



**Digital  
Citizenship**

## Active participation Course



Readings | Exercises | Case studies | Quizzes



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# Strategic partnership to develop open educational resources for teaching digital citizenship

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## DIGCIT

D13 – Digital Citizenship “Active participation” Course

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<b>Abstract</b>	<p>Active participation refers to the involvement of people in their society, by taking initiatives based on their needs. Being an active citizen shows that we are not passive and we do care about the society we live in. Furthermore, it shows that we do care about others.</p> <p>Active participation is a symbol of independence and democracy. Being involved in such activities enable people to take their own decisions about their lives and to be heard.</p> <p>Active participation represents one of our rights and as long as we have the chance of participating, we should definitely take it. There are so many ways that give us the freedom of participating in our everyday life and active participation is the main one.</p>
<b>Keywords</b>	Model course; digital citizenship; course plan; active participation; digital world; motivation; digitalization; types of participation; democracy; digital voting; advocacy; youth policy; online support; community; education; reflection; online participation

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## Introduction

Active participation is the genuine possibility to shape the environment and determine the rules affecting oneself. Active participation empowers individuals in the activities and relationships of everyday life leading to them living as independently as possible. Also, it helps individuals to increase autonomy, self-confidence and self-esteem. What is more, they can face easier challenges that occur in the digital world. Online active participation can take many forms including communication, online communities, as well as equal distribution of power and influence among the various online users.

Youth participation implies youngsters' empowerment to be an active part of decision-making and it is achieved by providing them access to decision-makers and adequate information, support from adults they rely on and opportunities.

As it was mentioned before, the participation process requires communication, continuous and holistic information dissemination, and ongoing dialogue among youth and adults. It is based on respect towards children's opinions and points of view and their ability to express themselves in line with their age, maturity, social and economic background and skills. Participation is closely related to people sharing their ideas, thinking about themselves, expressing opinions effectively, planning, prioritizing and participating in decision-making to make a change.

That being said, this course is divided into two parts: a theoretical and a practical one. At the beginning of each module, there is a short description of the topic. Some sophisticated aspects of our day to day lives are explained with a common vocabulary, so there are no difficulties in understanding them. Even in the theoretical parts, some reflections will guide your learning. In the end, some exercises will make your learning practical and meaningful. And, why not, as long as the topic raises your interest, there are also some recommendations about where to find out more information about it.

In this course, you will find more information about:

- ❖ The digital society we live in;
- ❖ What you can do in your youth;
- ❖ What is a democratic system and its benefits in a digital world;
- ❖ How to support and implement your ideas;
- ❖ In what ways the online world has an impact on the real one.

In other words, youth participation implies that all young people enjoy the right to be heard, express their own opinion, and influence decisions affecting them directly. As such, youth participation enriches democratic processes and guarantees the upbringing and moulding of future conscious generations actively involved in the lives of their communities.

## 1. Module 1 – Digital citizens in a digital world

Upon completing this module, you will be able to:

- Be aware of their own needs;
- Understand the needs of society;
- Understand the idea of digital society.

### Motivation of doing

The key thing to learning something is to have a real interest in the subject, so choose something that you find really interesting. The next step is to keep up with your enthusiasm throughout the course - and to put time aside in your busy schedule. Note that you don't need to read everything - if you don't have the time, be selective and don't worry if you miss some information. Finally, don't be scared or nervous to share your opinion - you'll find it motivating to have people responding to or agreeing with your comments.

There are some tips and tricks that can make your learning easier (FutureLand, 2015, p. 36):



### Get support and ask for help

Establish a good relationship with the teacher and other students. This can help keep you motivated and improve your confidence.

If the problem is the understanding or the difficulty of the work, please please please, do ask for help from your tutor or co-learners without embarrassment. You are a student and that implies that you are not expected to know that which you strive to learn.

## Don't be scared to have fun

Play. Just as children play with toys, play with statistics, literature, geometry, topology, networks, or any other topic; this frees you from an unconscious fear of failure.

The better the engine, the more efficient your learning is. If spiced with additional motivation, like planning trips or jobs, the result is absolutely great. The learning is fast, pleasant and practically non-stop!

## Reflect on what you've learnt

Students working on their own need some self-awareness, some way of keeping an internal monitor on their approach. Ask yourself: "Why do I think that? Why do I feel like that about this area or thought?"

Studying new subjects is like going to the gym. It improves your overall feeling of wellbeing and also your mental health. Learning will make you think about the world differently.

Just think



about it!

*Have you ever followed these principles?*

### What are our needs

Before starting, it is important to understand the concept of *needs* (Farrux, 2021, pp. 18-19):

- 🏠 "Demand for something in daily life; need, necessity, need."
- 🏠 "Needs determine the main direction of human activity, to meet them all the physical and spiritual strength of the person is mobilized"
- 🏠 The need is related to human activity, arises in the process of his activity, is satisfied, and at the same time the next need, therefore, becomes the cause of activity"

Human needs can be distinguished as the needs for:

- self-activation (realization of one's own potential);
- others and self-esteem (to be important and worthy);
- love and belonging (unification and acceptance);
- security (longevity and stability);



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- physiological needs.

The classification of needs is based on the above concepts, which equate their needs with the means of their satisfaction, so, first, material needs are "food, clothing, housing, etc."; secondly, they describe the spiritual needs that arise as a result of the development of society as "education, training, recreation, treatment and other services", and thirdly, as "social needs mainly express the purposeful activities of people" (Farrux, 2021, p. 18).



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

However, "higher" needs are no less important than the "simplest" needs, the person first meets the need for survival and security, and then - the need for respect and belonging. Later, in adulthood, to maximize his candidacy, he must develop the need to develop his personal potential.

Just think



about it!

What are your needs?

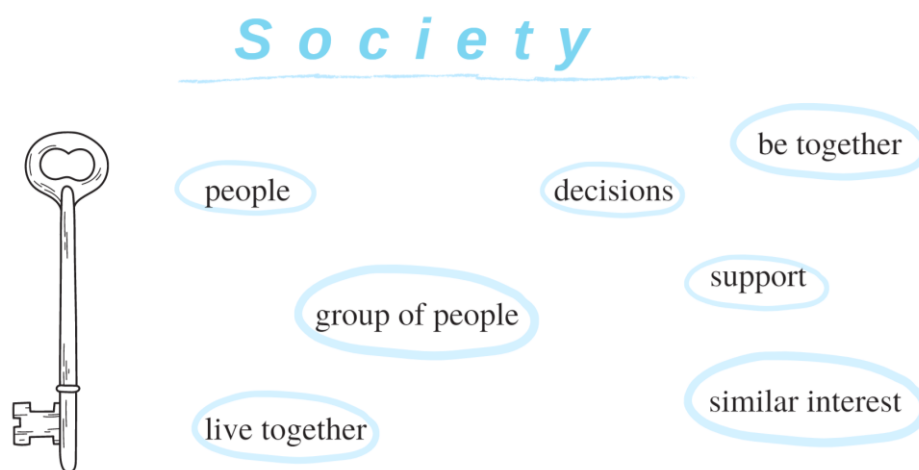
## What society needs

Human interests are formed over the years and are reflected in the interests of society (the people).

Cambridge Dictionary explains that *society* is:

- ☞ a large group of people who live together in an organized way, making decisions about how to do things and sharing the work that needs to be done. All the people in a country, or in several similar countries, can be referred to as a society;
- ☞ the state of being together with other people;
- ☞ an organization in which people who share similar interests;
- ☞ people considered as a group, or a group of people who live together in a particular social system
- ☞ an organization for people who have special interests or who want to support particular activities
- ☞ people in general, living together in an organized way, making decisions about how to do things, and sharing the work that needs to be done.

The keywords for society are:



As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev noted (Farrux, 2021, p. 18):

*To ensure the interests of man, first of all, it is necessary to communicate with people to know their concerns, dreams, problems and needs.*

In carrying out these tasks, special attention should be paid to the satisfaction of human interests and needs. It is known that need is an objective necessity (need) of the subject` (person, organization, social group, community) who feels the necessity for something to support its vital activities. Necessities are the source of its social activism.

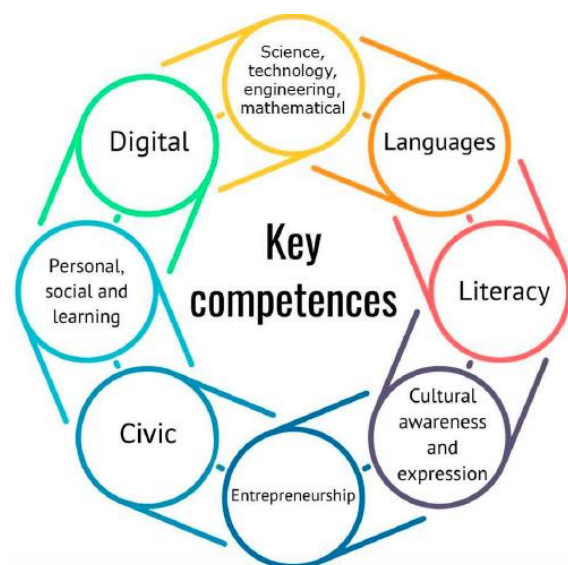
People differ from each other according to age, gender, nationality, religion, level of education, occupation, marital status, and living environment. In this regard, depending on who needs the needs, they are divided into individual (individual), group (corporate), regional, and community (nationwide) needs.

That being said, needs can be met individually and collectively. This largely depends on the nature of the need and the nature of the objects that satisfy it. Some items and services can only be shared. These include, for example, educational facilities, hospitals, leisure facilities, sports games and entertainment.

Furthermore, society wants all its citizens to have a series of 8 competences. It means they have

- ▣ knowledge – know *what*;
- ▣ skills – know-*how*;
- ▣ attitude – know *why*.

As it can be seen, one of the needs of society consists of citizens with digital competences.



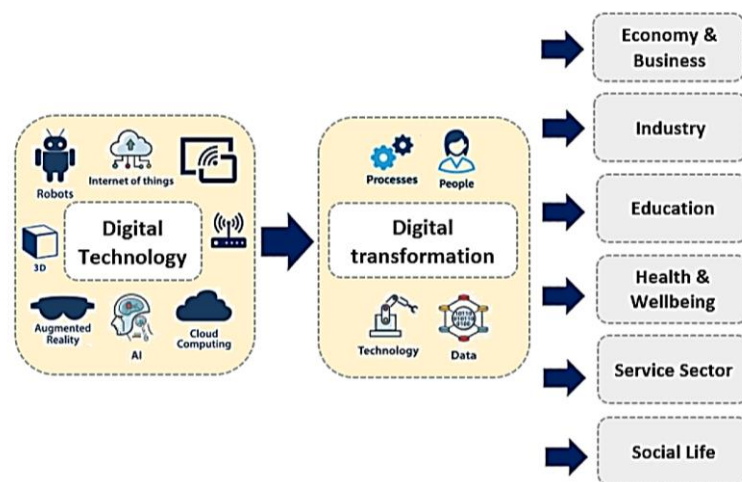
8 key competencies

## How society is changing – digitalization

Digital transformation is due to the use of rapidly developing digital technologies and their accelerated impact on society. Such transformation takes into account the changes that have already happened, happening and will happen in the future. The processes of digital transformation are affecting many areas of human activity. They are felt in all areas where there is mechanization and automation of data processing.

Modern digital technologies, services and systems are extremely important for social development. One of the key issues for the implementation of digital transformation is changes in the way of thinking and requirements for the competencies of workers in the industry. First of all, it is connected to people's understanding of digital transformation processes and their ability to use digital technologies effectively (Morze & Strutyńska, 2021, p. 1).

There are some areas in which fundamental changes take place due to the digital transformation:



Source (Morze & Strutyńska, 2021, p. 6)

<b>49%</b> Telepresence (Skype, Google Hangouts, etc.)	<b>35%</b> Nanotechnologies
<b>49%</b> Digital currency	<b>33%</b> Robots (hardware)
<b>46%</b> Artificial intelligence	<b>29%</b> Telematics
<b>41%</b> Robotic process automation (software)	<b>28%</b> Wearables
<b>39%</b> Sharing economy platforms like Uber	

Source (Morze & Strutyńska, 2021, p. 6)

The main results of digital transformation include new products, services, policies, markets, environment and development of the digital society as a whole. Here is presented the impact of technology that is the basis for the digital transformation of the economy, production, and social life. There is written the percentage of respondents answering “high” or “very high” impact.

Just think



about it!

ONLINE FORUM. We do need digital skills in our digital society.

Furthermore, we do need citizens who know how to participate in the digital world.

## Exercise 1: What makes you a proper citizen

### Objective:

- Understand what soft skills are
- Have a wider vision of their soft skills
- Reflect on their skills

**Duration:** 25 min

**Tools:** device with an Internet connection, paper, pen

**Methods:** brainstorming, exercise, reflection

**Description of the exercise:** The trainer explains the concept of “soft skills”. With the help of the trainer, the students give examples of soft skills (brainstorming). After that, the students are asked to answer the question from the given website.

### Tasks:

- Go to <https://www.bizlibrary.com/soft-skills-assessment/>
- Answer the questions
- Read the explanations

**Debriefing:** Take a piece of paper and think about your results and yourself! *Are the results correct for you? Did you expect these results? Did you know those things about yourself? What things you can improve?*

**Lessons learned:** “No matter who you are, no matter what you did, no matter where you've come from, you can always change, become a better version of yourself.” (- Madonna Ciccone)

**Recommendation:** Information for the trainer:

Transferable skills, also known as life skills, soft skills or socio-emotional skills, allow young people to become agile, adaptive learners and citizens equipped to navigate personal, academic, social and economic challenges. They include problem-solving, negotiation, self-management, empathy and communication. They support crisis-affected young people to cope with trauma and build resilience in the face of adversity. Transferable skills work alongside knowledge and values to connect, reinforce, and develop other skills and build further knowledge.

Examples of skills (UNICEF, 2020, p. 64):

Transferable skills	Related life skills
<b>ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP</b>	
<i>Participation</i>	Dialogue, active listening, analytical and critical thinking, self-confidence, agency
<i>Empathy</i>	Understanding others, caring for others, identifying abusive and non-abusive behaviours, altruistic behaviour, conflict management, conflict resolution, understanding and managing emotions
<i>Respect for diversity</i>	Active tolerance, social interaction, self-esteem, self-control, analytical thinking, active listening
<b>LEARNING</b>	
<i>Creativity</i>	Innovative thinking, divergent thinking, articulating ideas, analysis and synthesis; agency
<i>Critical thinking</i>	Questioning, interpreting information, synthesizing, listening; self-protection, social responsibility
<i>Problem-solving</i>	Action planning, goal setting, leadership skills, risk-taking, safety skills, ethical reasoning
<b>EMPLOYABILITY</b>	
<i>Productivity</i>	Work hard, produce results
<i>Cooperation</i>	Teamwork to achieve common goals,
<i>Negotiation</i>	Influencing and leadership, cooperation, customer relationship, career planning, effective communication
<i>Decision-making</i>	Action planning, goal setting, leadership skills, risk-taking, safety skills, ethical reasoning
<b>PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT</b>	
<i>Accountability</i>	Ensure sharing and feedback
<i>Self-management</i>	Self-efficacy, goal setting, life planning, autonomy, agency, self-help, motivation
<i>Resilience</i>	Grit, steadfastness, stress control, adaptability, self-efficacy, self-development, agency, emotional and behavioural regulation, adaptation to adversity, emergency preparedness
<i>Communication</i>	Relationship management, self-realization, self-presentation, active listening, two-way empathic communication, appropriate assertiveness

Supplementary reading

“Soft skills”: A phrase in search of meaning:

[https://www.hansrajcollege.ac.in/hCPanel/uploads/elearning/elearning\\_document/soft\\_skills.pdf](https://www.hansrajcollege.ac.in/hCPanel/uploads/elearning/elearning_document/soft_skills.pdf)

## 2. Module 2 – Make your youth remarkable

Upon completing this module, you will be able to:

- Define youth participation;
- Identify different types of participation in the online and offline environment
- Be aware of their position in helping youth problems in society.

### What is youth participation

*Youth* (ages of 15-24) is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence.

Let's get together

from this:

If the world was guided by youth, it would be a better place.  
They are the ones who are  
the most alive, idealistic, and energetic.

*Sadhguru*

to this:

I can guide the world and it is a better place.  
I'm the one who is the  
most alive,  
idealistic  
and  
energetic.



*Participation* means to be involved, to have tasks and to share and take over responsibility. It means to have access and to be included. Participation and active citizenship are about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities, so as to contribute to building a better society.

In the Council of Europe, *youth participation* is perceived as “the right of young people to be included and to assume duties and responsibilities in daily life at a local level as well as the right to influence the processes of their lives democratically”.

Youth participation is important, but questions arise about its most fundamental phenomena. What is participation, who are the participants, what do they do, and with what outcomes? When we say that someone participates, is it about “community service,” “social action,” or “civic engagement”? Lacking agreement on its basic content, a field of practice or subject of study will be



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limited. The question is not whether there is consensus or conflict, but rather whether there is a measure of mutual understanding about what to discuss.

*Youth participation* strengthens personal and social development, provides expertise for children and youth programs and services, and promotes a more democratic society, but questions arise about its most fundamental phenomena. Lacking agreement on its basic content, however, youth participation as a field of practice and subject of study will be limited (Checkoway, 2011, p. 1).

Youth participation is important, because when young people participate, it draws upon their expertise, enables them to exercise their rights as citizens, and contributes to a more democratic society. It also promotes their personal development and provides them with substantive knowledge and practical skills.

Young people are now seen as active players in organizations or in community life; they are seen as partners with lots of potential, talents and strengths. *The youth is the hope of our future- Jose Rizal. Partnership is about doing things together. It is about listening to everyone's voice and taking different ideas seriously*". In practice, this means that aims, objectives, roles, responsibilities, decisions, etc., are negotiated and agreed upon, and that young people and adults know precisely.

Just think



about it!

Be the generation that makes history!

### Types of participation



- Increase the workplace readiness
- Increase employability of young people
- Eliminate poverty
- Stabilise the economic situation in a society.



- relates to authorities and governments, public policies
- exercising power
- influence on the distribution of resources at different levels.



- Involvement in the life of a local community
- Facing local problems and challenges
- Peaceful and supportive social interactions



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→ E.g.: cultural and sporting events and youth-led community dialogue.



→ Expressing through arts

→ E.g.: visual arts, music, film, dancing, drawing etc.

But, practically, what could be examples of youth participation in your community?

There are two ways of participating: engagement in the decision-making process in a system of representative institutions at local, national and international levels and engagement in actions and activities in civil society (like cultural or social action or activities in the field of non-formal education and information).

Here are some examples:

- ↻ Voluntary work;
- ↻ Being active in an organization;
- ↻ Participate in non-formal education;
- ↻ Peer education;
- ↻ Youth councils;
- ↻ Taking part in elections (vote and/or be elected).

### Why be an active citizen

Youth participation can bring very concrete and visible benefits, not only to young people themselves but also to the organizations/institutions and communities they are involved in.

For you	For others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Be heard;</li> <li>✓ Be taken seriously;</li> <li>✓ Express your opinion;</li> <li>✓ Make decisions;</li> <li>✓ Acquire new knowledge;</li> <li>✓ Develop new skills and attitudes;</li> <li>✓ Develop your strengths;</li> <li>✓ Learn by doing;</li> <li>✓ Build better relationships with others;</li> <li>✓ Benefit from adults' experiences;</li> <li>✓ Public and civic engagement;</li> <li>✓ Challenge yourself.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Positive change in society;</li> <li>✓ Break stereotypes about youth;</li> <li>✓ Create partnership;</li> <li>✓ Give reliable information about young people's needs;</li> <li>✓ Teach adults how to work efficiently with young people;</li> <li>✓ Impact different groups at a local level;</li> <li>✓ Resolve local problems;</li> <li>✓ Give modern perspectives;</li> <li>✓ Give fresh ideas;</li> <li>✓ Break traditional thinking.</li> </ul>





Just think



about it!

What are some ways to prepare young people for active participation in a diverse democracy?

## Challenges and obstacles

Challenges	Why?
<p><b>Stereotypes about young people</b></p> <p><i>youth seen as problems</i></p>	<p>The media often portray young people, especially young people of colour, as perpetrators of crime, drug takers, school dropouts, or other problems of society. With these images in mind, many adults think of young people as problems.</p> <p>Adults may be unaccustomed to youth voices being positioned as authoritative and, as a result, are unwilling to listen to their demands for change. This is particularly true in the context of the medical profession, which may have the assumption that it is not the place of youth—or any layperson—to provide oversight of health services and systems.</p>
<p><b>High rates of unemployment</b></p>	<p>The inequality of opportunities in education and training. Fewer opportunities for some categories of young people.</p>
<p><b>Gender</b></p>	<p>Certain jobs are considered suitable only for men or only for women.</p>
<p><b>Lack of interest in politics</b></p>	<p>The problem is that daily life seems to be very far from national politics and it is hard to understand for youth how their involvement can influence it.</p>
<p><b>Recognition of all forms of youth participation</b></p>	<p>Traditional methods of participation (political parties, unions, confessional groups) are often not attractive. Traditional youth councils, youth associations and youth organizations do not necessarily represent young people; members often use their activities in an organization as a step in their career planning.</p>
<p><b>Inclusion</b></p>	<p>While all youth experience challenges to social accountability participation due to power, hierarchy, and norms, youth who experience systematic exclusion and discrimination based on class, caste, ethnicity, religion, educational level, economic status, sexuality, and gender identity face additional barriers. One interviewee pointed out that youth from indigenous communities in his country have a deep mistrust of state authorities, which prevents them from engaging in</p>



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	social accountability
<b>Mobilizing and organizing</b>	In some contexts, particularly where the use of coordinating mechanisms and digital applications such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger are not available to youth, mobilization is a challenge. Adding youth's lack of control over financial and other resources to this means that youth often rely on adults and their funding to be invited and funded to participate in social accountability.
<b>Limited access to the data and the internet</b>	Low penetration of mobile phone usage, lack of access to data, and clinics without free Wi-Fi were all noted as challenges to youth participation in digital social accountability initiatives.  Someone explains: "There were big issues with access to data. Mobile data in sub-Saharan Africa is ridiculously expensive and that's a major barrier for a number of the youth and for the health care facility staff, not just the youth who are struggling" (SaveTheChildren, The power of youth voices, 2021, p. 17)
<b>Turnover among youth participants</b>	The perennial challenge of high rates of turnover among youth participants and leaders has been documented extensively in FP/RH (Family planning and Reproductive Health) programs generally.
<b>Language</b>	The language surrounding accountability causes confusion and, in some contexts, prevents youth from participating. One interviewee pointed out that "accountability" is not a word that is widely understood; thus, it needs to be explained to youth and to communities before it is used. Further, there are negative connotations attached to the word "accountability," particularly in places where government oversight is a reality in all areas of life. In one African country, the use of the word is avoided altogether and youth are called "youth data reporters," even though their role is related to accountability  Someone explains: "Reframing accountability away from something that sounds really technical and alienating. Breaking it down and framing it around supporting young people to understand that what they're already doing is already accountability." (SaveTheChildren, The power of youth voices, 2021, p. 17)

Just think



about it!

ONLINE FORUM How can we stop these challenges?



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## Examples of youth participation in Europe

### What are Youth Participation Activities?

Youth Participation Activities are non-formal learning activities revolving around the active participation of young people. Such activities aim to enable young people to experience exchanges, cooperation, cultural and civic action. Supported activities should help the participants strengthen their personal, social, citizenship and digital Erasmus+ 3 competences and become active European citizens.

Activities outside formal education and training that encourage, foster and facilitate young people's participation in Europe's democratic life at local, regional, national and European levels.

**How long does it take?** 3 to 24 months

### Who can participate?

Any eligible participating organisation established in a Programme Country can be the applicant.

A participating organisation can be:

- 🏠 a non-profit organisation, association, NGO; European Youth NGO; a public body at local, regional, national level; a social enterprise; a profit-making body active in Corporate Social Responsibility;
- 🏠 an informal group of young people (13 and 30 years old).

### Where to apply?

To the National Agency of the country in which the applicant organisation is established.

### What is Youth Department?

The Youth Department is part of the Directorate of Democratic Participation within the Directorate General of Democracy ("DGII") of the Council of Europe. The Department elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels.

It provides funding and educational support for international youth activities aiming to promote youth citizenship, youth mobility and the values of human rights, democracy and cultural pluralism. It seeks to bring together and disseminate expertise and knowledge about the life situations, aspirations and ways of expression of young Europeans.



### Tips and tricks

On the website, there is a section called:  
Go and check it!

**CALLS FOR PARTICIPANTS**



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### What is Erasmus+?

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe



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### Who can participate?

Open to many individuals and organisations, although eligibility varies from one action to another and from one country to another.

### Tips and tricks

If you want to take part in Erasmus+, but don't know where to go, there are some Facebook groups that can help you.

#### Erasmus Internships, Erasmus+

Public group · 39.4K members

#### Erasmus+ Romania

Public group · 7.9K members

#### Erasmus+ partner search (the original !)

Public group · 52.0K members



### What is AIESEC?

AIESEC is a global platform for young people to explore and develop their leadership potential. It is a non-political, independent, not-for-profit organisation run by students and recent graduates of institutions of higher education. They are a global network of young leaders under the age of 30 who strive to better themselves and the communities around them. They are passionate about world issues, leadership development, cultural understanding and experiential learning. The organisation spans 126 countries and territories and every aspect of AIESEC's operations are managed by students and recent graduates. Its members are interested in world issues, leadership and management. AIESEC does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion or national/social origin.

### Who can participate?

Anyone.

Any **organisation** in your town!

Just go and be a volunteer!



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## Exercise 2: Ladder of youth participation

### Objectives:

- to introduce the concept of the ladder of participation;
- to provide a framework to assess the degree of young people's participation in resolving problems they are currently facing;
- to collect ideas for criteria of participatory projects.

**Duration:** 30 min

**Tools:** pieces of paper, pen

**Methods:** reflection,

**Description of the exercise:** The concept of the ladder of participation is explained to you. Then, you are asked to think about a real problem that affects your society and it has a huge impact on you. Based on the ladder of participation, where do you situate yourself regarding your implications in resolving this problem? Draw yourself there. Think: in fact, where would you like to be? Draw a circle and yourself in there. How can you get there?

### Tasks:

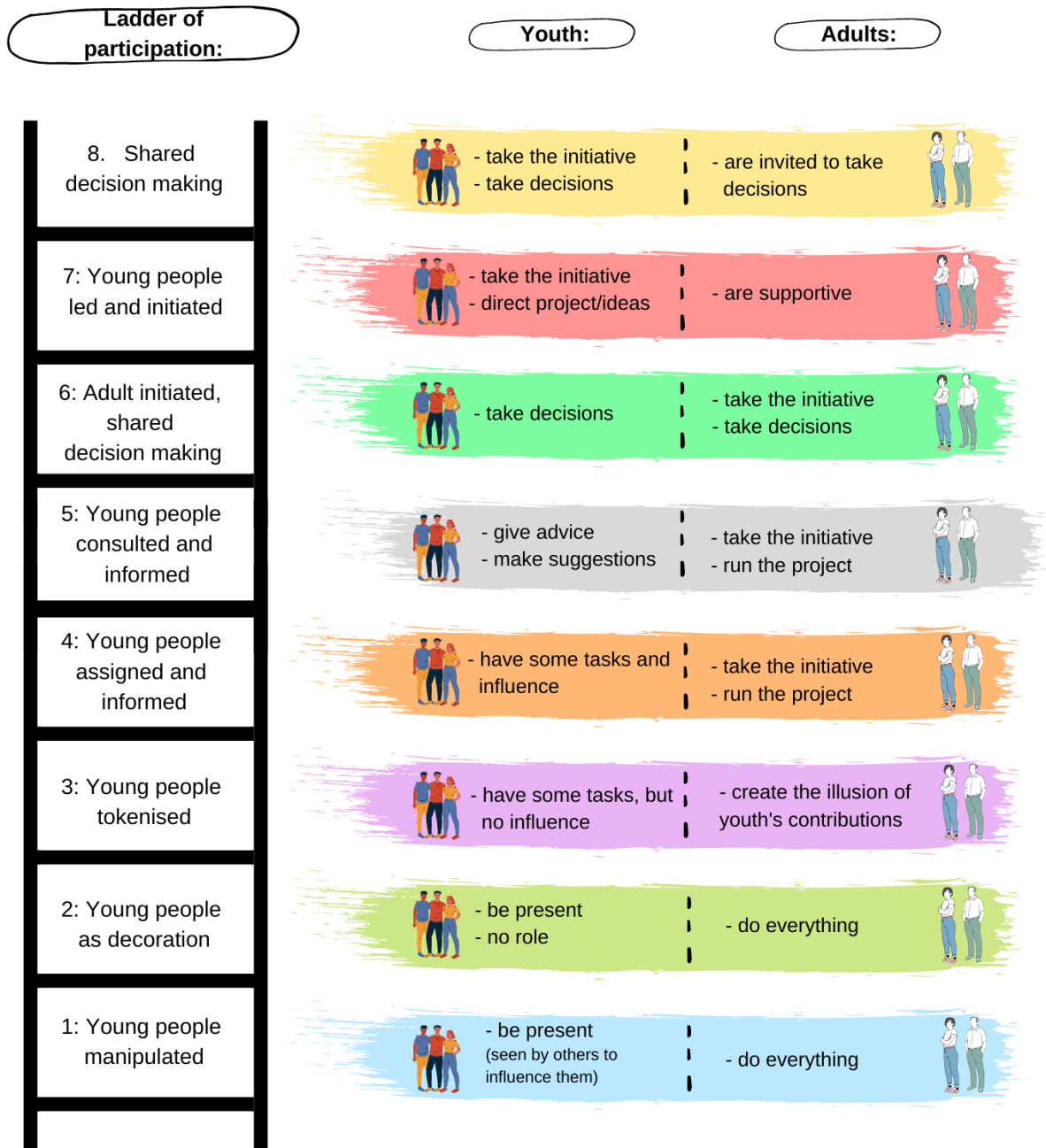
- Draw the ladder of participation;
- Find a problem that affects your society, especially your life;
- Draw yourself on the ladder of participation thinking where you situate yourself in resolving this problem;
- Draw yourself in a circle on the ladder of participation thinking where would you like to be in resolving this problem;
- Answer to this question: How can I get there?

**Debriefing:** Participants are asked the following questions:

1. Do you think it is realistic to make this change?
2. How can you do it?
3. What are your limitations?
4. How can you face them?

**Lessons learned:** We can be the change and impact positively our society.

**Recommendation:** Ask the students to be honest.



Supplementary reading

Adolescent and youth engagement (2018):

[https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13378/pdf/aye\\_toolkit\\_-\\_english.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13378/pdf/aye_toolkit_-_english.pdf)

### 3. Module 3 – The freedom of voting

Upon completing this module, you will be able to:

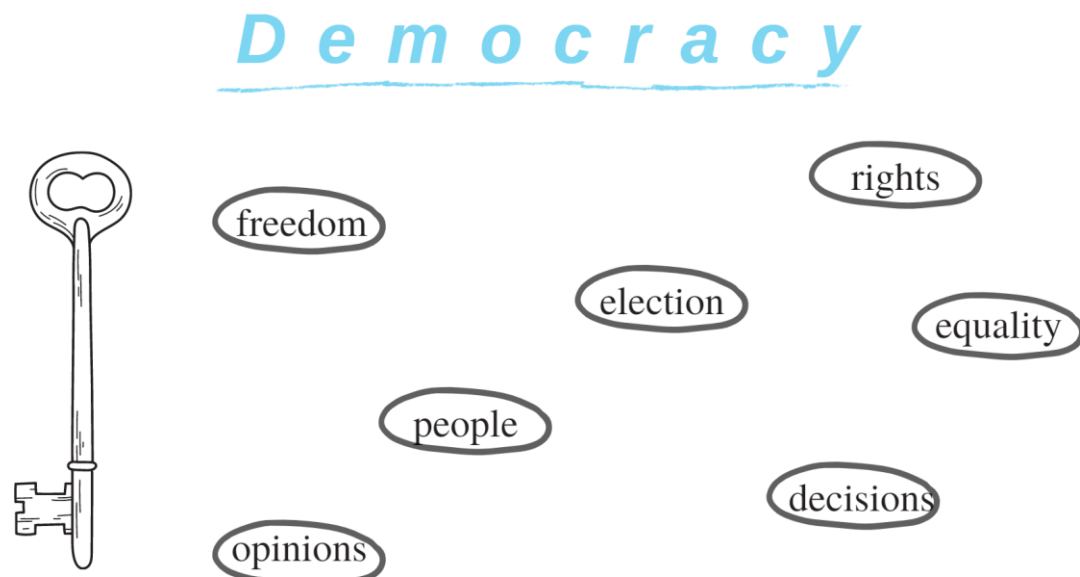
- Understand the characteristics of democracy;
- Comprehend the voting system;
- Use the digital voting system in real life.

#### What is democracy

Cambridge Dictionary explains that *democracy* is:

- ↳ the belief in freedom and equality between people, or a system of government based on this belief, in which power is either held by elected representatives or directly by the people themselves;
- ↳ a country in which power is held by elected representatives;
- ↳ a situation, system, or organization in which everyone has equal rights and opportunities, and can help make decisions;
- ↳ the belief that everyone in a country has the right to express their opinions, and that power should be held by people who are elected or a system of government based on this belief;
- ↳ a country in which power is held by people who are elected.

As it can be seen, the keywords are:



In other words, a democracy is a governing system in which the residents of a country choose their leaders by voting in an election. The word is also used in businesses or groups where every member of the group has a say in making decisions. If a decision is made without people's input, we say that decision was "undemocratic".

Democracy is based on the core principles of popular sovereignty and collective decision-making, while the different definitions of democracy – procedural, liberal and social – are derived from the degree to which they incorporate sets of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social, cultural and minority rights.



Democracy promises to let the people rule (Yascha, 2018, p. 182). But this immediately raises a deceptively simple question:

*Who, exactly, are the people?*

## Our rights in a democratic system

It is well known that human rights can be seen as the consequence of the struggles of people against oppression and injustice, successive generations of people have fought for distinct 'generations of rights' with civil and political rights comprising the first generation. The first declaration of rights was adopted by the International Save the Children Union in Geneva in 1923, and endorsed by the League of Nations General Assembly in 1924, as the World Child Welfare Charter. The Declaration of the Rights of the Child was proclaimed by the United Nations in 1959 and was the basis for the Convention of the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989.

Human rights have grown in breadth and depth since the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such that today there are as many as 58 different rights delineated in the various international treaties for the protection of human rights. Moreover, Europe, the Americas and Africa have established regional systems for the protection of human rights, while the Arab league is in the early stages of doing the same. Asia, which itself covers a diverse set of countries in South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia, has yet to embark on this path (Landman, 2013, p. 41).

The most commonly accepted categorization of human rights is (Landman, 2013, p. 33):

Categories of human rights	
<i>Civil and political</i>	protect the 'personhood' of individuals and their ability to participate in the public activities of their countries
<i>Economic</i>	provide individuals with access to economic resources, social opportunities for growth and the enjoyment of their distinct ways of life, as well as protection from the arbitrary loss of these rights
<i>Social</i>	
<i>Cultural</i>	
<i>Solidarity</i>	seek to guarantee access to public goods like development and the environment for each individual

Furthermore, participation is a fundamental right of citizenship because it is a way of learning what it means to be a citizen.

Article 12 states that children have the right to participate in decision-making processes relevant to their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard, especially in schools or communities. It affirms that children are full-fledged persons who have the right to express their views





in all matters affecting them and requires that those views be heard and given due weight. It recognizes the potential of children to share perspectives and to participate as citizens and actors of change. This right is related to the right that children should have the necessary information about options that exist and the consequences of such options so that they can make informed and free decisions. Providing information enables children to gain skills, confidence and maturity in expressing views and influencing decisions.

In addition, Article 15 states that children have the right to create and join associations and to assemble peacefully. Both imply opportunities to express political opinions, engage in political processes and participate in decision-making. Both are critical to the development of a democratic society and the participation of children in the realization of their rights (Checkoway, 2011, p. 2).

However, there are some questions that we should ask ourselves:

Just think



about it!

ONLINE FORUM *Are democracies better at protecting all human rights or just some of them?*

*Our lives are increasingly digital, so should there be a right to access the internet?*

## How Europe sees youth nowadays

Socioeconomic exclusion and democratic exclusion go hand in hand. Youth struggling with disadvantages are generally fewer active citizens and have less trust in institutions. Europe cannot afford wasted talent, social exclusion or disengagement among its youth. Young people should not only be architects of their own lives but also contribute to positive change in society. For young people to reap the full benefits of EU actions, these need to reflect their aspirations, creativity and talents, and respond to their needs. In turn, young people enrich the EU's ambitions: according to the EU Youth Report, this generation is the best educated ever and especially skilled in using Information and Communication Technologies and social media (EU, 2018, p. 3).

Furthermore, the report also shows that (EC, 2018, pp. 4-5):

- Young people are educated to an increasingly higher level.
- More young people are finding employment.
- There has been some improvement in the social inclusion of young Europeans.
- Young people appear less prone to risky health behaviours.
- Young Europeans are demonstrating an increasing interest in politics and are taking advantage of the new methods of participation offered by modern technology.
- Participation in voluntary activities shows an exceptional expansion.

Significant improvements have been made in many aspects of young people's lives in recent years, marking a turning point in many European countries

It is up to the public authorities to bridge the gap between young people's eagerness to express their opinions and the methods and structures which society offers. Failure to do so might fuel the 'citizenship' deficit, or even encourage protest (EU, A new impetus for European youth, 2001, p. 10).



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## Digital voting

As it was mentioned before, democracy is a governing system in which the residents of a country choose their leaders by voting in an election. The word is also used in businesses or groups where every member of the group has a say in making decisions. If a decision is made without people's input, we say that decision was "undemocratic".

In most countries, voting includes heading to a polling station whether that's putting a cross in a box. People go behind a curtain, somewhere so that nobody can see how they vote. It is considered that voting can be complicated and time-consuming. This is why many have discussed about taking voting online to make engaging in democracy quicker and easier.

Estonia is the only country to take it super seriously, using online i-voting in every election for the last 16 years. Estonia first tried i-voting in 2005 for local municipal elections. I-voting refers to the ability to vote via the Internet without having to go to a polling station. It went so well, that in 2007 Estonia became the first country in the world to use internet voting for a national parliamentary election and they continue to use internet voting for every election since then.



So, the question is: How is it working?

The whole process is enabled by Estonia's ID Cards which are known as smart cards. Basically, as well as being a normal ID card, each ID also carries a unique digital signature. In 2007 people had to have a special ID card reader which you plug into your computer before voting. Then, they insert their ID card and launch a particular piece of software. After that, they can cast their votes online. Now the process is easier by introducing a mobile app called Mobile IT. It allows citizens to vote online without the special card reading, simply just using their phones. Internet voting also allows citizens to change their minds. Online voting is open 10 days before Election Day and it is open until 4 days before. So, the first vote can be changed, but the last one counts.

In 2007, only 3,4% of votes were cast online, the other preferences being pen and paper. Even so, Estonia needs to trust online voting more and more and in the most recent parliamentary elections (March 2019), 44% of votes were cast electronically.

Just think



about it!

*Why do you think some people still prefer the traditional way of voting?*

On the other hand, more and more countries are moving towards i-voting. For example, in Norway, it was used for some local elections and in Switzerland for referenda. Also, in the US they have some electronic voting machines.



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### Exercise 3: Online votes are still considered votes?

#### Objective:

- Identify at least 1 country which has an online voting system;
- Understand the effects of online voting in society;
- Create an opinion about online votes.

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Tools:** Internet connection, pen, piece of paper

**Methods:** research, comparisons, debate

**Description of the exercise:** During this exercise, you will search for a country that is using an online voting system. You have to find information about when it was implemented and how many people (percentages) are using it. After that, find at least 3 advantages and 3 disadvantages of online voting.

#### Tasks:

- Use the Internet and find a country with an online voting system (such as Estonia and i-voting);
- Answer to the question: How many people are using this type of voting? (e.g.: in Estonia from 3.4% to 44%)
- Write at least 3 advantages of online voting;
- Write at least 3 disadvantages of online voting.

Example:

Country:

People using the online voting system: ... %

Advantages	Disadvantages
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

**Debriefing:** Debate - someone starts by saying an advantage. Someone else says a disadvantage contesting that advantage. Someone else says a disadvantage to contest the previous argument. The activity continues in the same way until there are no more arguments (pros-cons).

**Lessons learned:** Finding the answer to the question: "Is the online voting system better than the traditional way?"

**Recommendation:** No matter the voting system (online or traditional) be ready to go and vote. It is your freedom of choice and you have the right to do it!

Supplementary reading

What are the universal human rights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDgIVseTkuE>

Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

[https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr\\_translations/eng.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr_translations/eng.pdf)



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## 4. Module 4 – Advocacy: networking for advocacy strategy

Upon completing this module, you will be able to:

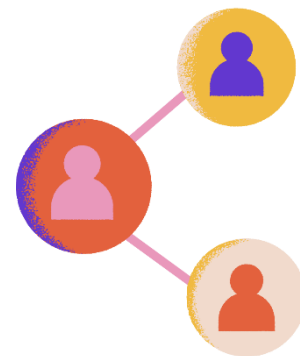
- Understand the concept of networking;
- Comprehend the characteristics of advocacy;
- Complete an advocacy plan.

### What is a networking

*Networking* – creating and maintaining contacts with those who support the same aims and who agree to work on achieving common goals (Have your say, 2015, p. 94).

In fact, almost everybody is a part of some network or another. For example, we network at work, at school, in social life or in sports activities.

Furthermore, even social media represents networking. Over three billion people around the world report that they are active users of social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Recent reports show that this number has been steadily increasing each year. (Saiphoo, Halevi, & Vahedi, 2019, p. 2)



Just think



about it!

What are the keywords for describing networking?

### What is advocacy

*Advocacy* – influencing different aspects of youth policy, such as the public perception of certain issues or the attitudes of policymakers. It can also aim at supporting specific solutions or even stopping certain proposals. Advocacy can be used at various levels – institutional, local, regional, national and international. Advocacy is based on networking, so it is based on people with common goals (Have your say, 2015, p. 94).

Advocacy is about:



Source: An advocacy kit



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As expressions of participation, young people are organizing groups for social and political action, planning programs of their choice and advocating their interests in the community.

For example, an advocacy initiative about education would sound like this:

Example	Your turn
<p><b>We</b> a youth group representing out-of-school girls are calling for change to investment in informal education for young mothers</p> <p><b>because</b> the right to education is in our constitution, and research shows more girls in school means better health and wealth</p> <p><b>we know</b> informal education is the number one priority for the girls in our community and we have the biggest impact on the investment</p> <p><b>we can</b> do it because we have the plans in place, the networks, experience and support to deliver what is needed</p> <p><b>make a difference</b> by supporting this initiative and helping make a real change.</p>	<p><b>We</b> ..... ..... .....</p> <p><b>because</b> ..... ..... .....</p> <p><b>we know</b> ..... ..... .....</p> <p><b>we can</b> ..... ..... .....</p> <p><b>make a difference</b> ..... ..... .....</p>

## Understand youth policy

Cambridge Dictionary explains that *policy* is:

- 🔖 a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that have been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party;
- 🔖 a document showing an agreement you have made with an insurance company;
- 🔖 a set of ideas or a plan for action followed by a business, a government, a political party, or a group of people.

Just think



about it!

e.g.: a national education policy might include a commitment to increased investment in primary schools, which will guide how education develops in that country.

What are the keywords for describing policy?

Some policies will become law, for example, 'all children under 16 years old must attend school'.

The process of policymaking includes the following steps (Edleston, Smith, Crone, Bah, & Laurie, 2014, p. 81):

Agenda settings	Policy design	Decision-making	Implementing	Monitor&Evaluate
Ideas for new policies are presented.	Options for new policy are explored and a design is outlined.	Finding agreement or compromise among everyone who needs to be involved in the decision.	Putting the policy into action.	Reviewing how the policy is being implemented and making changes if necessary.



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Although this step-by-step process looks quite simple, the way that policy is developed and influenced can be complex. This can make planning an advocacy strategy challenging though it can also be a good thing because it means there are potentially lots of different ways of influencing policy.

## Steps in advocacy



### 1 Decide your advocacy objective

- ✓ You should have a clearer understanding of the problem, as well as possible objectives for your advocacy.
- ✓ The network needs to agree on what issue to support to promote a policy change.

*What is the change you want to see?*



### 3 How can you influence them?

- ✓ Knowing WHO and WHAT influences your target is crucial to effective advocacy

*What do they care about?*

*What do they do?*

*Who do they know?*

*Where do they get information from?*



### 5 How?

- ✓ You'll need to decide on the actions you want to undertake.

*What might be the easiest things to do?*

*What skills and contacts does your group already have?*

*What do you know has worked in the past?*



### 2 Who do you need to influence?

- ✓ Decide who you will be trying to influence

*What would we need them to do?*

*How much impact could they have on achieving our objective?*

*How easily can we influence them?*



### 4 What is your message?

- ✓ Link to an existing interest – use the information you've gathered from 'What influences them'.

Appeal to the:



*Why should they care?*



*What can change?*

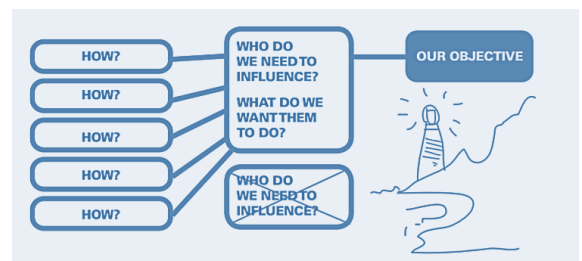


*What can they do?*



### 6 What is your plan?

- ✓ Start planning
- ✓ Write it down





### Monitor your success

- ✓ Regularly gathering information on the positive (+) and negative (-) impacts of your advocacy campaign.

#### How?

- Surveys • Evaluation forms • Statistics • Impressions or observations from people involved • Consultations • Audits • The media • Internet and social media.

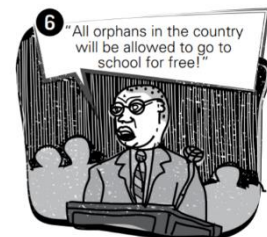
### Examples of the advocacy process

Salathiel's story from Burundi (Edleston, Smith, Crone, Bah, & Laurie, 2014, p. 16)

### Securing education for Burundian orphans

After the Arusha peace agreements, security conditions improved and schools started to open doors for children. However, the school fees made them inaccessible to orphans, refugees and others whose families had been affected by the war.

“Like some of my friends, I had just lost both my parents during the civil war and I could not afford to pay for school materials and fees. I was suspended from class, with the worry that failure to pay fees for the trimester would result in expulsion.”

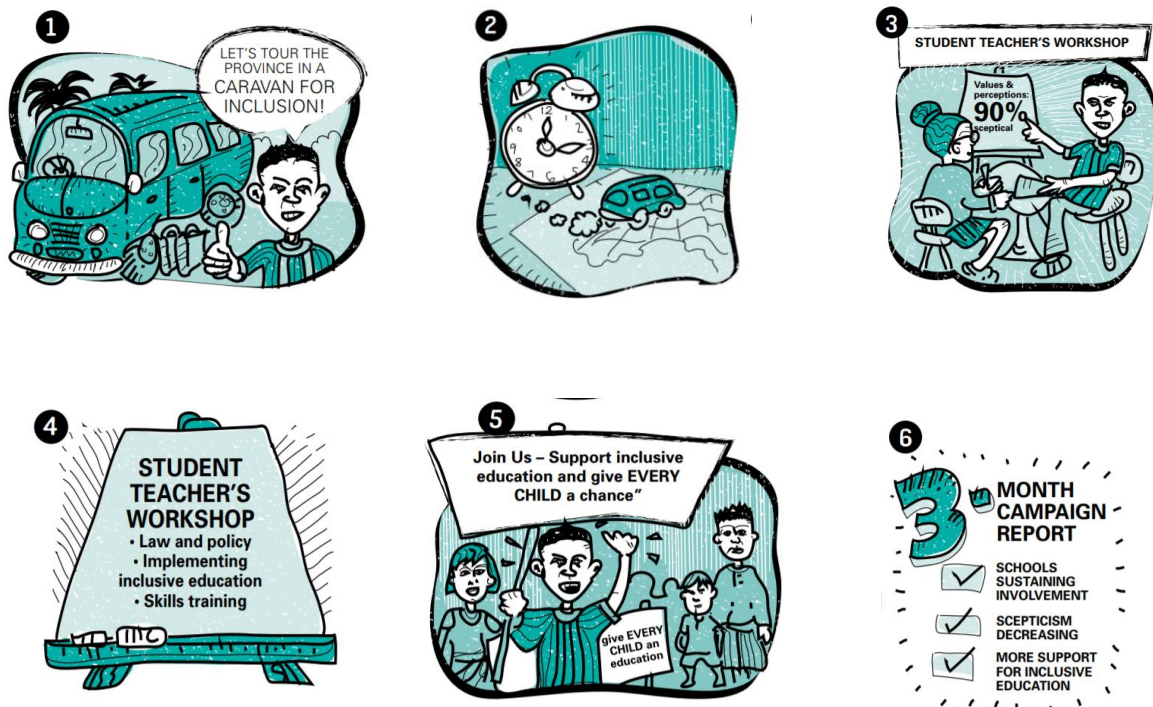


Source: An advocacy kit

Rolando's story from the Philippines (Edleston, Smith, Crone, Bah, & Laurie, 2014, p. 78)

## Caravan for inclusion

Children with special educational needs were not able to claim their right to education. Inclusive education – education that integrates children and young people with special needs into mainstream education – had been identified as a priority in policy, but it was far from a reality in practice. There was no support or capacity amongst teachers and it was not a formal requirement. We made the strategic decision to go for an ‘early intervention’, targeting student teachers to change their hearts and minds and to build their capacity. “The push for inclusive education came from young people themselves. They were being denied their rights and we wanted to support them... We had no money but we made use of everything we could.”



Source: An advocacy kit

### Exercise 4: Our advocacy plan

#### Objective:

- Decide an advocacy objective;
- Complete the advocacy plan

**Duration:** 30 min

**Tools:** paper sheet (advocacy plan), pen

**Methods:** exercise, discussion

**Description of the exercise:** Based on the information you received previously about the steps of advocacy, complete the sheet.



**Tasks:**

- Think of a problem you would like to resolve
- Based on the information about “steps of advocacy”, complete the advocacy plan, trying to resolve your problem

**Debriefing:** Every student is asked to present his objective and the main method of making it possible.

**Lessons learned:** We do have power!

**Recommendation:** The trainer should give any supplementary information (the example) if needed. If it is too difficult, everyone can decide and complete only one advocacy plan.

Our advocacy plan			
<b>What needs to change?</b> <b>Our objective</b>  Tip: Choose one objective. Use words like 'improve, decrease or increase' to describe the change			
<b>Who do we need to influence?</b> <b>What do we need them to do?</b>  Tip: Identify 2 or 3 things that would help achieve the objective		1.	
		2.	
		3.	
	<b>To do</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
<b>How can we influence them?</b>          Tip: In the boxes, write down the detailed specific actions you will carry out to influence the person or organization			
<b>Managing risks</b>          Tip: Consider the risks of your advocacy plan, what can you do to manage them?			
<b>Monitoring success</b>          Tip: Think about how you will know if you're being successful and identify some actions you can carry out.			

SAMPLE



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**EXAMPLE:**

Our advocacy plan			
<b>What needs to change? Our objective</b>  Tip: Choose one objective. Use words like 'improve, decrease or increase' to describe the change	Widen access to higher education and decrease the numbers of students dropping out by lowering fees in our university		
<b>Who do we need to influence? What do we need them to do?</b>  Tip: Identify 2 or 3 things that would help achieve the objective	1. Raise awareness of the situation amongst the students and get them involved 2. Provide viable alternative ways to bring down the university budget 3. Get the student's voice listened to by the university board		
	To do	By whom	By when
<b>How can we influence them?</b>  Tip: In the boxes, write down the detailed specific actions you will carry out to influence the person or organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Host a campus event to draft shared requests in a student 'Memorandum of Understanding'</li> <li>● Build social media connections for regular communications</li> <li>● Hold a demonstration</li> <li>● Research details of the university budget, and how it is allocated</li> <li>● Draw up different options</li> <li>● Understand how decisions are made at the university</li> <li>● Write to the Minister of Education</li> <li>● Mass meetings between students and university board</li> </ul>		ongoing
<b>Managing risks</b>  Tip: Consider the risks of your advocacy plan, what can you do to manage them?	<b>RISK</b> Loss of motivation with slow-moving change (team and students) Being manipulated or ignored because we don't understand how things work Being seen as an insider or 'part of the system' by the students.  <b>AVOID</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be realistic about expectations with everyone</li> <li>● Track involvement</li> <li>● Regular injections of energy</li> <li>● Understand the system! Get to know the bureaucracy and decision-making processes</li> <li>● Bring students and Board together</li> </ul>		



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead demonstrations</li> </ul> <p>DEAL WITH</p> <p>Step up the pressure if interest fades Refer to the higher authorities</p>		
<p><b>Monitoring success</b></p> <p>Tip: Think about how you will know if you're being successful and identify some actions you can carry out.</p>	<p>WHAT TO MONITOR</p> <p>Numbers of supporters Perception/support of university authorities Wider support</p> <p>SOURCES</p> <p>Signatories to the 'Memorandum' 1 to 1 meetings Local media coverage Offers of involvement from other groups</p>		<p>Start and throughout</p> <p>Before and every 3 months</p> <p>Throughout</p>

## Supplementary reading

The power of advocacy: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_dzaM0fCqsg&t=181s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dzaM0fCqsg&t=181s)



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## 5. Module 5 – Online support with real impact

Upon completing this module, you will be able to:

- Be aware of communities' problems;
- Find ways to enrol communities;
- Make a real impact in society due to online methods.

### Understanding community

Cambridge Dictionary explains that *community* represents:

- ☞ the people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group, or nationality;
- ☞ all the people who live in a particular area, or a group of people who are considered as a unit because of their shared interests or background;
- ☞ on social media, a group of people who have similar interests or who want to achieve something together.

Just think



about it!

What are the keywords for community?

Communities face some problems, such as (Bryant, et al., 2021, pp. 2-3) (Aitchison & Saladin, 2020):

Offline community	Online community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unequal opportunities for education;</li> <li>○ Unequal opportunities for employment;</li> <li>○ Underdeveloped rural areas;</li> <li>○ Availability of healthcare services</li> <li>○ Protecting the animals;</li> <li>○ social exclusion.</li> <li>○ Corruption;</li> <li>○ Public safety;</li> <li>○ Clean environment;</li> <li>○ Walkable and bike-friendly communities;</li> <li>○ Pollution;</li> <li>○ Violence;</li> <li>○ Hunger etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Online Public Shaming</li> <li>○ Social exclusion;</li> <li>○ Collective online pressure;</li> <li>○ False accusations;</li> <li>○ Cyberbullying;</li> <li>○ Cybercriminal access</li> <li>○ Online safety;</li> <li>○ Privacy;</li> <li>○ Software vulnerabilities.</li> </ul>

Just think



about it!

Are there more problems in offline communities than in online ones?

Do you know any organizations that try to solve these problems?



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## Online participation

Online participation means being actively engaged in the socio-political process via online means. In this regard, there are various tools for e-engagement: petition, e-voting, hashtagging, online campaigns, meetings, mailing, video messaging or blogging, being active in social media etc. It can be done on all levels of government started from local to international.

Here are some examples:

### e-petitions

An online petition (or Internet petition, or e-petition) is a form of petition which is signed online, usually through a form on a website. Visitors/users to the online petition sign the petition by adding their details such as name and email address. Typically, after there are enough signatories, the resulting letter may be delivered to the subject of the petition, usually via e-mail. The online petition may also deliver an email to the target of the petition each time the petition is signed.

Examples: [Change.org](https://change.org) and [Avaaz.org](https://avaaz.org).

Online petitions may be abused if signers don't use real names, thus undermining its legitimacy. Verification, for example via a confirmation e-mail can prevent padding a petition with false names and e-mails. Many petition sites now have safeguards to match real-world processes; such as local governments requiring protest groups to present petition signatures, plus their printed name, and a way to verify the signature (either with a phone number or identification number via a driver's license or a passport) to ensure that the signature is legitimate and not falsified by the protestors.

### emailing

Among other means and tools, there is emailing, which is contacting the governmental representatives or state bodies by sending emails to express the opinion and will of citizens.

### blogging

This tool is used as both written blogs and video messages or series of videos reporting the issues or requesting the call and will of the citizen or citizens by spreading it via social media platforms.

### social-media

One of the most popular and least recognized ways of e-participation is being active in social media. Today by posting, reporting, sharing, liking or commenting on the relevant posts citizens are expressing the views that usually are taken into account by the politicians and decision-makers even business and private sectors. Facebook, for example, claims to have over 2 billion users, while Twitter claims 336 million regular users worldwide. Because of the sheer numbers reached via these media and their interactive element, mass social media have become an important space for the shaping of public attitudes and the dissemination of ideas (Aitchison & Saladin, 2020, p. 5).



## Principles of online participation

This model is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. They help to identify specific guidance to respond to young people's online lives. Principles of online participation are framed by three main categories of rights: *provision rights*, *protection rights*; and *participation rights*.

The 6 principles of participation are (BePart, 2020, p. 48):

<p><b>Support digital citizenship</b></p> <p>Recognizing the Internet's potential for young people's connection and actively participate in all forms of online and local communities. This principle aims to engage innovative and ethical online interaction and effect change.</p>
<p><b>Empower young people</b></p> <p>Fostering awareness of online spaces to provide safe and positive online experiences. Participation is a form of self-protection, a way to express youth concerns and a form to strive for their rights.</p>
<p><b>Respond to risks</b></p> <p>By having clear and proportionate policies and processes in place.</p>
<p><b>Promote resilience</b></p> <p>Recognizing online risk situations and creating mechanisms to overcome those risks as a way to increase personal development.</p>
<p><b>Provide positive spaces</b></p> <p>Offering opportunities to experiment with and explore digital media in different ways, according to developing age-appropriate online spaces (addressing issues of consent, privacy and security in the design of social software or devices).</p>
<p><b>Create youth shaped services</b></p> <p>Provision and protection must be both informed by young people's active participation. That provision must take into account youth-adult partnerships in setting priorities for digital-era services.</p>

Just think



about it!

*What are we doing to address the young people's protection, the provision of positive opportunities, and the participation of young people, concerning their online lives?*



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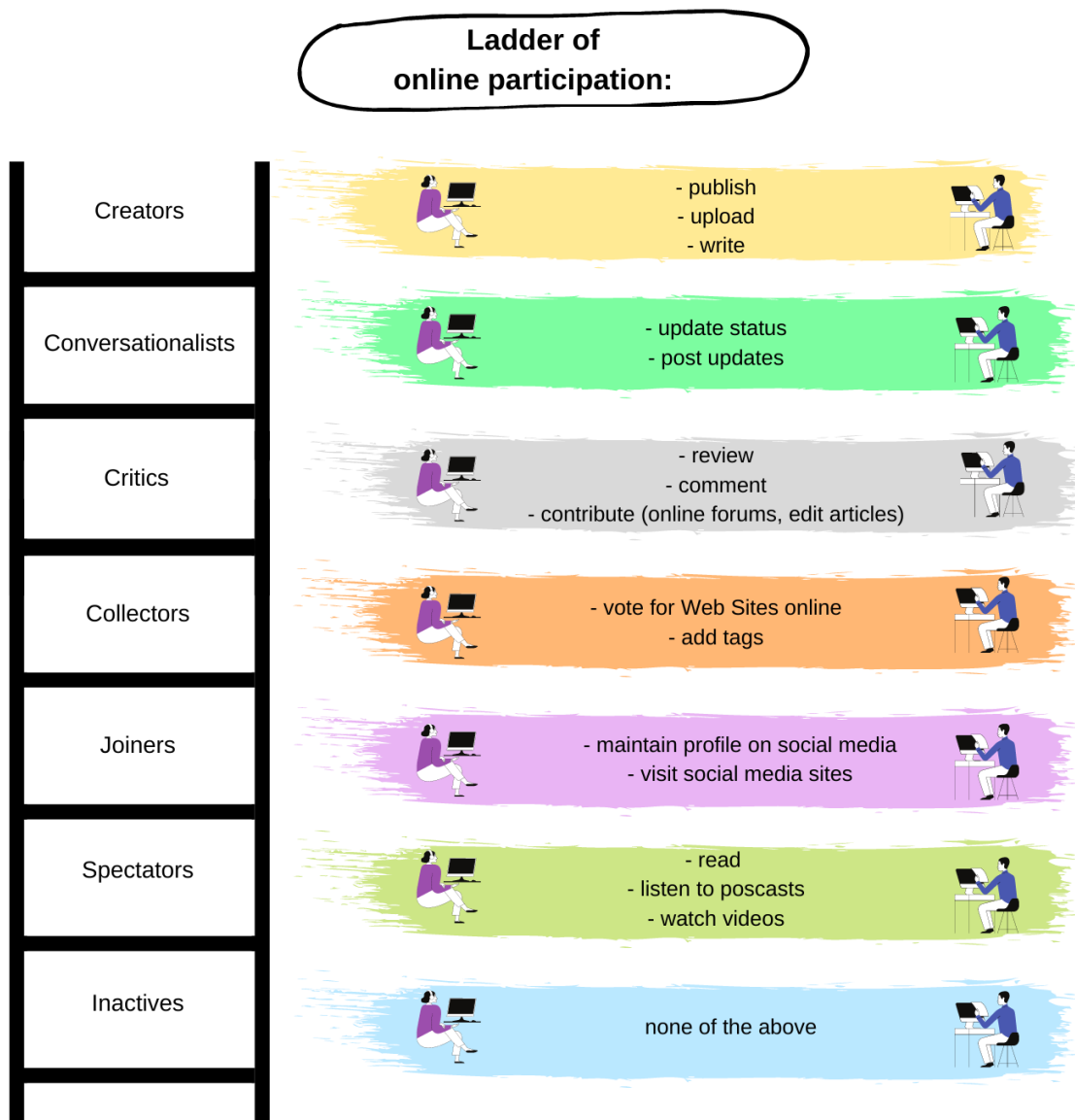
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## The ladder of online participation

The ladder of participation can also be applied online.

The model presents the ladder of online participation founded on the concept of social technographic which views online activity according to multiple ways of participation – from spectator to the creator (BePart, 2020, p. 40):



Just think



about it!

*What kind of participant are you?*



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## An environment made for youth

RMSOS stands for:

<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>S</b>
rights	means	space	opportunity	support

It is based on the principle that meaningful youth participation can only take place when the right conditions have been created and all the actors involved in participatory work have been given the responsibility to ensure that these conditions are present.

The five keywords represent the main factors influencing youth involvement at local level. Each of them focuses on a different support measure but they are closely interrelated, and they all have to be fulfilled for young people to be able to participate fully in the activities or decisions that interest them (Have your say, 2015, p. 37).

Just think



about it!

Why is the RMSOS approach useful?

The RMSOS approach can be a useful tool for young people, youth workers or local authorities as it helps them to look critically at their projects or initiatives and to find out whether the right conditions for young people's participation have been created.

### ■ Rights

The concept of rights has been detailed in module 3 *The freedom of voting*. The chapter *Our rights in a democratic system* offers more information about rights.

As you well know, participation is a fundamental right and is one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that has been reiterated in many other Conventions and Declarations.

Ideally, there should be a law at local and/or regional level stating that young people have to be consulted and have the right to participate in issues, actions and decisions affecting them. But even in communities where no such law officially exists, young people have a right to participate. In other words, it is not dependent on local or regional authorities to grant such a right, but it is a fundamental right that all young people have and should demand. Youth participation is backed by the relevant national and international legal acts adopted by the UN, EU, CoE and various states (Have your say, 2015, p. 38).

Just think



about it!

*Do young people have a right to participate in your local community?*

*How do you know this?*



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## ■ Means

Life can be more difficult for young people who have insufficient resources in life (financial resources, for example) and who live in poverty due to unemployment or other difficulties. This may mean that their basic needs like food or shelter are not met and they may feel isolated or left out of society as a result. It is natural that, in such circumstances, the priority is to try to look for different ways of obtaining the missing resources and, as a result, young people might lack the time or motivation to participate in the life of an organization or community.

To encourage young people to get involved, therefore, it has to be ensured that basic needs are met. These include sufficient social security, education, housing, health care, transportation, know-how and access to technology.

Just think



about it!

*What are the most important means that young people need in your local context so that they can fully participate in your project, organization or community life?*

*How have you identified these needs?*

## ■ Space

Young people need physical or virtual space to meet, to spend time or to organise their own activities. As far as participation in school activities or other organised curricula is concerned, facilities are usually provided (in classrooms, gyms or youth clubs, for example).

But, it is much more difficult for young people to find a place to meet if they are interested in getting involved in non-organised initiatives. That is why we are seeing the Internet being used more and more frequently by young people as a space for exchanging views or even setting up projects with other like-minded people (Have your say, 2015, p. 40).

It is important to know that the lack of virtual and real meeting spaces makes vulnerable youth even more socially and civically excluded.

Just think



about it!

*What space do you prefer? Physical or virtual?*

*Why?*

## ■ Opportunity

To be able to participate actively young people need to be provided with the opportunity to do so. This means, for example, that young people must have easy access to information on how to get involved, what the opportunities available are and where they are. When they know what is going on in their local community in terms of youth participation, then they can make informed decisions about their involvement. It is sometimes the case that young people do not participate, not because they have no interest, but simply because they do not get information about existing opportunities.

Youth must have easy access to information on how to get involved, what the opportunities available are and where they are, so they can make informed decisions about their involvement. Events, decision-making processes and systems need to be youth-friendly and have to be ensured that

young people have the opportunity to participate in terms of having sufficient time and supportive structures.

But, how do these opportunities get to you?

There are some ways that an opportunity for youth participation can get to you (SaveTheChildren, 2016, pp. 67-73):

<p><b>Adverts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ are useful</li> <li>👎 they are costly to produce and distribute</li> <li>👍 manage to convince your local newspaper or a magazine to support your case by publishing them for free</li> </ul>	<p><b>Banners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ covered with your slogan or message</li> <li>👎 you need permission from the police, local government or town council if you plan to put a banner in a public place</li> <li>👍 fairly cheap and easy to produce</li> </ul>
<p><b>Observing special days</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👎 significantly harder to catch people's attention when many groups compete for space and time on the same day</li> <li>👎 you have to get permission from the organisers</li> <li>👍 many people</li> </ul>	<p><b>School visits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ create awareness</li> <li>👎 time</li> <li>👍 direct reaction</li> </ul>
<p><b>Media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ almost always important when you do advocacy</li> <li>👎 risk of trivialising your problems if it is invited the media at every given opportunity</li> <li>👍 If a journalist pays attention to your problem and begins covering it, it puts pressure on your target groups to find a solution.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Newsletters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ hand delivery possible or post it by regular mail</li> <li>👎 take time to prepare</li> <li>👍 stylish</li> </ul>
<p><b>Radio</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Most radio channels also have specific topics</li> <li>👎 Making and sending public broadcasts often requires permission from the police or local government.</li> <li>👍 popular</li> </ul>	<p><b>Websites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ communicate directly with the audience</li> <li>👎 regular access to a computer</li> <li>👍 easy to use</li> </ul>

Just think



about it!

*What is the most efficient method?*

*What do they use in your community?*



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## ■ Support

Young people have lots of talent and the potential to participate, but without the necessary support, their involvement might not be as efficient as it could be. They should have access to various forms of support.

- e.g.: financial, moral and institutional, advice

These can be provided, for example, by a person referred to in the revised charter as a guarantor or, alternatively, by a youth worker or other professional who has the necessary experience and expertise in working in the field of youth-adult partnerships or in working with young people. Lastly, the institution or community, as a whole, needs to support and recognize the importance and contribution of youth participation, not only for young people but also for public authorities and society in general (Have your say, 2015, p. 42).

Ideally, local authorities should provide adequate financial support to cover expenses and structural costs, but it is still the case that in many communities, youth issues do not have priority in terms of local financial management.

Just think



about it!

*In what way is your local community environment supportive of the participation of young people?*

For example, Save the Children provides vulnerable youth with the space and tools to empower themselves in collaboration with others. In youth groups, they may learn about their rights, expand their social networks, enhance their personal capacities and learn new skills that are important for interaction with others (SaveTheChildren, 2016, p. 16).

The government institution Bangladesh Shishu Academy works with children and culture, and it is providing office space for The National Children's Task Force in all districts (SaveTheChildren, 2016, p. 48).

But, the question is: where can you find this support and opportunities?

- ✓ youth councils;
- ✓ parliaments;
- ✓ international, national, regional or local authorities,
- ✓ schools;
- ✓ clubs;
- ✓ NGOs.

Just think



about it!

*Tips and tricks: You can find them offline and online too!*



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## Exercise 5: Connections online & offline

### Objective:

- Analyze problems
- Finding solutions to overcoming risks
- Exercise critical thinking

**Duration:** 20 min

**Tools:** pieces of paper, pen

**Methods:** SWOT

**Description of the exercise:** The SWOT methods are explained:

<b>S</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>T</b>
strengths	weaknesses	opportunities	threats

SWOT is normally used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in an organisation, but youth can also use SWOT to analyze work situations or workspaces, or the risks and potential of an advocacy campaign (SaveTheChildren, A youth participation best practice toolkit, 2016, p. 87).

The trainer gives an example of an online community that has a real impact (e.g. <http://aspa.ro>). The students are asked to use the SWOT analysis regarding the given community and write characteristics for the 4 items.

### Tasks:

- go on <http://aspa.ro>
- Investigate their strategy
- Complete the table (SWOT analysis) regarding their activity online and offline:

<b>S</b> trengths	<b>W</b> eaknesses
<b>O</b> pportunities	<b>T</b> hreats

- As a tip and trick, you can write about: importance in society, impact, relevance, budget, location, marketing, competition, strategy etc.

**Debriefing:** After completing the table make some connections and find at least 1 solution for overcoming risks.

Suggested correlations:

- \* Strengths & Opportunities;
- \* Strengths & Threats;
- \* Weaknesses & Opportunities;
- \* Weaknesses & Threats.

S trengths	W eaknesses
↓	↓
O pportunities	T hreats

Just think



about it!

Do online activities have any impact on the offline world?

**Lessons learned:** Even online help represents real help.

**Recommendation:** The trainer can decide on another online community with the students' help (common decision).

Supplementary reading

EU petition: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/get-involved/petition-eu\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/get-involved/petition-eu_en)

What is E-PARTICIPATION? What does E-PARTICIPATION mean? E-PARTICIPATION meaning & explanation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z9Bu6bOBDU>



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## 6. Assessment quizzes

### Module 1

- 1) What is the most important aspect of learning?
  - a) Motivation - the learner needs to have a real interest in the subject
  - b) Complexity - the degree of subject difficulty
  - c) Time - the amount of time needed for reading
  
- 2) Which of the below statements is more realistic regarding the needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs:
  - a) "Higher" needs, for self-actualization, are the most important
  - b) "Simplest" needs, physiological needs, are the most important
  - c) In adulthood, individuals develop needs situated at higher levels
  
- 3) According to the concept of the 8 key competences, the three main groups are:
  - a) Knowledge, experience, skills
  - b) Knowledge, skills, attitudes
  - c) Values, skills, attitudes
  
- 4) Digital transformation is prompted by the rapidly developing .....:
  - a) Green energy supply
  - b) Smartphone technology
  - c) Digital technologies

### Module 2

- 1) In the context of active participation, what are the main types/levels of participation of people in organizations or the community?
  - a) Teaching, Political, Social, Cultural
  - b) Economic, Political, Social, Cultural
  - c) Economic, Medical care, Social, Cultural
  
- 2) Which of the below is NOT considered a way of active participation:
  - a) Engagement in the educational process, going to school, doing homework and being an active participant during the classes
  - b) Engagement in the decision-making process in a system of representative institutions at local, national and international levels
  - c) Engagement in actions and activities in civil society (like cultural or social actions or activities in the field of non-formal education and information)
  
- 3) Who can benefit from youth active participation?



- a) Only young people themselves
  - b) Only organizations/institutions and communities the youth are involved in
  - c) Young people themselves and organizations/institutions and communities they are involved in
- 4) Which of the below is better describing the youth participation activities?
- a) Non-formal learning activities revolving around the active participation of young people
  - b) Formal education and training
  - c) Training courses that develop digital skills for digital citizens

### Module 3

- 1) What is democracy?
- a) A governing system in which the residents of a country choose their leaders by voting in an election
  - b) A governing system in which the residents of a country choose their leaders by digital secret voting
  - c) A governing system in which the residents of a country have a say in making all important decisions
- 2) Among the categories of human rights, the “Solidarity” .....
- a) Protects individuals and their ability to participate in the public activities of their countries
  - b) Guarantees access to public goods like development and the environment for each individual
  - c) Provides individuals with access to education
- 3) Which is the first country to try a digital voting system for elections?
- a) Germany
  - b) Sweden
  - c) Estonia
- 4) Which of the below statements is correct?
- a) Youth struggling with disadvantages have greater trust in institutions
  - b) Youth struggling with disadvantages are generally less active citizens
  - c) Socioeconomic excluded people show an increasing interest in politics

### Module 4

- 1) Which of the below is best describing the “networking”?
- a) Meeting school colleagues to work on delivering a project
  - b) Being an active user of social media
  - c) Creating and maintaining contacts with those who support the same aims and who agree to work on achieving common goals



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- 2) What is “advocacy”?
  - a) Influencing different aspects of (youth) policy, such as the public perception of certain issues or the attitudes of policymakers
  - b) Influencing teachers, to change their opinions and attitudes about the type of examinations
  - c) Influencing families, to change their opinions and attitudes about spending their free time
  
- 3) How can young people take an advocacy initiative?
  - a) By organizing groups for social and political action, planning programs of their choice and advocating their interests in the community
  - b) By organizing a small group for educational purposes, planning to deliver non-formal educational programs in school
  - c) By organizing an activity in the classroom for increasing cultural diversity awareness
  
- 4) What is “policy”?
  - a) An idea proposed by a group of youth that can change the world.
  - b) A set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that have been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party
  - c) A set of activities proposed by young people.

## Module 5

- 1) A community represents a group of people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group, or nationality. The community can be:
  - a) Offline only
  - b) Online only
  - c) Both online and offline
  
- 2) In the context of active participation, “online participation” means:
  - a) Using online means, such as hashtagging, meetings, mailing, video messaging or blogging, social media to stay in touch with friends
  - b) Accessing online documentation to be informed about the latest development in the field of youth
  - c) Being actively engaged in the socio-political process via online means: e-petition, e-voting, hashtagging, online campaigns, meetings, mailing, video messaging or blogging, social media
  
- 3) RMSOS is the abbreviation of the five keywords representing the main factors influencing youth involvement at local level. This means:
  - a) Rights, Means, Space, Organization, Support
  - b) Rights, Means, Space, Opportunity, Support
  - c) Rights, Means, Space, Opportunity, Security

- 4) “Space” is one of the main factors influencing youth involvement at local level in the RMSOS model. In this context, “space” stands for:
- a) A physical or virtual space to meet, to spend time or to organise their own activities
  - b) A physical space to meet, to spend time or to organise their own activities
  - c) A virtual space to meet, to spend time or to organise their own activities

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## Appendix

### Assessment quiz check sheets

Evaluation quiz Module 1 check sheet – correct answers

1a

2c

3b

4c

Evaluation quiz Module 2 check sheet – correct answers

1b

2a

3c

4a

Evaluation quiz Module 3 check sheet – correct answers

1a

2b

3c

4b

Evaluation quiz Module 4 check sheet – correct answers

1c

2a

3a

4b

Evaluation quiz Module 5 check sheet – correct answers

1c

2c

3b

4a

## Instructional design review checklist for youth workers

No	Criteria	Yes	No
<b>1. Objectives</b>			
1.1	Are objectives stated clearly for the learner?		
1.2	Are the course requirements consistent with the objectives?		
1.3	Do chapters/topics thoroughly cover the course's objectives?		
1.4	Do the learning objectives match the learning outcomes?		
1.5	Does the overall content and structure of the course meet its instructional objectives?		
<b>2. Structure</b>			
2.1	Does the course have a concise and comprehensive overview or syllabus?		
2.2	Does the course include examples, analogies, case studies, simulations, graphical representations, and interactive questions?		
2.3	Does the course structure use appropriate methods and procedures to measure student mastery?		
<b>3. Content</b>			
3.1	Does the content flow seamlessly, without grammatical, syntactical and typing errors?		
3.2	Is the content up-to-date?		
3.3	Is the content aligned with the curriculum?		
3.4	Are the desirable outcomes incorporated in the content?		
3.5	Is the content in compliance with copyright laws and all its quoted material cited correctly?		
3.6	Does the course engage students in critical and abstract thinking?		
3.7	Does the course have prerequisites or require a technical background?		
<b>4. Assessment</b>			
4.1	Are the assignments relevant, efficient and engage students in a variety of performance types and activities?		
4.2	Are practice and assessment questions interactive?		
4.3	Do the practice and assessment tasks focus on the course's objectives?		
<b>5. Technology - Design</b>			
5.1	Is the design clear and consistent, with appropriate directions?		
5.2	Are the images and graphics of high quality and suitable for the course?		
5.3	Is the course easy to navigate and offers assistance with technical and course management?		
5.4	Is the course navigation structure consistent and reliable?		
5.5	Are the course hardware and software-defined?		
5.6	Is the audio and on-screen text in sync?		
5.7	Does the architecture of the course allow instructors to add content, activities and extra assessments?		



## Feedback on topic for students

Assessment of Module						
<b>Course title:</b>	Privacy and Security					
<b>Module Title:</b>	Introducing privacy					
<b>Part A:</b>	On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest level of agreement indicate how you feel on the following					
	Observations	1	2	3	4	5
1	The subject was interesting					
2	I believe the topics covered were important					
3	I would like to know more about the area					
4	I have learned new things which I am likely to apply in the future					
5	I would like to improve my skills in the area					
6	I am likely to recommend this course					
<b>Part B:</b>	In the space provided please feel free to include any comments and recommendations you wish to make					
<b>Part C:</b>	In the space provided please feel free to include your email address if you would like to be kept informed about this project					

