arguments and then participate in a town hall debate. The group must reach a decision — by vote, consensus, or compromise.
- 4. (10 min) Debrief** — The facilitator steps out of the simulation and asks: How did you decide? Whose voice was loudest? Whose was missing?
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — The facilitator connects the simulation to real-world governance: the tensions between competing needs, limited resources, and the challenge of representing everyone fairly.

Facilitation Guide

Design the scenario so that no proposal is clearly “right” — the value is in the deliberation, not the outcome. Assign roles that challenge participants: give a quiet person the role of mayor, or ask a natural leader to represent a minority interest. Monitor the deliberation for power dynamics.

Debrief Questions

- How did your group make its final decision?

- Did you feel your voice was heard? Did everyone?
- Was anyone left out of the discussion? Why?
- How is this similar to how decisions are made in your real community?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Replace Sparkville with the school: the student council has a budget and must choose between competing proposals.
Youth centre (90 min)	Extend the simulation: add a second round where the consequences of the first decision are revealed.
Community / outdoor	Use a real local issue as the scenario. Invite a local decision-maker to observe the deliberation.
Younger group (14–16)	Simplify the scenario to two clear options. Provide role cards with key arguments already written.
Older group (25–35)	Add complexity: budget figures, stakeholder maps, and a media component where one group reports on the process.

Activity 13

The Ladder of Participation

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Levels of participation, tokenism vs. genuine engagement, power and agency

Materials: Large paper with a ladder drawn on it (or tape on the floor), scenario cards, markers

Objectives

- Participants understand that participation exists on a spectrum — from non-participation to genuine youth-led decision-making.
- Participants can distinguish between tokenistic and meaningful forms of involvement.
- Participants assess their own participation experiences using the ladder framework.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator introduces the idea that not all “participation” is equal.
- 2. (10 min) Framework presentation** — The facilitator presents a simplified participation ladder with clear levels: Non-participation Tokenism Genuine Participation.
- 3. (20 min) Scenario analysis** — Groups receive 3–4 scenario cards and place each scenario on the ladder with their reasoning.
- 4. (10 min) Plenary discussion** — Groups present their placements. The facilitator facilitates discussion where groups disagree.
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — Knowing where you are on the ladder is the first step toward climbing it.

Facilitation Guide

Use scenarios that are close to participants’ lives — not hypothetical global examples. Include at least one scenario where the participation looks genuine but is actually tokenistic. This challenges assumptions and deepens critical thinking. Avoid lecturing about the theory — let the scenarios and discussion do the teaching.

Debrief Questions

- Which scenario was hardest to place on the ladder? Why?
- Where would you place your own most recent experience of participation?
- What is the difference between being “included” and having “influence”?

- What would it take to move one rung higher in a situation you care about?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Use school-specific scenarios only: student council, class decisions, event planning. Draw the ladder on the board.
Youth centre (90 min)	After the scenario analysis, groups design an intervention that moves one of their scenarios up the ladder.
Community / outdoor	Draw the ladder on the ground. Participants physically stand at the rung they think applies.
Younger group (14–16)	Simplify to three levels: “No real say,” “Some say,” “Real influence.” Use concrete school examples.
Older group (25–35)	Include institutional scenarios: board participation, policy consultation, programme co-design.

Activity 14

Making Every Voice Heard

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Right to expression, democratic dialogue, inclusive participation

Materials: A4 paper, pens, open space for group work

Objectives

- Participants practice expressing their opinions in a structured, respectful format.
- Participants experience what it means to have their voice genuinely heard — and to hear others.
- Participants understand the connection between individual expression and democratic participation.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator asks: “When was the last time you felt truly heard? What made that different from other conversations?”
- 2. (10 min) Paired listening exercise** — Participants pair up. One person speaks for 2 minutes about something they care about. The other listens without interrupting. Then the listener reflects back what they heard. Roles switch.
- 3. (15 min) Group exercise** — Small groups of 5–6 discuss a shared topic. One person is assigned the role of “voice guardian” — their job is to ensure that everyone speaks and no one dominates.
- 4. (15 min) Plenary and reflection** — Groups share their conclusions. The facilitator asks about the voice guardian role.
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — Democracy works when every voice is heard, and creating that space requires intentional effort.

Facilitation Guide

The paired listening exercise is more powerful than it appears — many participants will have rarely experienced uninterrupted listening. Give it space. In the group exercise, observe carefully: does the voice guardian actually intervene? Model the behaviour you want to see: listen actively, validate contributions, and resist the urge to fill silence.

Debrief Questions

- How did it feel to be listened to without interruption?

- Was the voice guardian effective? What did they do (or not do)?
- In your daily life, whose voices tend to be heard most? Whose are often missing?
- What can you do — starting today — to make space for voices that are usually unheard?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (30–40 min)	Focus the paired exercise only. Use a class-relevant topic.
Youth centre (60 min)	Add a creative component: groups create a visual or audio piece representing the voices they want to amplify.
Community / outdoor	Conduct the paired exercise with community members of different ages. Discuss generational differences.
Younger group (14–16)	Use a simpler prompt for the paired exercise. Provide a checklist for the voice guardian.
Older group (25–35)	Extend the discussion to institutional and professional contexts: meetings, consultations, governance.

Activity 15

Playing with Images

Duration: 50 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 10–25 participants

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Visual communication, media literacy, interpretation, civic awareness

Materials: A set of printed images (photographs, illustrations, news images), A4 paper, pens

Objectives

- Participants develop skills in interpreting visual messages and understanding how images communicate civic themes.
- Participants explore how the same image can carry different meanings depending on perspective.
- Participants connect visual literacy to critical citizenship and media awareness.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5 min) Introduction** — The facilitator explains that images are one of the most powerful forms of communication — they can inspire, inform, provoke, and mislead.
- 2. (10 min) Image distribution and personal response** — Each participant receives an image. They spend 3 minutes studying it and answering: What do you see? What does it make you feel? What civic issue does it connect to?
- 3. (15 min) Small group discussion** — Participants share their images and interpretations in groups of 4–5.
- 4. (15 min) Plenary discussion** — Selected images are shown to the full group. The facilitator guides discussion on visual communication and media framing.
- 5. (5 min) Conclusions** — In a world saturated with images, the ability to interpret them critically is a civic skill.

Facilitation Guide

Select images carefully: include a mix of clear civic images (protests, elections, public spaces) and ambiguous ones (a crowd, a closed door, an empty chair). Avoid images that could be traumatising. The goal is not to find the “right” interpretation but to discover that images carry multiple meanings.

Debrief Questions

- Did you and your group members interpret the same image differently? What caused the difference?
- How do images shape the way you understand news or social issues?

- Have you ever shared an image online without thinking about what it actually communicated?
- What would you look for now when encountering an image on social media?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (40 min)	Use images from textbooks or school campaigns. Connect to media literacy curriculum.
Youth centre (60 min)	Participants find or create their own images on a civic theme and present them.
Community / outdoor	Use images taken in the local community. Discuss how the community is visually represented.
Younger group (14–16)	Use clearer, less ambiguous images. Provide guiding questions for the interpretation.
Older group (25–35)	Analyse media framing: compare how different outlets use images of the same event. Add a component on digital manipulation.



Informing

Activities through which young people share information with others — through conversations, presentations, social media, and public stands. These are short-format activities (5–20 minutes) designed for peer-to-peer outreach in everyday settings.

Activity 16

One-on-One Information Conversation

Duration: 5–10 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, individual interaction

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Information sharing, civic awareness, peer outreach

Materials: Key information to share (printed or digital), link or contact for follow-up

Objectives

- The peer educator shares clear, concise information about a civic opportunity or programme with one person.
- The conversation sparks curiosity and provides a concrete next step.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (1 min) Natural opening** — Start the conversation informally. Mention the topic naturally in the context of what you are already discussing.
- 2. (2–3 min) Present the information** — Explain briefly: what it is, why it matters, and who it is for.
- 3. (1–2 min) Explain relevance** — Answer the unspoken question: “Why should I care?” Connect to the person’s interests.
- 4. (1 min) Provide next step** — Share a link, a contact, or a specific action.

Facilitation Guide

Keep it conversational — this is not a presentation. If the other person is not interested, respect that. The goal is to plant a seed, not to convince. The most effective information conversations feel like a recommendation from a friend, not a pitch.

Debrief Questions

- Did the person understand what I was sharing?
- Did I adapt my language to their interests?
- Did they seem curious? Did I provide a clear next step?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Between classes, in the canteen, or during a break. Keep it under 3 minutes.
Youth centre	During informal moments before or after an activity.
Community / outdoor	At a local event, on transport, or during a neighbourhood encounter.
Digital	Via direct message on social media — same principles, adapted to written format.

Activity 17

Group Information Presentation

Duration: 10–15 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, small to medium group

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Information sharing, public speaking, civic awareness

Materials: Visual aids (optional), key information, link or contact for follow-up

Objectives

- The peer educator presents clear, engaging information about a civic topic or opportunity to a group.
- The presentation generates interest and directs participants toward further engagement.

Step-by-Step Description

1. **(2 min) Capture attention** — Open with a question, a surprising fact, or a brief personal story.
2. **(4–5 min) Present the main information** — Explain clearly: what it is, who it is for, and what it involves.
3. **(2–3 min) Explain the benefits** — Why should people in this room care?
4. **(2–3 min) Examples and questions** — Share a concrete example or answer 1–2 quick questions.
5. **(1 min) Next steps** — Clearly state what to do next.

Facilitation Guide

Speak to the group, not at them. Make eye contact. If possible, start with something personal rather than institutional. Avoid reading from notes. Keep energy high and information focused. If the group asks questions you cannot answer, say so honestly and commit to finding out.

Debrief Questions

- Did the group seem engaged?
- Was my message clear and focused?
- What generated the most interest? What fell flat?
- How many people asked follow-up questions or requested more information?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Present during a class period or assembly. Keep under 10 minutes and connect to curriculum.
Youth centre	Use as the opening of an activity session.
Community / outdoor	Present at a community event or gathering. Use large visuals if available.
Younger group (14–16)	Use visual aids and simpler language. Keep under 8 minutes.
Older group (25–35)	Provide more detailed background. Allow more time for questions.

Activity 18

Informative Social Media Post

Duration: 15–20 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, online reach

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Digital communication, information sharing, civic awareness

Materials: Smartphone or computer, social media account, design tool (Canva or similar), relevant images

Objectives

- The peer educator creates a clear, engaging social media post that shares civic information with a broader audience.
- The post provides a concrete next step (link, event, action) for those who want to learn more.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (2 min) Choose the subject** — What information are you sharing? Who needs to see it?
- 2. (3–4 min) Write the message** — Keep it short and scannable. Answer: What? Who? Why? Where to learn more?
- 3. (6–8 min) Create the visual** — Use a design tool or a strong photograph. Clear, relevant, and readable on a small screen.
- 4. (1–2 min) Publish** — Post on the chosen platform with appropriate hashtags or tags.
- 5. (2–3 min) Distribute** — Share with friends, groups, or networks who would benefit.

Facilitation Guide

The post should be informative, not promotional. It should answer a question or fill a gap in knowledge. Test the message on one person before publishing. Always include a link or action for those who want more. Check facts before sharing.

Debrief Questions

- Is the message clear in under 5 seconds of reading?
- Does the visual support the message or distract from it?
- Did I include a next step for the reader?
- How many people did the post reach? Did anyone engage?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Create a post for the school's social media or a class group chat.
Youth centre	Create a post series: one topic per week, building a civic information calendar.
Community	Share on local community pages or neighbourhood groups.
Younger group (14–16)	Use templates. Focus on one clear message per post.
Older group (25–35)	Add analytics: track reach, engagement, and audience response.

Activity 19

The Information Stand

Duration: 15–20 minutes per interaction

Target group: 14–35 years and general public, drop-in format

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Information sharing, community engagement, face-to-face outreach

Materials: Posters or banners, flyers, printed information, a table or display surface, contact details

Objectives

- The peer educator provides accessible, visible information about civic topics or opportunities in a public space.
- The stand generates conversations and directs interested people to further resources.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (3–5 min) Setup** — Arrange the stand with clear, readable visuals. Place information materials where they can be picked up easily.
- 2. (1–2 min) Invite** — As people pass, make eye contact and invite them to stop. Keep the opening friendly and low-pressure.
- 3. (4–6 min) Present** — When someone stops, explain the key information clearly and briefly.
- 4. (3–4 min) Answer questions** — Respond honestly. If you do not know something, offer to follow up.
- 5. (1–2 min) Next steps** — Provide a flyer, link, or contact. Thank the person for their time.

Facilitation Guide

Choose a location with foot traffic. Make the stand visually attractive — people decide whether to stop in the first 3 seconds. Do not stand behind the table — stand beside it or in front of it. Be friendly and approachable, but not aggressive. If someone is not interested, respect that immediately.

Debrief Questions

- How many people stopped? What drew them in?
- What questions came up most frequently?
- Was the information clear enough to explain in 2 minutes?
- What would I change about the stand or the approach next time?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Set up during lunch break or a school event.
Youth centre	Position at the entrance or in a common area during a busy time.
Community / outdoor	Set up at a market, festival, transit hub, or community centre.
Younger group (14–16)	Use colourful, visual materials. Keep explanations simple.
Older group (25–35)	Provide detailed printed materials for those who want to read more.



Consultation

Activities through which young people collect opinions and involve their community in decisions. These range from brief individual conversations to structured group consultations.*

Activity 20

One-on-One Consultation

Duration: 5–10 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, individual interaction

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Civic participation, community needs assessment, democratic consultation

Materials: Notebook and pen, prepared consultation questions

Objectives

- The peer educator gathers one person's opinions and experiences on a civic topic.
- The consultation is respectful, open, and non-judgmental.
- The collected input will inform programme decisions or community discussions.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (1 min) Open** — Explain who you are and why you are asking. Be transparent about how the input will be used.
- 2. (1–2 min) Introduce the topic** — Briefly explain what issue or question you are consulting on.
- 3. (3–5 min) Ask and listen** — Pose open-ended questions. Listen more than you speak. Take notes.
- 4. (1–2 min) Clarify** — If something is unclear, ask a follow-up question. Do not challenge or correct the person's views.
- 5. (1 min) Close** — Thank them. Explain what will happen with their input.

Facilitation Guide

Consultation is about listening, not persuading. Your role is to collect perspectives, not to evaluate them. Write down key points immediately. Ask open questions, not leading ones. If someone gives a brief answer, wait a moment before moving on — silence often invites deeper reflection.

Debrief Questions

- What did I learn that I did not expect?
- Did I listen more than I spoke?
- Were my questions open enough to allow genuine responses?
- How representative is this person's view of the broader group?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Conduct during breaks or advisory periods. Keep under 5 minutes.
Youth centre	Integrate into existing one-on-one check-ins.
Community	Conduct in public spaces, neighbourhood visits, or at events.
Digital	Adapt as a voice message exchange or a brief chat conversation.

Activity 21

Small Group Consultation

Duration: 10–15 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 5–10 participants

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Group dialogue, democratic consultation, participatory decision-making

Materials: Notebook and pen, prepared questions, optional visual aids

Objectives

- The peer educator facilitates a brief group discussion to gather opinions on a civic topic.
- All participants feel heard and their contributions are recorded.
- The collected input reflects the range of perspectives in the group.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (2 min) Introduce** — Explain the purpose of the consultation and how the input will be used.
- 2. (2–3 min) Present the topic** — Briefly describe the issue being discussed.
- 3. (5–7 min) Group discussion** — Ask open questions and facilitate the conversation. Ensure all participants contribute.
- 4. (2 min) Clarify** — Repeat back the main themes and ask: “Did I capture this correctly?”
- 5. (1 min) Close** — Thank the group. Explain next steps.

Facilitation Guide

Watch for dominance: one or two voices often take over in small groups. Use techniques like round-robin or pair-share-before-group to ensure quieter participants contribute. Note which ideas are mentioned by multiple people. Keep the conversation focused but not rigid.

Debrief Questions

- Did everyone participate? If not, what could I have done differently?
- What were the most common themes?
- Were there surprising or dissenting views?
- How will I communicate these results back to participants?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Conduct during a class period or club meeting.
Youth centre	Use existing group structures (regular attendees, activity groups).
Community	Organise focused consultations on specific local issues.
Younger group (14–16)	Use simpler questions and visual aids. Keep under 10 minutes.
Older group (25–35)	Explore more nuanced civic and social topics. Allow more discussion time.

Activity 22

Online Survey

Duration: 15–25 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, broad online reach

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Digital engagement, large-scale consultation, community input

Materials: Computer or smartphone, online survey platform (Google Forms, Microsoft Forms), social media for distribution

Objectives

- The peer educator creates and distributes an online survey to collect opinions from a large number of young people.
- The survey is clear, brief, and accessible.
- The results inform programme or community decisions.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (2 min) Choose the topic** — What do you want to learn? Who are you asking?
- 2. (6–8 min) Write questions** — 3–5 clear, simple questions. Mix closed questions with at least one open question.
- 3. (5–7 min) Build the survey** — Enter questions into the platform. Test it yourself before sharing.
- 4. (2–3 min) Distribute** — Share via WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, email, or other channels.
- 5. (Ongoing) Collect and review** — Monitor responses. Send a reminder after 2–3 days if needed.

Facilitation Guide

Less is more. A 3-question survey will get more responses than a 15-question one. Always explain at the top who is asking, why, and how the results will be used. Respect anonymity if promised. When analysing results, look for patterns — not just numbers.

Debrief Questions

- How many responses did I receive? Is the sample representative?
- What patterns emerged?
- Were the questions clear? Did anyone misunderstand?
- How will I share the results with respondents and decision-makers?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Distribute via class groups or school social media. Keep to 3 questions.
Youth centre	Create a regular monthly survey to track changing priorities.
Community	Post on local community pages and neighbourhood groups.
Younger group (14–16)	Use simpler language and fewer questions. Test with one person first.
Older group (25–35)	Add demographic questions for richer analysis. Include comment fields.

Activity 23

Participatory Consultation Activity

Duration: 30–40 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, group of 8–20 participants

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Participatory decision-making, democratic engagement, collective input

Materials: Post-it notes, pens, flip chart or whiteboard, sticky dots for voting (optional), markers

Objectives

- Participants contribute ideas and opinions through an interactive, hands-on process.
- The consultation feels engaging and inclusive, not bureaucratic.
- The results reflect both individual and collective input.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (4–5 min) Introduction** — Explain the purpose: “We want to hear from you. Your ideas will inform [specific decision or programme]. This is not a survey — it is a conversation where everyone contributes.”
- 2. (3–5 min) Explain the exercise** — Each participant will write ideas on post-it notes (one idea per note) in response to a prompt. Notes are placed on a shared board.
- 3. (15–20 min) Participatory activity** — Participants write ideas individually, place them on the board, then help cluster them into themes. Optional: vote on most important themes using dot stickers.
- 4. (6–8 min) Discussion** — The facilitator reads the emerging themes and invites reactions.
- 5. (2 min) Close** — Thank participants. Explain how the results will be used.

Facilitation Guide

The physical, visual nature of this activity is its strength — people can see their ideas alongside others’ ideas, which creates collective ownership. Ensure everyone writes at least 2–3 notes. If a few participants dominate the discussion, redirect. Keep the central question focused.

Debrief Questions

- Did you feel your ideas were genuinely captured?
- Were there themes that surprised you?
- Do you trust that this input will be used? Why or why not?
- What would make this kind of consultation more meaningful?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (30 min)	Use a focused question about school life. Keep the voting round quick.
Youth centre (45 min)	Add a step where groups develop one theme into a concrete proposal.
Community / outdoor	Use a large outdoor board or wall. Invite community members beyond the immediate group.
Younger group (14–16)	Provide prompts or categories to help focus ideas. Use drawings as well as words.
Older group (25–35)	Add a feasibility discussion: which ideas are realistic and what would implementation require?



Promotion

Activities through which young people promote a cause or initiative in their community. These combine personal outreach with digital and event-based strategies

Activity 24

Promotion Conversation

Duration: 5–10 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, individual interaction

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Youth engagement, programme promotion, community outreach

Materials: Information about the opportunity, link or contact for sign-up

Objectives

- The peer educator generates interest in a civic programme or opportunity through personal conversation.
- The conversation feels authentic — a recommendation from a peer, not a sales pitch.

Step-by-Step Description

1. **(1 min) Start naturally** — Mention the opportunity in the context of a natural conversation.
2. **(2–3 min) Explain what it is** — Briefly describe the programme or activity. Focus on what is interesting.
3. **(2–3 min) Explain the benefits** — Why is it worth participating? What will the person gain?
4. **(1–2 min) Invite** — Ask if they would like to learn more or participate.
5. **(1 min) Provide next step** — Share a link, a date, or a contact.

Facilitation Guide

The difference between promotion and information is emphasis: promotion highlights benefits and invites action. But it should never feel pressured. If the person is not interested, respect that. Authenticity is everything — share your own experience if you have one.

Debrief Questions

- Did the person seem interested? What part resonated most?
- Did the conversation feel natural or forced?
- Did I provide a clear next step?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Between classes or during breaks. Keep under 3 minutes.

Context	Adaptation
Youth centre	When welcoming new visitors or during informal time.
Community	At events, gatherings, or in neighbourhood encounters.
Digital	Via direct message — same principles, adapted to written format. Keep it brief and personal.

Activity 25

Group Promotion Presentation

Duration: 10–15 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, small to medium group

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Youth engagement, programme promotion, public communication

Materials: Presentation materials (optional), programme information, link or contact

Objectives

- The peer educator presents a civic opportunity to a group in an engaging, motivating way.
- The presentation generates enthusiasm and provides a clear path to participation.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (1–2 min) Capture attention** — Open with a question, a personal story, or a surprising fact.
- 2. (3–4 min) Present the opportunity** — What is it? What happens? Who is it for?
- 3. (3–4 min) Explain the benefits** — What do participants gain? Use concrete examples.
- 4. (2–3 min) Share an example** — Describe what a participant actually does. Share your own experience if possible.
- 5. (1–2 min) Invite and provide next steps** — How do they sign up? Where do they go? When is the deadline?

Facilitation Guide

Energy matters. If you are excited about the opportunity, the group will feel it. Speak clearly, make eye contact, and keep the presentation focused. Do not read from notes. Allow 1–2 questions at the end.

Debrief Questions

- Did the group seem engaged? What part generated the most interest?
- Was the message clear and focused?
- How many people asked follow-up questions?
- What would I do differently next time?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Present during a class, assembly, or club meeting. Keep under 10 minutes.
Youth centre	Use as the opening or closing of a regular activity.
Community	Present at local events, festivals, or gatherings.
Younger group (14–16)	Emphasise fun, social, and engaging aspects. Use visual aids.
Older group (25–35)	Highlight learning, leadership, and professional development benefits.

Activity 26

Social Media Promotion

Duration: 15–20 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years, online reach

Level: Beginner

Civic theme: Digital engagement, youth programme promotion, online communication

Materials: Smartphone or computer, social media account, design tool (Canva or similar), images

Objectives

- The peer educator creates a visually appealing social media post that promotes a civic opportunity.
- The post drives interest and provides a clear action for viewers.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (2 min) Choose the opportunity** — What are you promoting? What is the key message?
- 2. (3–4 min) Write the message** — Short, benefit-focused. Answer: What is it? Why should I care? How do I participate?
- 3. (6–8 min) Create the visual** — Use a design tool or strong photograph. Make it eye-catching and readable on mobile.
- 4. (1–2 min) Publish** — Post on the platform where your audience is most active.
- 5. (2–3 min) Distribute** — Share with friends, groups, and relevant networks. Encourage sharing.

Facilitation Guide

Promotion posts should feel authentic, not institutional. Use your own voice. Include a clear call to action. Test the post on one person before publishing. Track engagement to learn what resonates.

Debrief Questions

- Would someone stop scrolling for this?
- Is the call to action clear?
- Does the visual match the message?
- How will I track whether this reached the right people?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Post on school social media or share in class groups.
Youth centre	Create a regular promotion calendar for ongoing programmes.
Community	Share on local community pages and neighbourhood groups.
Younger group (14–16)	Use templates and pre-designed elements. Focus on one clear message.
Older group (25–35)	Add strategy: audience targeting, hashtag research, engagement analysis.

Activity 27

Promotion Event

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Target group: 14–35 years and community members, interactive format

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Youth engagement, experiential promotion, civic participation

Materials: Activity materials (varies), visuals, programme information, registration links

Objectives

- The peer educator promotes a programme through an engaging, interactive experience — not just a presentation.
- Participants experience a taste of what the programme offers and are motivated to join.

Step-by-Step Description

- 1. (5–10 min) Prepare** — Set up materials and create an inviting space. Display visuals about the programme.
- 2. (3–4 min) Introduce** — Briefly present the opportunity: what it is, who it is for, why it matters.
- 3. (10–15 min) Interactive activity** — Run a short, engaging exercise that gives participants a taste of what the programme involves.
- 4. (3–4 min) Connect to the programme** — Explain how the activity they just experienced relates to the full programme.
- 5. (2–3 min) Invite and provide next steps** — How to register, when it starts, who to contact.

Facilitation Guide

The event should feel like an experience, not a recruitment pitch. Choose an activity that showcases the programme's best qualities. Keep energy high and the barrier to participation low. If possible, have a former participant share their experience.

Debrief Questions

- Did participants enjoy and engage with the activity?
- Did they understand the connection between the activity and the programme?
- How many expressed interest in joining?
- What would I change for the next event?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School	Run during a break, open day, or school event. Keep the activity under 10 minutes.
Youth centre	Hold regular “taster” events to attract new participants.
Community / outdoor	Set up at a market, festival, or community gathering. Use a portable, low-resource activity.
Younger group (14–16)	Use a game or creative activity. Emphasise fun.
Older group (25–35)	Highlight learning and leadership. Use a more analytical activity.



Extended Formats

Multi-day seminar formats that prepare a whole group to take on a participatory role over time — as elected class representatives, or as peer mentors for younger students. These are complete programmes with their own team, rhythm, and outputs, designed to leave something behind in the school.

Activity 28

The Student Council Seminar

Duration: 2 days (approx. 11 hours of programme, residential or non-residential)

Target group: 10–14 years, elected class representatives — 20–24 participants working in 4 small groups, accompanied by 2–3 teachers

Team: 1 seminar leader + 3 facilitators; among them one material officer, one technical officer, and one contact person for the accompanying teachers

Level: Intermediate

Civic theme: Representative mandate, school democracy, collective decision-making, turning concerns into projects

Materials: 4–5 material boxes (A3 and A4 paper in white and colour, scissors, adhesive tape, pencils, coloured pencils, markers, ballpoint pens); moderation cards; pin board; flipchart; role cards for the small groups and for the parliament session; name-badge stickers; a “What is the plan” poster listing the blocks of the day without exact times; project plan templates; optional hand puppet; participation certificates

Objectives

- Participants understand what their mandate as elected class representatives involves — representing the wishes and interests of the whole class, not only their own.
- Participants practise self-organised group work with distributed roles (moderation, timekeeping, speakers’ list, minutes) and can reuse it in their own class council.
- Participants transform the concerns collected in their groups into concrete project plans, and prioritise them together in a simulated student parliament session.

Step-by-Step Description

Day 1 — Mandate, trust, and collecting the issues

- 1. (75 min, before arrival) Team preparation** — Set up the rooms and a circle of chairs for each small group. Put up the “What is the plan” poster with the blocks of the day but without exact times. Check the technology, prepare name badges, and assign the three team functions (material, technology, contact with the teachers).
- 2. (15 min) Welcome and framing** — The team introduces itself briefly; each member names one thing that connects them to working with children. The seminar leader welcomes the group, presents the plan, and hands out the note on the duties of class representatives. With younger groups, a hand puppet can carry the welcome and return throughout the day.
- 3. (10 min) Warm-up** — “The wind blows for everyone who...”: one participant in the middle names a characteristic, and everyone it applies to stands up and changes places.

- 4. (15 min) Why co-determination matters** — A short motivational input (3–4 minutes): you are the voice of your classmates, you make sure everyone is heard, and co-determination means deciding together and carrying responsibility together. Then a first open round: what did you expect when you were elected?
- 5. (15 min) Getting to know each other** — Icebreaker bingo in the full group. The goal is not speed but trust: participants will spend the rest of the day working in small groups with people from other classes.
- 6. (15 min) Line-ups and group formation** — Three silent line-ups (alphabetically by first name, by height, by age), each followed by the question “Who is standing next to you now?” to learn names. Participants then count to four, which forms the four small groups.
- 7. (50 min) Small-group session** — Each group works in a separate room with one facilitator: speed dating (2 minutes per question, speakers change after 1 minute) with two free-time questions and one on why the work of class representatives matters; distribution of group roles with role cards (moderation, reader, timekeeper, volume watch, task manager — the minutes are taken by the accompanying adult, in consultation with the group); a moderated exchange on where you can have a say — in your family, with your friends, at school; then the current situation at school, collected on moderation cards under A) what works well, B) what does not work, C) project ideas; finally the group agrees its own rules for working together. The C cards are the raw material for Day 2 — keep them safe.
- 8. (75 min) Guided tour, lunch, and the teachers’ meeting** — Participants tour the venue and have lunch. In parallel, the team meets, and then meets the accompanying teachers to clarify their role for the seminar, organise the “secret friend” draw, and hand over the preparation of the evening mini-rally.
- 9. (10 min) Warm-up** — Evolution rock-paper-scissors: everyone starts as an egg and can only play against someone at the same stage; the winner moves up, the loser moves down. Egg, chicken, dinosaur, monkey, sage.
- 10. (40 min) How decisions are made at school** — A short input on the structure of the school bodies, so that everyone can see where the class council, the student council, and the school board sit in relation to each other. Then an input on what a class representative is and is not, followed by a quiz of 7–8 questions. The quiz is not a test: each question is a conversation starter for a concrete situation. Close with an open round for questions that are still unanswered.
- 11. (20 min) Movement break outdoors** — A tag game or any game the group chooses.
- 12. (20 min) Bringing the results together** — The moderation cards from all four groups are merged on one pin board under A, B, and C. Comment briefly on each cluster. Appreciate what is going well and make clear that not every school has this. Emphasise that the project ideas continue tomorrow.
- 13. (15 min) Closing the day** — A short summary and honest praise, anticipation for the next day, then the draw for the “secret friend”: everyone draws one name and keeps it to themselves, and is especially attentive to that person for the rest of the seminar.
- 14. (evening) Mini-rally** — In six groups, participants each prepare a five-minute game, challenge, or exercise at their own station. Half of each group runs the station while the other half visits the others, then they swap. Every participant both leads and takes part.

Day 2 — From ideas to decisions

15. (20 min) Opening plenary — Warm-up (pillow race in the circle), a short evaluation of the evening, and the outlook for the day: today we develop the projects and hold a real session.

16. (15 min) Choosing the projects — The selected ideas are hung around the room at some distance from each other. Participants think about their first and second choice, then go and stand at their first. With support from the teachers, the team helps balance the groups. Make clear that today's division holds for today only — anyone can join another project back at school.

17. (10 min) Framing the group work — Explain the project plan template and announce that roles for the afternoon session will be distributed. Each project group is numbered and assigned a room on a site plan on the pin board, with the project notes and the names next to it.

18. (30 min) Project work I — A short warm-up in the group, distribution of roles, then collecting ideas and filling in the plan: What do we want to do? How? Who is responsible? By when? What do we need? Who can help us?

19. (105 min) Project work II — Writing, drawing, making posters. Each group prepares two sentences that someone will read out or say freely in the session, and decides who presents — ideally two people taking turns. The aim of the presentation is to convince others at school to join in.

20. (15 min) Plenary and roles for the session — Announce the exhibition of results and the session. The following roles are needed: moderation, timekeeper, speakers' list, volume watch, vote counter, minutes, and preparation of the room and the snacks. Volunteers stay behind to receive their role cards; the others go on break.

21. (60 min) Lunch and role preparation — One or two facilitators prepare the participants who took on roles: what they say, when they say it, and what to do if it goes wrong. Meanwhile the remaining cards are transferred to the pin board.

22. (55 min) The student parliament session — The session is chaired by the participants: welcome and attendance list, a short seated warm-up, presentation of the agenda, explanation of how the speakers' list works, then each project group presents in two sentences and takes questions and comments. At the end, the group votes on which three projects start this school year; the rest are kept for later or tried out in individual classes. The order of implementation is recorded in the minutes.

23. (35 min) Closing — A last game, then five-finger feedback: thumb — that was great; index finger — this could be better; middle finger — I did not like that at all; ring finger — I am taking this with me; little finger — there was too little of this. Certificates are handed out with applause, followed by the farewell round.

Facilitation Guide

This format needs a team: one seminar leader who holds the whole and keeps contact with the teachers, plus one facilitator per small group. Keep the plan poster without exact times — you will lose ten minutes somewhere on the first day, and a poster with times turns that into a visible failure. Agree with the accompanying

teachers before the start what their role is: support and presence, not supervision or discipline. They are the ones who will still be there when the seminar is over.

The moderation cards are the spine of the seminar. Transfer them to the pin board during a break so that nothing is lost between the two days, and never rewrite a child's formulation into adult language. The session on Day 2 must be a real decision, not a performance: if the team has already decided which projects will happen, the participants will notice, and the whole seminar becomes the tokenism described in Chapter 1. Make sure the results are usable back at school — the three prioritised projects, the project plans, and the group rules go home with the delegation. And end earlier rather than later: a seminar that finishes with energy left over is remembered better than one that runs to the last minute.

Debrief Questions

- What does it mean to represent your class when their opinion is different from your own?
- Which part of the group work would you use in your next class council, and why?
- In the session, who had the most influence on the final decision — and what gave them that influence?
- Which of the ideas that were not chosen still deserves to happen, and how could it happen anyway?
- What is the first thing you will do at school next week, and who can help you?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (one day, 5–6 hours)	Keep the mandate input, one small-group round, and a shortened session. Drop the evening programme and the secret friend. Two rooms are enough: one plenary space and one for group work.
Youth centre (2 days, non-residential)	Keep the full structure but replace the evening rally with a longer afternoon block. Invite a member of the local youth council or a councillor to attend the session and answer questions afterwards.
Community / outdoor	Run the line-ups, the movement break, and the rally outside. Replace school issues in the A/B/C collection with local ones: playground, transport, public spaces, safety on the way to school.
Younger group (10–12)	Use the hand puppet, keep every input under four minutes, use the simple version of the quiz, and reduce each block to 5–6 items. Plan one movement break every 45 minutes.
Older group (14–18)	Drop the puppet and the secret friend. Use the more demanding quiz version, add a negotiation element (how to bring a proposal to the school board and what to do when it is refused), and let participants chair the session with minimal support.

Activity 29

The Buddy Seminar

Duration: 5 days (residential)

Target group: 14–18 years, 3–4 school delegations of 12–16 participants each (36–64 in total), working in 5 mixed workshop groups

Team: 1 seminar coordinator + 1 facilitator per workshop group + the accompanying teachers

Level: Advanced

Civic theme: Peer-to-peer mentoring, communication, conflict resolution, inclusion and diversity, group processes, project planning

Materials: Flipchart and metaplan paper, markers, moderation cards, an expectation-tree poster, printed emoji cards for random group division, conflict scenario cards, materials for a cooperation exercise (Froebel crane or river crossing), paper for the drawing-telephone game, mood cards, a handout on SMART goals, an online evaluation form, certificates of attendance

Objectives

- Participants can facilitate a session for a younger group — speak in front of a group, moderate a short discussion, and lead a game.
- Participants can plan and pitch a small project for the group they will mentor (a welcome day, a class party, a hiking day).
- Participants can de-escalate small conflicts between peers, and recognise the point at which a situation must be handed over to a teacher or a social pedagogue.
- Participants can name their own role and boundaries as a mentor, and give respectful, constructive feedback to people they are not friends with.

Step-by-Step Description

The rhythm of the week

Every day follows the same shape: breakfast, a plenary moderated by one of the workshop groups, a morning workshop block, lunch and a long break, an energizer with everyone, an afternoon workshop block, dinner, and an evening programme designed by the participants themselves. Two structures carry the week. The workshop groups are fixed and deliberately mixed across schools. The elected seminar speakers join the team meeting every day at noon, bringing their own and anonymous participant feedback into the planning.

Day 1 — Arrival and the profile of a good mentor

- 1. (45 min) Arrival and check-in** — Rooms, name badges, first informal contact with the team.
- 2. (90 min) Opening plenary** — Welcome, introduction of the seminar team, a getting-to-know-you game (line up alphabetically by name without speaking), presentation of the weekly schedule and the goal of the week,

house rules, and a charter of respect written jointly by the group. Then a creative house rally in small groups, so that participants learn the site and meet each other while moving.

3. (45 min) Organisational plenary — A short warm-up, then the practical matters: meals, rooms, phones, safety, quiet hours, and who to turn to with what.

4. (45 min) What makes a good mentor? — Each small group draws the outline of a body on metaplan paper and fills it in: head — what a mentor needs to know; belly — what attitudes they need; hands — what skills; the space around the figure — what conditions they need from outside. The posters are exhibited, everyone reads the others' and asks questions. Each participant then marks the competences they want to develop during the week.

5. (15 min) Division into workshop groups — Random division, for example with printed emoji cards. Say out loud that the mixing across schools is intentional.

6. (90 min) First workshop-group session — Names and pronouns, three hashtags each, expectations written on cards and hung on the expectation tree, presentation of the workshop plan with the expectations placed inside it, circle of commonalities, partner interviews, and an exchange on the mentoring programmes that already exist in their schools. Go through the feedback rules as preparation for the coming days, then nominate and elect the seminar speakers.

7. (90 min, evening) Getting-to-know-you evening — Icebreaker bingo and speed dating. Every game is named and briefly explained afterwards, so that participants can reuse it with their own mentees.

Day 2 — Communication

8. (30 min) Plenary moderated by workshop group 1 — Welcome, warm-up, review of the previous day, plan for today, planning of the evening programme, announcements, and a mini feedback method for the moderating group. The group prepares and rehearses this plenary with a facilitator the day before.

9. (150 min) Workshop: communication I — Entry method “Need for a contract” (Betzavta), followed by a full reflection: what happened, how did I feel during it, how do I feel about the process now (approx. 60 min). Then a 15-minute input on the four-sides model (Schulz von Thun): factual information, self-revelation, relationship, appeal. In small groups, participants invent a situation, distribute the four “sides”, and prepare a short sketch — or, as an alternative, visualise situations and typical sentences on posters.

10. (15 min) Energizer — A joint warm-up game with everyone.

11. (165 min) Workshop: communication II — The sketches are shown to the other groups, who guess which side of the message each person is playing and why; reflection follows. Then a drawing-telephone game (one person describes an image, the other draws it), with a reflection on how misunderstandings arise and who is responsible for them. Where the group is ready, add an input on moderation: how to stand in front of a group, how to use your voice, how to handle interruptions. Close with a feedback method for the day.

12. (90 min, evening) Evening programme designed by the participants.

Day 3 — Conflicts

13. (30 min) Plenary moderated by workshop group 2 — Same structure as the previous day.

14. (150 min) Workshop: conflicts I — A cooperation exercise (Froebel crane, or river crossing), followed by reflection: what happened, which roles emerged in the group, what annoyed you, what did you contribute, how do you feel now. Then silent written self-reflection on personal conflict behaviour. The group builds its own basics of dispute resolution: which rules would matter in a conflict conversation? Finally, paraphrasing practice in threes — one tells a story, one paraphrases, one observes.

15. (15 min) Energizer — A joint warm-up game with everyone.

16. (165 min) Workshop: conflicts II — Conflict scenarios are distributed; the parties and the mediator prepare their roles separately, either from a short profile or from a conflict they invent themselves. One after another, the groups play and try to resolve their conflict, followed by reflection: what happened, what worked, how did it feel in each role? Close with the limits of the mentor role — which conflicts you hand over, to whom, and how you tell the person that you are doing it. Day feedback.

17. (90 min, evening) Evening programme designed by the participants.

Day 4 — Projects

18. (30 min) Plenary moderated by workshop group 3 — Same structure.

19. (150 min) Workshop: project planning I — A team-building game of the facilitator's choice, then a first brainstorm of project ideas for the group they will mentor. Project groups form around one idea each. Input on SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) — each group formulates one SMART goal and presents it to the others. Input on the action plan: goal, steps, supporters, foreseeable problems. The groups then plan independently.

20. (15 min) Energizer — A joint warm-up game with everyone.

21. (165 min) Workshop: project planning II — Planning continues, then a short input on visualisation and on the elevator pitch. At the end of the day every project is pitched to the other groups, and feedback is given according to the rules agreed on Day 1.

22. (90 min, evening) Evening programme designed by the participants.

Day 5 — Presentation and reflection

23. (30 min) Plenary moderated by workshop group 4 — Same structure, plus the practical information for departure.

24. (150 min) Workshop: preparing the presentation — Each group decides what from the week should be shown to the others, then designs, prepares, and rehearses it with support from the team. Working under real time pressure is part of the learning; resist the urge to take over.

25. (30 min) Final preparations — Last run-through, room set-up, technology check.

26. (60 min) Presentation — All groups present one after another, moderated by one workshop group.

27. (60 min) Evaluation in the workshop groups — Tidy the room together, then reflect in a circle with mood cards, a target evaluation, or a “warm shower” round in which each person hears from the others what they contributed. A written questionnaire follows for everyone, then the certificates of attendance.

28. (30 min) Final round in school delegations — What do we take away from the week? What are our next steps? When exactly do we meet again, and what has to be ready by then? A short reflection in the large group, then the farewell.

29. (45 min, after departure) Team evaluation — The seminar team evaluates the week while it is still fresh, and writes down what the next group should get differently.

Facilitation Guide

Two things make or break this format. The first is that the participants really do carry parts of the programme: each workshop group moderates one morning plenary, and the evening programmes are theirs. Prepare and rehearse each plenary with the responsible group the day before — but do not rescue them the moment it wobbles. Wait a few seconds longer than is comfortable. A plenary that goes slightly wrong and is survived teaches more than one you quietly took over. The second is the seminar speakers: they join the team meeting every noon with their own and anonymous feedback, which means the programme has to remain changeable. If nothing ever changes as a result, they will stop bringing anything.

The conflict day only works if the reflection is protected. When time runs short, cut the exercise, never the reflection. Model closeness and distance yourself, because this is the behaviour participants will copy with twelve-year-olds: mixed groups, no exclusive favourites, and clear about your own boundaries. Say explicitly that speaking in front of a group is much harder for some people than for others, and build in ways to contribute that are not performances. Finally, close the loop with the schools: without an agreed date for the first meeting back home, the projects planned on Thursday stay on flipchart paper.

Debrief Questions

- Which of the competences you marked on the body outline on Day 1 did you actually practise this week — and which got no attention at all?
- When you moderated a plenary, what was harder than you expected?
- Where is the line between helping a twelve-year-old and taking the problem off their hands?
- Which conflict would you not handle yourself, and how would you tell the person that you are passing it on?
- What has to happen in the first two weeks of the school year for your project to actually start?

Adaptation Variants

Context	Adaptation
School (5 half-days, non-residential)	Keep the daily themes but cut each workshop block to two hours. Drop the evening programmes and replace them with one shared afternoon action. Communication and conflicts stay; the final presentation becomes a school assembly.
Youth centre (3 days, residential)	Merge communication and conflicts into one day and keep projects and presentation. Keep the participant-led plenaries — they are the core of the format, not decoration.
Community / outdoor	Run the cooperation exercises, the energizers, and the rally outdoors. Choose projects that serve the neighbourhood rather than the school, and invite one local partner to the final presentation.
Younger group (12–14)	Shorten every input to ten minutes, use predefined conflict scenarios instead of invented ones, and pair each participant-led plenary with a facilitator who stands visibly nearby.
Older group (18–25)	Use the format to train peer educators in youth organisations or student mentors at university. Add an input on safeguarding and on the boundaries of the volunteer role, and require every project to name a budget and an institutional contact person.

A Note on Adaptation

Every activity in this chapter is a starting point, not a finished product. The adaptation variants are suggestions — not the only options. You know your group, your context, and your resources better than any manual can. Use Chapter 3 as your guide for making intentional, principled adaptations. And remember: the debrief is never optional, regardless of how short the activity is. It is the moment where experience becomes learning.

CHAPTER 6

Sustainability and Impact

A project ends. Funding runs out. The team moves on. But what happens to the young people who found their voice, to communities that began opening to dialogue, to connections that were just beginning to grow?

This chapter is not a conclusion — it is a guide for what comes next. Sustainability is not something you plan for at the end. It is something you build into the DNA of your work from day one. The strategies here will help ensure that the energy, knowledge, and networks created through your civic education work continue to grow long after the formal project closes.

How do you ensure that a spark becomes a sustainable flame?

1. How to Continue Activities After the Project Ends

Many successful civic education projects share a common story: months of meaningful activities, engaged youth, real impact — and then silence. Not because interest disappears, but because no one planned what happens when funding ends.

Sustainability is not an afterthought. It is a mindset that shapes every decision from day one — which partners you choose, how you train youth, what structures you build, and how you document your work.

Key principle

Do not ask “How do we maintain this?” at the end. Ask “What are we building so that it outlives us?” from the beginning.

Here are six concrete strategies to ensure civic education activities continue beyond the life of any single project:

Strategy 1 — Integration into Existing Structures

The most reliable path to sustainability is embedding activities in organizations and institutions that will continue operating regardless of project funding. This means building partnerships not just for the current project, but for the long term.

Partner type	How integration works	Example
Local youth centre	The center adopts monthly civic workshops as part of its regular program	Youth-facilitated sessions become a standing offering each semester
School	Activities integrated into elective modules or extracurricular programs	A civic education module co-created with teachers becomes part of the school's annual calendar
Local NGO	The organization includes civic activities in its own project proposals	A partner NGO continues to facilitate the consultation methodology with its own groups
Municipality	Youth participation activities become part of the local youth strategy	The local council allocates a small annual budget for youth-led civic events

The key is to start these conversations early. Invite potential institutional partners to observe your activities, involve them in planning, and make it easy for them to see the value of continuing.

Strategy 2 — Cascade Training of New Peer Educators

The peer-to-peer methodology described in Chapter 4 is inherently sustainable. Every young person you train as a peer educator has the potential to train others. This creates a cascade effect that can extend far beyond the original project team.

A practical approach is to structure the training program so that, by the end of a project cycle, experienced peer educators are already co-facilitating training for the next generation:

- In the first phase, adults train the initial group of peer educators.
- In the second phase, these peer educators facilitate activities with their peers (with adult support).
- In the third phase, the most experienced peer educators begin co-training new peer educators alongside adults.

Important

Cascade training only works if quality is maintained. Each new generation of peer educators needs proper training, practice, and feedback — not just a quick briefing. Scaling without quality control dilutes impact.

Strategy 3 — Partnerships with Schools for Space and Access

Schools are where young people spend most of their time — and they can become powerful allies for sustainability, not by transforming non-formal education into formal lessons, but by opening doors outside of class hours. A partnership with a school can be as simple as this: after classes end, the school provides a room where young people trained in peer-to-peer facilitation can continue to lead civic education activities for their peers.

This type of partnership works because it costs the school very little (a room, a few hours a week), aligns with the school's educational mission, and gives peer educators a stable, accessible space to practice what they have learned.

To build this partnership, start by identifying a teacher or school counselor who understands the value of youth-led initiatives. Invite school staff to observe a youth-led session. Then propose a simple arrangement with minimal commitment: one afternoon a week, a room, young facilitators who take responsibility.

Strategy 4 — Alumni Network and Community of Practice

Young people who have been part of your program carry with them knowledge, skills, and motivation. An alumni network gives them a reason and structure to stay connected, share experiences, and continue to contribute.

A functioning alumni network needs more than a chat group. It needs regular touchpoints (quarterly meetings, annual gatherings), shared resources (activity templates, facilitation guides, opportunities), and a sense of purpose.

Level	Description	Commitment
Connected	Stay informed, participate occasionally	Follow updates, participate in 1–2 events per year

Level	Description	Commitment
Active	Facilitate activities regularly or mentor new members	Monthly engagement, lead at least one activity per quarter
Leader	Coordinate local or thematic groups, represent the network externally	Ongoing coordination role, participate in strategic planning

Strategy 5 — Documentation and Open Access

Everything you create — a manual, activity guides, training materials, evaluation tools — becomes a sustainability asset when properly documented and made freely available.

Publish resources under open access licenses. Distribute them on platforms where other practitioners can find them. Write about your experience in professional networks. Present results at conferences and in working groups. Every organization that adapts your methodology to its context extends the life and impact of your work.

Key Takeaway

Sustainability does not mean the survival of an organization. It means spreading ideas, skills, and practices to more people and places than you could ever reach alone. The goal is not to keep a project alive — it is to make the project unnecessary because its impact has become self-sustaining.

Strategy 6 — Apply for New Funding Based on Updated Needs

The end of a project does not mean the need has disappeared — often it means you now understand the need better than at the beginning. Use this knowledge. Before the current project closes, conduct a fresh consultation with young people in your network to identify what has changed, what new needs have emerged, and what they want to do next.

This updated needs assessment becomes the foundation for the next funding application. Programs like Erasmus+ (KA1, KA2, KA3), the European Solidarity Corps, national youth funds, and local grant schemes all support civic education and youth participation initiatives.

- In the final months of the project, organize a participatory consultation where young people reflect on what they have gained and what gaps remain.
- Identify what funding programs align with the needs that have emerged.
- Involve young people in shaping the new project idea — their ownership increases both the quality of the proposal and the likelihood they will remain engaged.
- Use documented impact (activity reports, testimonies, data) as evidence of your capacity and results.

Key Perspective

The end of a project is the best time to start the next one. You have a trained team, an active network, institutional relationships, and real data about what works. Don't let that momentum fade — channel it into a new application that builds on what you've learned.

The Role of Recognition

An often-overlooked factor in sustainability is formal recognition of what young people have learned and contributed. Certificates, portfolios, recommendation letters, and digital badges serve a dual purpose: they validate the young person's growth and provide tangible evidence that motivates continued engagement.

Consider implementing a recognition framework that acknowledges different levels of participation and contribution. When young people can point to concrete recognition of their civic involvement, they are more likely to continue and inspire others to join.

2. Building a Network of Active Young People

A network of active young people is the living legacy of any participation project. It is not an email list or a social media group — it is an ecosystem of relationships built around a shared commitment to civic engagement.

What makes a network more than a list of names?

What a Functioning Network Looks Like

A truly functioning youth network has four essential characteristics:

Regular and structured communication. Members know when and how to contact each other. There are predictable rhythms — a monthly online call, a quarterly newsletter, an annual face-to-face meeting — that create consistency and reliability.

Shared resources. The network serves as a library and toolkit. Members share activity plans, facilitation tips, contacts, and opportunities.

Member-initiated projects. The network does not just maintain existing activities — it generates new ones. Members propose ideas, form teams, and launch initiatives that respond to needs in their own communities. This is the strongest sign that a network is alive.

Mutual support. Civic engagement is not always easy. Young people face resistance, burnout, and discouragement. A strong network provides emotional and practical support — someone who understands what you're going through because they've been there too.

Practical Tools for Building and Maintaining the Network

Tool	Purpose	How it's used
Communication Platform	Informal daily/weekly communication	Create channels by topic or region. Keep active with resources and celebrations
Monthly Online Meeting	Updates, sharing, coordination	Rotate facilitation among members. Structured but informal (45–60 min)
Quarterly In-Person Meeting	Deep connection, planning	Combine working sessions with social time. Rotate locations
Annual event	Network cohesion, recognition	2–3 days: training, sharing, and vision for the next year
Peer mentoring system	Support for new members	Experienced members are paired with newcomers
Internal newsletter	Information Sharing	Monthly digest of opportunities, resources, member stories

The mentoring dimension

One of the most powerful elements of a youth network is a structured mentoring system. When experienced members mentor newcomers, three things happen simultaneously: new members receive personalized support and integrate faster, experienced members deepen their own skills by teaching others, and the network develops leaders from within rather than relying on external coordination.

Note on Network Maintenance

Networks do not maintain themselves. They require intentional effort — someone (or a rotating team) who sends reminders, organizes calls, updates the resource library, and reaches out to quiet members. Allocate time and energy to network maintenance as you would for any activity.

Growing the Network

A healthy network grows not through recruitment campaigns but through reputation. When the network creates authentic value for its members — connections, skills, opportunities, belonging — members naturally invite others.

- Invite participants from your activities to join as observers or guests before making a full commitment.
- Host open events where non-members can experience the culture of the network.
- Share stories about the impact of members publicly — on social media, at conferences, in community events.
- Create a clear and welcoming process for new members to join.

3. Connecting with Institutions and Decision-Makers

Youth participation becomes truly transformative when it influences the decisions that affect their lives. This requires building bridges between the energy of your network and the structures where decisions are made — local councils, schools, public agencies, and decision-makers.

Key Perspective

Connecting with institutions does not mean asking permission to participate. It means demonstrating value, building trust, and creating formal channels through which young people's voices shape real decisions.

Why This Connection Matters

Without institutional connection, even the most active youth network risks operating in a bubble — young people talk to each other about change, but the people with the power to implement change never hear them. Institutional connection closes that gap.

The EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 recognizes this explicitly. Youth Goal #9 — Space and Participation for All — calls for strengthening young people's democratic participation at all levels of decision-making, ensuring they can influence processes from agenda-setting through implementation and evaluation.

A step-by-step process

Building relationships with institutions requires time and intentionality. Here is a practical process:

Step 1 — Mapping local actors. Before reaching out to anyone, understand who makes decisions relevant to young people in your community.

Actor	Role	Relevance to Youth
Mayor/ Local Council	Local policy and budget decisions	Youth strategy, public spaces, program funding
School Inspectorate	Local educational policy	Curriculum, extracurricular programmes, student participation
Youth Department	Youth policies and services	Youth centers, programs, consultations
Influential Local NGOs	Advocacy, service provision	Partnerships, joint projects, voice amplification
Media	Public visibility	Coverage of youth initiatives, public accountability

Step 2 — Document your impact. Institutions respond to evidence. Before approaching decision-makers, prepare a concise impact portfolio that includes the number of young people involved, descriptions of activities and their results, participant testimonies, and concrete examples of community impact.

Step 3 — First contact. The first meeting should be informal and informational — not a funding request or approval request. Present your network and work. Show results. Ask about the institution's priorities for young people. Look for alignment.

Important

Young people should be present and actively participate in these meetings from the start. The adult's role is to facilitate access — to open the door, to make the introduction — not to speak on behalf of young people. When decision-makers hear directly from engaged young people, the impact is much more powerful.

Step 4 — Present Results Publicly. Organize a public event where young people present their work and proposals. Invite institutional actors, media, and community members. This gives young people practice in public communication, creates visibility, and demonstrates to institutions that young people are serious and competent partners.

Step 5 — Engage in Formal Participation Mechanisms. Many communities already have formal structures for youth participation — they are simply underused or unknown:

- Local youth councils — advisory bodies where young people provide input on local policies.
- Public consultations — formal processes where citizens can submit views on policy proposals, budgets, or plans.
- Structured dialogue platforms — initiatives at national or European level (such as the EU Youth Dialogue) that connect youth priorities with the decision-making process.
- School governance bodies — student representatives on school councils or education committees.

Where these mechanisms do not exist, your network can advocate for their creation — which is in itself a powerful act of civic participation.

Building Long-Term Institutional Relationships

- **Consistency** — Regular communication, even brief updates, keeps you on the institution's radar.
- **Professionalism** — Honor your commitments, follow up after meetings, and be reliable.
- **Reciprocitate** — Look for ways your network can support institutional objectives, not just the reverse.
- **Patience** — Institutional change is slow. Some doors will not open on the first knock. Persistence and professionalism pay off over time.

Key principle

Do not present institutions as obstacles. Most local decision-makers are open to collaboration when the approach is professional, evidence-based, and clearly benefits the community. Approach them as potential allies, not gatekeepers.

4. Scaling and Multiplying Results

The peer-to-peer methodology at the heart of this manual is, by its nature, scalable. Every young person trained as a peer educator becomes a potential multiplier — someone who can reach others, inspire them, and train them. This section explores how to harness this potential deliberately and responsibly.

The Cascade Model

The Cascade Model is simple in concept and powerful in practice: a trained peer educator facilitates sessions for 15–20 young people, of whom 3–5 become peer educators themselves, each of whom in turn reaches 15–20 more young people — and the cycle continues.

Starting point	After 1 cycle	After 2 cycles	After 3 cycles
5 peer educators	75–100 young people reached	15–25 new peer educators	225–500 young people
20 peer educators	300–400 young people reached	60–100 new peer educators	900–2,000 young people

These figures are estimates based on the experience of national peer education programs. Actual reach depends on the quality of training, existing support structures, and local context. But they illustrate a fundamental point: peer-to-peer education scales geometrically, not linearly.

The Ripple Effect

Imagine throwing a stone into still water. The first ripple is your initial group of peer educators. The second ripple is the young people they reach. The third ripple is the broader community touched by those young people's actions — families, schools, neighborhoods, institutions. Each ripple is larger than the one before, and each carries the energy of the original impact outward.

Visual Impact Map

A powerful way to understand and communicate scaling impact is through an impact map — a visual representation of where your work has reached and how it has grown:

Level	Description	Multiplication
Level 1	Coordinators	Core team forms the first generation
Peer educators (Gen 1)	Trained directly by the team	Each facilitates in their own community
Communities	Young people reached through local activities, school workshops, events	Active participants become candidates for the new generation
Peer educators (Gen 2)	Trained by Gen 1 with adult support	Extend impact to new communities and schools

Level	Description	Multiplication
New communities	New schools, youth groups, spaces...	The cycle continues and amplifies

Conditions for Successful Scaling

Scaling is not automatic. It requires deliberate planning and continuous attention to quality. The following conditions must be met:

Rigorous documentation of the methodology. This manual is a step in that direction. Every activity, every training process, every facilitation technique must be documented clearly enough that someone who was not part of the original project can use it effectively.

Available training resources. New peer educators need access to the same quality of training as the first generation. This means training materials, facilitation guides, and practice opportunities that are easily accessible.

A support network that maintains quality. The mentoring system described in section 2 of this chapter is essential for scaling. Without experienced peers guiding newcomers, facilitation quality can decline with each generation.

Partnerships with organizations capable of replication. Scaling beyond your immediate area requires partners — other NGOs, youth centers, schools, or networks — who can adopt and adapt the methodology for their own contexts.

A Word of Caution

Growth without quality is not scaling — it is dilution. If the experience of the 200th young person is significantly weaker than the 20th, you have not multiplied impact — you have spread it too thin. Always prioritize the quality of engagement over the quantity of reach. It is better to deeply engage 100 young people who become active citizens than to superficially touch 1,000 who forget the experience in a week.

Monitoring and Communicating Impact

To scale efficiently, you must understand what works and what does not. This requires a simple but consistent system for monitoring impact:

- **For each activity:** Record the number of young people reached, the type of activity, key results, and a learning point.
- **For each quarter:** Compile the data into a summary that shows trends — which types of activities are most effective, where participation is growing.
- **For each year:** Create an annual impact presentation showing cumulative reach, network growth, and qualitative stories of change.

This data serves a dual purpose: it helps you improve your own practice and provides the evidence you need to convince partners and institutions to support your scaling efforts.

Closing — A Final Thought

This manual began with a question: what does it take for young people to become active citizens? Over six chapters, we have explored the context of youth participation, the importance of working where young people are, how to adapt interventions to diverse contexts, how to prepare young people for peer-to-peer education, concrete civic engagement activities, and now — how to make it all last.

But a manual is only a starting point. It is a toolkit, not a detailed plan. The real work happens in youth centers, classrooms, community halls, parks, and online spaces where young people gather, ask, discuss, create, and act.

Final Thought

Participation is not an event. It is a process, a practice, and a right. This manual is a starting point — a toolkit for building the spaces where young people aged 14 to 35 grow as active citizens, find their voice, and use it to shape the world around them. The methodology is designed to spread: every peer educator you train can train others, every activity you adapt can inspire new ones, every connection you build with an institution can open doors for others. The next step belongs to you — to you and the young people you will work with. Make it count.

