



# YSI-ACT TOOLKIT

Tools for Fostering Solidarity,  
Inclusion, and Active Citizenship



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# TOOLS FOR FOSTERING SOLIDARITY, INCLUSION, AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

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[YSI.ACT.EU](https://ysi.act.eu)

2025



This manual was developed within the project  
**“YSI-ACT\_ Youth in Action for Solidarity and Inclusion”**  
(Project No. 101147567 — YSI-ACT — CERV-2023-CITIZENS-CIV). This publication  
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#### YSI-ACT Project Partners:

Active Bulgarian Society (Bulgaria): [www.activebulgariansociety.org](http://www.activebulgariansociety.org)  
LAUREA University of Applied Sciences (Finland): [www.laurea.fi](http://www.laurea.fi)  
La Xixa (Spain): [www.laxixa.org](http://www.laxixa.org)  
Youth for Exchange and Understanding Cyprus (Cyprus): [www.yeucyprus.org](http://www.yeucyprus.org)

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# 1. Introduction



# 1.1 THE YSI-ACT PROJECT

The **YSI-ACT** “Youth Action for Solidarity and Inclusion” is a 24-month initiative that receives European Union funding in accordance with the CERV-Citizens’ Engagement and Participation programme. It includes partners from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland and Spain.

Its purpose is to promote the active participation of young people as well as foster social inclusion and solidarity in societies from all over Europe. YSI-ACT focuses on non-formal education through a creative and participatory approach to provide young people with the necessary tools and methods to fight against discrimination and stereotypes and to engage in their community.

YSI-ACT emphasises resource exchange and facilitates the creation of a space for young people to engage in human rights, inclusion, and active citizenship through innovative and participatory approaches. The goals of the initiative are to:

## - **Combat Discrimination and Promote Human Rights**

Encouraging conversation and reflection, actively questioning discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes. Additionally, the initiative aims to help young people better understand the essential EU mechanisms that protect fundamental human rights, such as treaties, charters, and institutions.

## - **Encourage the Development of Social and Emotional Skills**

Give young people the opportunity to improve their skills and emotional intelligence so that they can get more involved in their community. The program promotes youth-led initiatives that foster mutual respect, solidarity, and inclusivity. Share and work together to develop new strategies for citizens’ participation.

## - **Collaborate and share creative approaches to civic engagement**

Collaborate with youth professionals to implement and disseminate inclusive, nonformal educational methods, such as Forum Theatre and Playback Theatre which promote critical thinking and group cohesion.

## - **Create Inclusive and Sustainable Practices**

Help youth-led public initiatives that address community issues and foster inclusive ideals. The initiative also plans to establish a replicable approach that integrates innovation and participation in order to promote constant community involvement.



## TARGET GROUPS

The YSI-ACT project is specifically designed for:

- **Young people between the ages of 16 and 25**, particularly those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds or face social exclusion.
- **Youth workers and educators** who promote learning and growth in non-formal environments.
- **Community groups and local stakeholders** dedicated to inclusion and active citizenship.



## 1.2 PROJECT PARTNERS



The YSI-ACT project is based on the collaboration of a diverse consortium of organisations involved in youth participation, social inclusion, and community development. The YSI-ACT Toolkit was created by combining partners' skills and best practices of active involvement, inclusive community work and non-formal education.

## LA XIXA (SPAIN)



Located in Barcelona, La Xixa is a non-profit organisation specialising in participatory methodologies and non-formal education to promote social change. Through artistic tools like Forum Theatre and community-driven projects, they encourage discussion, reflection, and group action to address inequalities.

## ACTIVE BULGARIAN SOCIETY (ABS) (BULGARIA)



ABS is an organisation dedicated to encourage civic participation among young people. They use non-formal education and community involvement in international projects to improve youth participation, mobility and intercultural awareness.

## YOUTH FOR EXCHANGE AND UNDERSTANDING CYPRUS (YEU CYPRUS) (CYPRUS)



YEU Cyprus is part of an international network that seeks to engage young people in society through intercultural dialogue, human rights education, and the promotion of active citizenship. They organise workshops, training programs, and take part in projects that encourage young people to be active in their communities and create social change.

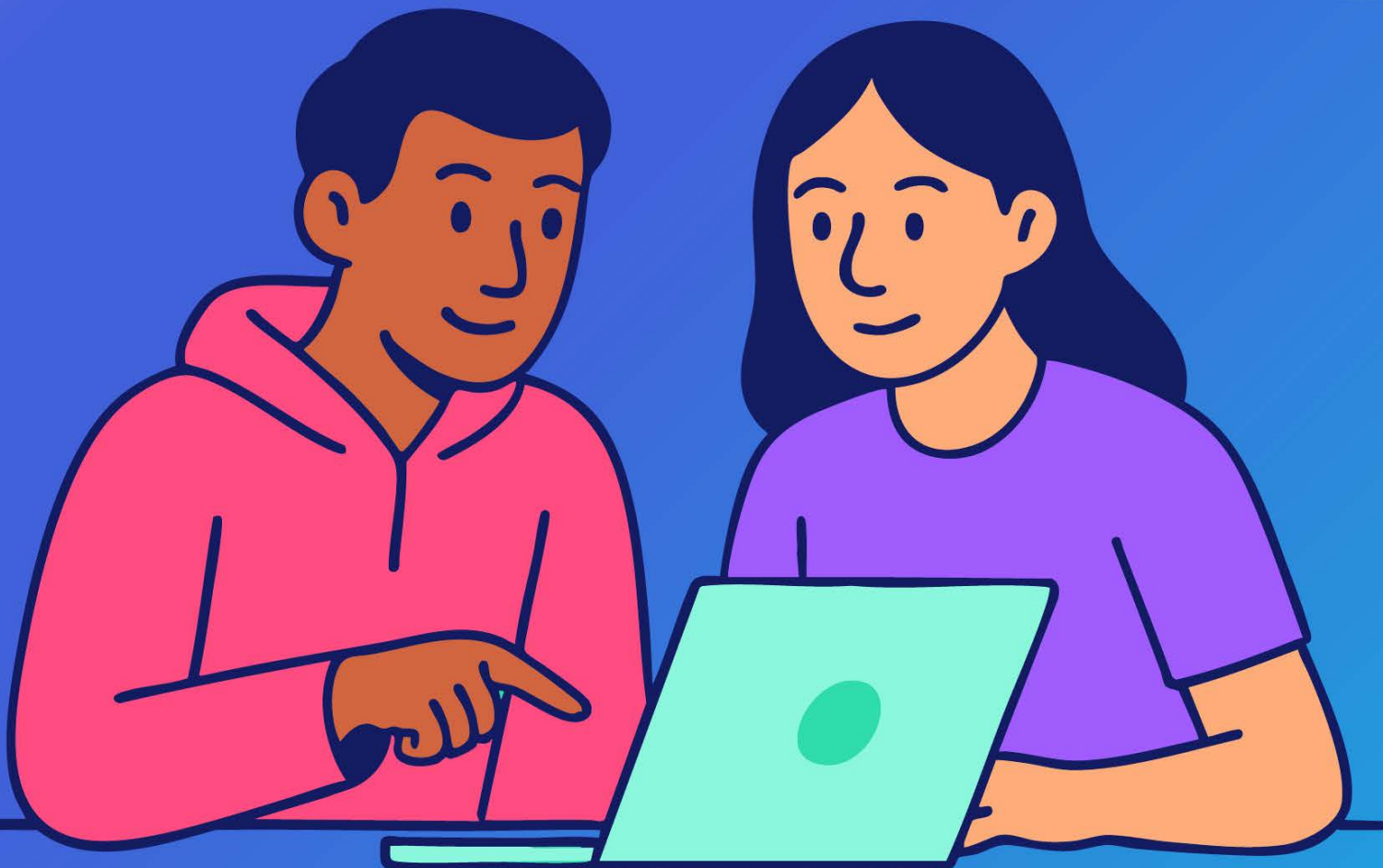
## LAUREA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES (FINLAND)



Laurea is a Finnish institution known for its applied research and community-centred education. Laurea collaborates with local and international partners to address social issues through education and research-based solutions, with more attention on social innovation and public welfare.



## 2. How to use the YSI-ACT Toolkit?



## 2.1 WHAT IS THE YSI-ACT TOOLKIT?

The YSI-ACT Toolkit is a practical tool designed to help youth workers, educators, and community leaders promote active citizenship, solidarity, and inclusion among young people. This tool uses non-formal education methods to promote critical thinking, empathy, and social engagement. It provides practitioners with methods to combat prejudice and stereotypes and foster more inclusive communities through activities, participatory techniques and innovative approaches like Forum Theatre, Participatory Action Research, Deep Democracy and Playback Theatre. The aim of this instrument is to promote a generation of new socially conscious citizens by involving young people in talks on human rights, citizens' participation, and solidarity. This toolbox provides readers with useful resources and introspective activities they need to set up areas of conversation, understanding, and cooperation, whether they are youth workers, educators, or members of a community group.

## 2.2 WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE FOR THE YSI-ACT TOOLKIT?

The **YSI-ACT Toolkit** is for two main target groups:

### **YOUNG PEOPLE (BETWEEN 16 AND 25 YEARS OLD)**

Young people will gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to participate and create more inclusive and fairer communities. Youth were chosen as the main target group because they are more vulnerable to misinformation and violence among peers. In addition, many youngsters do not know whether there are few opportunities to get involved in public life.

### **YOUTH WORKERS AND EDUCATORS**

Youth workers, educators, and other professionals working in the non-formal education and youth participation sectors are important to support young people through learning opportunities that foster community involvement and social solidarity.



## 2.3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGIES

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The YSI-ACT project is one answer to mutually related issues on social exclusion, discrimination based on identity, and youth underrepresentation in the public space throughout Europe. The project, which focuses on Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, and Spain, the project tries to go beyond theoretical research by proposing activities to improve young people's participation in solidarity initiatives.

### SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND IDENTITY-MOTVATED DISCRIMINATION

The United Nations defines social exclusion as the inability of individuals to fully engage in economic, social, political, or cultural life. In 2023, 21.4% of the EU population, around 94.6 million people, were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Almost one-third of these individuals, between the ages of 18 and 24, experienced exclusion. This problem often overlaps with identity-based discrimination, which manifests itself as unequal treatment based on racial, ethnic, gender, or other identity indicators.

In addition, the dynamics of each of the YSI-ACT target countries are unique.

For instance, Spain has been experiencing difficulties with immigrant discrimination, particularly against the Moroccan people, partially because of language and cultural differences.

Inequality in education and employment opportunities contributes to exclusion, particularly among Roma communities in Bulgaria.

In Finland, based on strong social systems, the level of exclusion is relatively low, but there are problems with job discrimination against non-European people.

Despite their efforts to improve inclusion through youth programs, Cyprus shows the marginalisation of groups that are disproportionately affected by exclusion, such as refugees and migrant workers, which is worsened by economic instability.

Identity-based discrimination exacerbates social exclusion in these situations and emphasises the need for specific initiatives that promote social integration and focus on structural inequality.

## YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Young people's participation in public life has changed from traditional methods like voting to more dynamic forms of activism, including protests, boycotts, and digital campaigns.

In Spain, youth activism combines conventional methods with movements like 15M, highlighting massive mobilisation and the use of digital platforms for advocacy.

Despite Finland displaying institutional mechanisms for youth consultation in policymaking, many young people feel disillusioned by a lack of tangible impact.

In Bulgaria, organisations like the National Youth Forum encourage structured dialogues, but declining interest in public affairs and the absence of a national youth strategy impede progress.

Cyprus declared 2024 the National Year of Youth, introducing digital and cultural initiatives to boost participation, although economic pressures and institutional distrust hinder broader engagement.

These experiences underscore the need for inclusive, context-sensitive strategies that empower youth and foster meaningful public engagement. In particular, young people need access to information about opportunities for empowerment and civic participation, so they can understand that their initiatives and their voices truly matter.



## YSI-ACT FOCUS GROUP RESULTS AND NEEDS IDENTIFIED

In addition to the desk research that highlighted the above-mentioned needs and challenges related to social exclusion, identity-based discrimination and youth participation, the YSI-ACT partners led a Focus Group with Civil Society Organisations' members from Cyprus, aimed at addressing youth participation in solidarity-based actions across Europe which revealed several key insights that helped shape this Toolkit's activities and strategies for youth workers. The results of this activity, combined with a survey submitted to members of CSOS from Bulgaria, Finland and Spain, offered a detailed understanding of how young people see and engage in solidarity actions, the challenges they face, and the ways to better support them.

One of the most striking aspects of the discussion was the general understanding of solidarity. Participants consistently linked this concept to words such as empathy, non-hierarchical support, communication, and cooperation. These expressions reflect the basis of solidarity efforts and emphasise the importance of equal, respectful relationships between those who offer and receive support. The idea that solidarity is a continuous process came through strongly, with many stressing the need for active participation and active listening. It resonates with survey responses, in which empathy and support were highlighted as essential components in the success of solidarity actions.

Speaking of areas in which solidarity is most needed, the responses were not uniform, but they highlighted certain regional challenges. In Finland and Spain, social justice was identified as a key area requiring solidarity-driven initiatives. In Bulgaria, the focus was on education because many respondents believe that there is a lack of sufficient attention and resources. These answers reflect the unique socio-political contexts in each country, but they also point to common issues about inequality and exclusion that affect young people across Europe.

Despite the recognition of these needs, the challenges that organisations face in the implementation of solidarity activities were also evident. Many participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the administrative burden related to the organisation of such initiatives, which often becomes a priority over the original purposes. This was linked to feelings of fatigue and burnout among those who led the initiatives, a concern that was repeated in several responses from the survey. Additionally, the lack of risk management processes was identified as a significant gap in ensuring the smooth execution of projects.

Another important finding was the low involvement of young people in solidarity actions. According to the research data, youth involvement in such initiatives was evaluated neutral to low on a scale from 1 to 5, with common reasons for this lack of participation being lack of time and lack of interest. Many participants noted that for young people to commit to solidarity actions, they must be able to sustain their life plans without the pressure of economic instability, a concern that reflects the broader issues of precarity facing many young Europeans.

The Focus Group and the survey participants offered recommendations to address these obstacles and improve youth commitment. There was a strong agreement on the need for youth-led approaches, in which young people are actively involved in the design and execution of the initiatives. This not only ensures that the actions are more in line with youth interests but also allows young people to recognise their potential to create positive social change. Furthermore, participants stressed the importance of reflexive practice in solidarity activities, ensuring continuous improvement and more participatory evaluation processes. This approach would help reduce some of the fatigue associated with these initiatives and create a more supportive environment for those involved.

The role of social media was also widely discussed. While participants recognised their strength to amplify messages and reach broader audiences, they warned that social problems can often become temporary “trends” online. To combat it, they suggested the use of digital storytelling and youth-friendly campaigns to involve young people in a way that resonates with their interests and concerns. These tools could help overcome traditional forms of participation and the evolving ways in which young people engage with the world.

Ultimately, the results of the focus group and survey responses highlighted the need for a more interactive, participatory, and youth-driven approach to solidarity activities. By including these elements, youth workers can help promote deeper relationships with young people and more sustained involvement in solidarity initiatives. The results also pointed out the importance of smoothing the structural and socio-economic obstacles that prevent youth from participating, which ensures that they are empowered to make a significant contribution to their communities.

## THE ROLE OF SOLIDARITY ACTIONS

Solidarity actions aim to address systemic inequality, fight social exclusion, and provide vulnerable groups with access to useful resources. It helps prevent identity-based discrimination and promotes youth participation in their communities and the public sphere. Solidarity efforts should prioritise promoting advocacy and providing structural support, like financial aid, mentoring programs, and institutional reforms.

Furthermore, educational programs should give learning opportunities through practical experiences, like community engagement and advocacy training while promoting critical thinking and awareness of equality and human rights among young people. Employment policies should also prioritise equity by guaranteeing access to decent jobs and promoting social integration through anti-discrimination and skill development initiatives whose main target should be young people.

The importance of intergenerational collaboration and inclusive decision-making systems is underlined by programs such as the Solidarity Across Generations Initiative, which allow youth to play an active role in creating equitable public spaces and policies by breaking the rule of societal hierarchies and including different points of view.

Solidarity cannot just be considered as an expression of support; it requires active participation in advocacy and cooperation to achieve systemic changes. Historical movements such as the Third World Liberation Front or contemporary examples like Black Lives Matter demonstrate how solidarity can practically address interconnected justice issues. There are also platforms that promote empathy and create bridges where divides exist where vulnerable voices can be heard by promoting empathy and creating bridges where divides lie, fostering long-term cohesion in society.

In the end, solidarity actions should serve as a pillar for achieving equity, inclusion and justice inside and across communities and generations, supported by collaborative strategies and investments in structural reform.



- 2 The Solidarity Across Generations Initiative, often celebrated as the European Day of Solidarity between Generations on April 29th, aims to promote intergenerational solidarity and cooperation. This initiative emphasises the importance of bridging different age groups to build a sustainable future and address global challenges. (<https://www.age-platform.eu/solidarity-between-generations-2025/#:~:text=On%2029%20April%202025%2C%20we,share%20common%20goals%2C%20such%20as:>)
- 3 The **Third World Liberation Front (TWLF)** was a coalition of student organisations at San Francisco State University and the University of California, Berkeley, formed in the late 1960s. The TWLF emerged in response to perceived racism, Eurocentric education, and lack of diversity in these institutions. The movement primarily focused on advocating for addressing the underrepresentation of diverse histories and perspectives. (<https://crg.berkeley.edu/third-world-liberation-front-research-initiative-twlf>)
- 4 The **Black Lives Matter (BLM)** movement is an international social and political movement that originated in the United States in 2013. It was founded by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager. The movement gained national recognition through street demonstrations after the 2014 deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in New York City . <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>



# METHODOLOGY

This toolkit will be based on methodologies that promote youth participation and solidarity actions, and address challenges such as social exclusion and identity-based discrimination. Each of these methods will be further explored and analysed in this manual, which offers practical tools to increase commitment and social transformation.

## NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Non-formal education provides experiential learning opportunities outside the traditional educational sector. This approach emphasises active participation, critical thinking, and collaborative solutions to real-life problems. It is expected to be accessible and inclusive, contributing to increasing opportunities and social inclusion. Programs such as initiatives led by young people and community workshops illustrate this methodology, which encourages youth to challenge societal norms and create change. Non-formal education is particularly effective in a context where formal education does not meet the needs of vulnerable communities, and promotes skills such as leadership, teamwork, and advocacy (OECD, 2019).

## THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

The Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) is a form of innovative participatory theatre created by Brazilian dramatist Augusto Boal. It aims to address and challenge inequalities in a society by transforming passive spectators into active participants, involving them in the scene in order to create and put in place possible solutions to real-world issues. This approach shows that art, especially theatre, can be an important tool for social transformation, dialogue, critical thinking, and collective action.

Within the Theatre of the Oppressed, Forum Theatre is the most famous methodology. It consists of presenting a play that shows a specific conflict or oppression of key importance for the audience. At some point during the play, the facilitator (Joker) stops the action and asks the audience to take part in the scene as “spect-actors” to recommend and adopt alternative solutions. This process transforms the scene into a collaborative space where the public analyses the basis of oppression and proposes alternatives in real time.

A special feature of TO is the “joker,” a facilitator who mediates between the actors and spect-actors. The Joker guides the conversation, makes sure to create an inclusive space, and encourages the public to show different perspectives without proposing solutions. This role is crucial for maintaining a respectful and constructive environment where all voices can be heard.

Theatre of the Oppressed spread around the world and has been used in various contexts, including education, community organisations, healthcare, and conflict resolution. For example, it was used to address domestic violence, advocate for workers’ rights, and fight discrimination. By fostering empathy and critical awareness, TO helps participants identify structural and interpersonal oppressions and act towards change.

Theatre of the Oppressed represents the idea that art can be seen as a mirror that reflects public issues and a useful tool that can help create a fairer future. Through participatory and collaborative processes, it supports individuals in imagining and creating paths toward justice and equality.

## PLAYBACK THEATRE

**Playback Theatre was born in the 1970s in the United States** when Jo Salas and Jonathan Fox experimented with Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, Moreno's Psychodrama, and the oral traditions of Native American cultures<sup>5</sup>. From these influences, they began to develop their own performative form.

Playback Theatre is a form of improvisational theatre, which means that performances are not based on pre-rehearsed or memorized scripts. Instead, the method brings to life real-life experiences shared by audience members. These experiences may be related to personal events or, to a certain extent, to a theme, such as dreams, youth stories, life changes, love, or one's own learning process.

In practice, a person participating in a workshop or performance tells a story related to the theme—something that happened to them—in an interview with the conductor (director). The actors and musician then improvise a summary or interpretation of the narrated experience on stage, using a technique or method chosen by the conductor.

In all activities, the aim is to listen to others in a respectful, empathetic, and multifaceted way, enriching the perspectives related to the content of the story. Rahmel, who has trained and directed Finnish Playback Theatre actors and facilitators since the 1990s, beautifully describes the process of story-theatre as follows:

“In Playback Theatre, the encounter between the individual and the group, their story and the related identity work, is brought to the stage through improvisational theatre, allowing the narrated story to come to life. The enchantment of theatre becomes part of learning and of the emotional experience that learning awakens in the learner.”<sup>6</sup>

As the name suggests, storytelling is an essential part of Playback Theatre. It is born from and ignited by the stories told and interpreted through theatrical means. Storytelling is a natural way for people to structure their experiences, thoughts, life stories, and identities. Through storytelling, we create meaning and interpret life events and experiences, while also constructing an understanding and image of who we are.

In her doctoral dissertation, Hänninen identified three different levels of human inner stories and storytelling. These include the **original story**—something immediately experienced; the **reflective story**—formed when reflecting on one's own experience, which often becomes evident in how a person tells their story to themselves based on observations and feelings; and the **meta-reflective story**, which emerges through conscious structuring and analysis.<sup>7</sup>

Playback Theatre techniques and methods can also be used in **non-formal learning environments**, such as workshops. In this context, the goal is not to perform but to use the method as a functional tool for exploration or as a form to process themes or phenomena discussed in the group. Playback Theatre allows for the visualization of, for example, a person's internal conflicts or life transitions. It can be used in many ways—to make stories and experiences visible, support learning and insight, and explore what it means to be human.

5 González Aguirre, A. (2016). Teatro participativo: Una técnica de investigación social para el diseño estratégico [Tesis de maestría, Universidad Iberoamericana de México]

6 Rahmel, P. (2020). Tell me, we'll see!

7 Hänninen, V. (1999). Sisäinen tarina, elämä ja muutos (Inner story, life and change). University of Tampere.

## PROCESS WORK

Process Work (or Process-Oriented Psychology) was developed by Arnold Mindell in the 1980s. It includes psychology, conflict resolution, and group facilitation. This methodology emphasises the discovery of the deeper, hidden, dynamics affecting conflicts both for individuals and groups. It focuses on tools such as dream analysis, body signals, and group discussions to identify and transform these dynamics. Process Work helps individuals and groups to understand power imbalances, vulnerable voices, and the hidden elements of conflict by raising awareness. It can be applied to various contexts such as, organizational leadership, community development and social justice because it is flexible (Mindell, 1992).

## DEEP DEMOCRACY

Deep Democracy was also developed by Mindell and it is based on the principles of Process Work. It prioritises inclusive decision-making by giving voice to all perspectives, especially those often silenced. This approach addresses the systemic marginalisation in traditional power structures. This methodology promotes an environment of mutual respect and collaboration because it takes into account every opinion, emotion or conflict as part of a group collective wisdom. When it comes to diverse communities, Deep Democracy has been useful to address diversity-related issues and facilitate dialogue. It supports transformation while disagreement integrates into constructive solutions, ensuring that decisions are equitable and sustainable (Mindell, 2002).

## PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a collaborative methodology in which researchers and community members work together to identify, study, and work on local problems. PAR is designed to support vulnerable groups by focusing on their experiences and expertise in the research process. This approach includes cycles of planning, acting, monitoring, and reflection, allowing participants to co-create solutions that respond to their needs. It has been used in education, healthcare, and community development fields to address systemic inequalities and create change (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

## INTEGRATION FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

These methodologies provide a comprehensive set of activities to promote youth engagement and social transformation. Process Work and Deep Democracy allow for a deep study of power dynamics and inclusivity, while PAR gives tools to communities through collective knowledge creation. Together, these strategies create a robust framework for promoting equality, solidarity, and meaningful change in diverse social contexts.

## 2.4 TIPS FOR FACILITATION

Facilitating activities with groups of young people might be challenging, but the YSI-ACT partners have developed a list of helpful tips and practical suggestions to help youth workers organise sessions that are engaging, inclusive, and productive. The facilitator can use these insights to encourage reflection during activities, foster open conversation and explore group dynamics. These recommendations aim to increase the facilitator's confidence and efficacy in implementing the toolkit's activities.

The facilitators of these activities will be in charge of overseeing the process and creating a welcoming, inclusive, and interesting atmosphere for attendees. Here are some helpful ideas to follow:

- 1 Create a welcoming and secure atmosphere** by making sure that participants feel at ease and included, despite their background or experiences. Respect other people's boundaries, particularly when sharing personal information or engaging in physical contact.
- 2 Encourage open dialogue and active listening** while maintaining respect. Remind participants that all voices are important, and that group learning depends on different perspectives.
- 3 Adapt to the needs of the group** by being flexible and prepared to make changes to your plans depending on the dynamics and comfort of the group. If participants seem uncomfortable or disinterested, think about modifying the workout.
- 4 Use your time wisely** and keep a close eye on the schedule of activities all the time but be adaptable if more reflection about the activities is needed. Balancing openness and structure is essential.
- 5 Promote reflection and debriefing** after each activity, and give participants time to reflect on their experiences. Invite them to link their experiences to more general topics such as solidarity, inclusion and social change. You can do it by asking guiding questions.
- 6 Be supportive and observant** by paying attention to participants who may feel excluded or less involved in the process. Give them encouragement and let them know that they are in a safe space, but don't forget to respect their level of comfort.
- 7 Celebrate mistakes** emphasising that errors also play a role in the learning process. Create an atmosphere where it is okay to make mistakes and stress the fact that they help foster group learning and personal development.
- 8 Model empathy and inclusion:** Your behaviour affects the mood of the group. Show active listening, empathy, and accept all points of view.
- 9** After each activity, **debrief with an objective** by opening discussions to help participants think on what they learned, how they felt, and how the experience relates to the topics of solidarity and inclusion.



# 3. Database of Activities



This toolkit offers a set of activities to support youth workers in creating inclusive, empathetic, and socially engaged spaces, divided into blocks to structure **icebreaking sessions, work on solidarity, inclusion, empathy, social change**, and finally **evaluate** the whole process.

There is no set order or required number of activities to follow. Each youth worker is encouraged to **adapt the content** to the context and target group they are working with, and the participants' levels of comfort in expressing themselves. Whether you're getting started with a new group or working with already formed groups, this toolkit serves as a resource to guide and inspire responsive, youth-focused facilitation.



### Icebreakers, Energisers & Team-building activities

*Name and the ball*

*Paired introduction*

*Nobody with anybody*

*1, 2, 3 Bradford*

*Encounter in pairs*

*Points of Contact*

*Ice breaking. QUIZ*



### Activities on Solidarity, Inclusion & Empathy

*Welcome to diversity*

*Individual Statues*

*Sociometric exercise – "Imaginary line" on the floor*

*Concentric Circles*

*Games without language*



### Activities on Activating Social Change

*From Image Theatre to Forum Theatre*

*Playback Theatre - Dance Past technique*

*Playback Theatre - Conflict Pair Technique*

*Talk to the head, heart and hand*



### Evaluation activities

*Evaluation and Feedback*

*Sociometric Closing Exercise – Sociometric Selection*

*Ball Toss*



## Activity Name and the ball

<b>Number of participants</b>	10-15	<b>Duration</b>	10 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster mutual knowledge among participants.</li> <li>To warm up the group and create an atmosphere that helps working in group/s To memorise names.</li> <li>To bring minds, attention and bodies to the present.</li> <li>To overcome the fear of making mistakes and put it into practice.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A big room or an open space where participants can move freely.</li> <li>A small ball, even more than one if you intend to implement all the steps (juggling ball or tennis ball).</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	Ask participants to make a circle in the centre of the room.		

### Step-by-step instructions

- Round of Introductions**  
Start with a quick round of introductions, where everyone says their names, pronouns and where they come from.
- Round A**  
Ask a participant to throw the ball to another person in the circle, saying their name loudly and clearly and then pass the ball. The participant continues by saying their name and throwing the ball to another participant until all people have said their names out loud.
- Round B**  
For this second round, the group says the name of the person to whom they threw the ball in the previous round and repeats the same dynamic as before.
- Round C: name inverting order**  
For this third round, try to do the same sequence of names, but starting from the end to the start. If the order was Ana-Maria-Joan-Albert, now Albert starts, and the round will be inverted.
- Two balls at a time**  
For this last round, a second ball will be introduced. The first ball goes in the round A order, and the second ball goes in the Round C order, simultaneously. Consider asking participants to make the game faster to stimulate their memory, or try not to lose the ball.

### Tips for facilitators

- As a facilitator, you can invite participants to ask the name of the person to whom they want to pass the ball. It is important to stress that they shouldn't feel bad if they don't remember at first.
- Sometimes, if someone doesn't remember our name, it might be perceived as a lack of respect. As a facilitator, you must make clear that it is not necessary to remember all names at first.
- How can we break that mandate and allow ourselves to ask the other person's name without feeling guilty? In our society, having a good memory is valued, and those of us who struggle are often seen as having less power than those who do. This element serves to discuss power dynamics that society imposes on us (and how we internalise them).



## Activity Paired introduction

<b>Number of participants</b>	10+	<b>Duration</b>	15-30 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants get to know each other.</li> <li>• Create a welcoming atmosphere.</li> <li>• Boost new conversations.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A big room or space where participants can move around freely.</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the area is clear of obstacles and organised to allow movement and interaction.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Invite participants to walk around the space.
2. Ask them to stop and look for a person they don't know.
3. Each person has one minute to introduce themselves and share something about their life, e.g. a favourite hobby, or another personal topic.
4. After two minutes, ask everyone to gather in a circle.
5. Explain that one by one, each participant should introduce their partner to the group by talking as if they were that person. For example: "Hi, I'm Marta. I love cycling by the river, and I wish my neighbourhood had more green spaces".
6. Continue until everyone has introduced their partner, ensuring that everyone has both been introduced and introduced someone else.

### Tips for facilitators

- Some participants might feel uncomfortable speaking with people they don't know or may struggle with the language. Please stress the importance of feeling comfortable and encourage people to speak with someone who speaks their language or with whom they feel more at ease.
- If someone feels uncomfortable introducing their partner to the whole group, gently encourage them, but offer the option to participate voluntarily instead.



## Activity Nobody with anybody

<b>Number of participants</b>	20+	<b>Duration</b>	10-30 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To gently introduce physical contact in a safe and playful way.</li> <li>To promote connection, cooperation, and group cohesion.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A large, open space, indoors or outdoors, where participants can move comfortably and safely.</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the area is clear of obstacles to allow for unrestricted movement.</li> <li>Create an environment that feels welcoming and inclusive for everyone.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. If the group is very large, consider splitting it into two equal subgroups.
2. Choose one participant to be the “boss” for the first round.
3. Ask everyone to turn to the closest person and form a pair.
4. The boss gives an instruction, asking each pair to connect using specific body parts (e.g., “Touch right knees”, “Connect left hands and right feet”). They can make it more interesting by combining multiple body parts.
5. After a few moments, the boss says, “Nobody with anybody!”
6. All participants then move freely around the space and quickly form new pairs.
7. The participant without a partner becomes the next boss.
8. Repeat the activity through several rounds, encouraging creativity, laughter, and interaction.

### Closing

- Thank the group for their energy and participation.
- Invite a quick group reflection:
  - How did they feel during the activity?
  - Was anything surprising or particularly fun?

### Tips for facilitators

- This activity involves body contact, so it’s important to be mindful that some participants may feel uncomfortable.
- Be open-minded and respectful if someone chooses not to take part.



## Activity 1, 2, 3 Bradford

<b>Number of participants</b>	Min 6 participants, there is no maximum, but the number of participants should be even	<b>Duration</b>	10-15 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster team building and confidence in.</li> <li>To warm up the body and foster alternative communication tools.</li> <li>To overcome the fear of mistakes and include them in practice.</li> <li>To foster concentration and go beyond automatic behaviours, increasing spontaneity and improvisation.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A big room or an open space where participants can move freely.</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare the room/space so that it is as spacious as it can be, without obstacles.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Invite participants to walk around the room freely. When you call out 'stop', they should pair up with the person closest to them.
2. Ask each pair to find a space in the room so that they can move freely without bumping into other participants.
3. Ask the members of the pairs to face each other.
4. Ask participants to count in a loop from 1 to 3 alternating with the partner: as to say one person will have to say 1 and 3 and the other 2. Give them a few seconds to try it out.
5. Now ask one participant to substitute the number 1 with a movement and sound, and to go back to counting. Invite them to make big movements and loud sounds.
6. Once they have practised for a few seconds, ask the other participant of each pair to do the same with the number 2.
7. Once they have practised for a few seconds, ask participants to now substitute the number 3.
8. Let the participants enjoy and play for a while, and just see what happens.
9. Once you stop the activity, you can ask for volunteers (or all pairs) to show what they have created.

### Closing

Guide the debriefing by asking the following questions:

- Did you like the activity?
- Was there anything difficult?
- Did you discover anything new?

### Tips for facilitators

- This exercise aims to foster alternative communication tools and to experiment with and accept mistakes while having fun.
- Be aware that some participants may enjoy this exercise, while others may find it frustrating.
- How participants relate to their ambitions and expectations can be one of the topics that can be addressed during the debriefing.



## Activity Encounter in pairs

<b>Number of participants</b>	8-20	<b>Duration</b>	20-40 minutes, depending on the number of participants
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know each other.</li> <li>• Building trust.</li> <li>• Building interaction.</li> <li>• Warming up to the theme (if there is a clear theme of the meeting).</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timer</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An empty space is needed for the exercise, where participants can move freely and talk to each other.</li> <li>• The facilitator should think about the topics of the discussions in advance.</li> </ul>		



### Step-by-step instructions

1. Get moving around the space. Ask participants to listen to their own body and movement, and what walking feels like right now. Tell them that they shouldn't worry about the others yet, just enough not to bump into each other, and they can focus on their movement.
2. Ask participants to pay attention to the others' socks or shoes and choose a partner to chat with by finding shoes/socks that are as similar as possible to theirs. They only have two minutes to talk and must make sure they both have time to talk.
3. Ask them to tell something about this morning/day (how is it going? What have you done today? Ask them to specifically introduce themselves by using their names.
4. After the first encounters, the pairs thank each other for the conversations and move on. After a little movement, participants should find a new partner to talk to, for example, by focusing on the model of the shirt or trousers, or hairstyle.

Good topics for discussion are those where people get to tell something about their past or background, the present, their thoughts or wishes. The topic of discussion can also be something surprising, and of course, some discussion topics are good to relate to the theme of the session.

Here are some tips on conversation topics:

- Tell me about a piece of clothing you're wearing, where did you get/ buy it, why are you wearing it right now?
- When was the last time you felt compassion for a stranger?
- What is your relationship to your hair? This question often provokes hilarity and a lot of discussion, even in those people who are bald.
- How do you want to influence the development of things in your community or society?
- What is your best group activity experience? Why?

You can give more time to this discussion and listen to something about it in a group debrief, if there is time. Often the characteristics of a group are quite similar.

Asking lots of questions helps participants connect, this way, they can have short chats and get to know everyone in the group.

### Closing

- What did you think of the exercise?
- Do the people in this group feel more familiar now?
- Did you learn something new or surprising about the others?
- Thank you for your cooperation!

### Tips for facilitators

- Topics for discussion can vary depending on the goal, size, and duration of the group.
- The main goal here is to get to know people through various short conversations. Familiarity in the group builds security and awakens one's creativity.
- Surprising and even slightly funny topics of conversation also serve as a good icebreaker between people.
- The exercise is inclusive and can be adapted for participants with motor disabilities. In this case, those who are able-bodied can rotate and choose a new conversation partner each time.



## Activity Points of Contact

<b>Number of participants</b>	Up to 20	<b>Duration</b>	20 minutes (can be adjusted based on how many rounds are done).
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage collaboration and teamwork.</li> <li>To energise the group by encouraging active participation.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No materials needed</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the activity will be implemented indoors, make sure to create some space for people to quickly move around. Tables/chairs and other furniture should be pushed to the sides of the room.</li> <li>The activity can be implemented indoors or outdoors.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Inform the group that during this activity, they will have to work as a team and try to achieve a goal together.
2. Gather all the participants in the middle of the room/space. Select certain points within the space (Examples: the door handle, a chair, a desk). Make sure that all participants are aware of where each of these points is.
3. Explain that they will have limited time (you can start with 15 seconds) to create a human chain connecting all these points. They must use at least one body part to connect the points (e.g elbows, hands, feet). You can specify and inform participants on how to connect the chain.
4. You can do multiple rounds by increasing the difficulty of the challenge. You can do this by increasing the number of points or reducing the duration.

### Closing

- Did you enjoy the activity?
- Do you think you worked well together?
- How did you manage to complete/not complete the goal?

### Tips for facilitators

- If you have a group with mixed abilities, make sure to adjust the points or duration accordingly.
- If needed, you may provide ribbons or other materials for participants to use while creating their human chains.

### Resources

[Peace Kites: A Peace Education Manual for Non-formal Education Activities with Children and Youth](#)



## Activity “Ice breaking, QUIZ”

<b>Number of participants</b>	20	<b>Duration</b>	1 hour
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know each other and share their opinions on inclusion.</li> <li>• Encourage the sharing of personal experiences on how vulnerable groups are treated in different countries.</li> <li>• Promote an open discussion around the topics of inclusion and discrimination.</li> <li>• Create a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere.</li> <li>• Encourage active participation and personal storytelling.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 cards per participant labelled: “Yes”, “No”, “Good”, “Bad”</li> <li>• 4 wooden sticks per participant (to hold the cards).</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<p>Prepare the questions. Examples:</p> <p><b>Warm-Up Questions (Light &amp; Personal)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you enjoy meeting new people?</li> <li>• Would you describe yourself as an open-minded person?</li> <li>• Do you like group activities?</li> <li>• Do you think it’s easy to make friends in your country?</li> <li>• Is humour important when connecting with others?</li> </ul> <p><b>Transition Questions (Getting Deeper)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever felt left out in a group?</li> <li>• Do you think your country is welcoming to outsiders?</li> <li>• Have you ever stood up for someone who was treated unfairly?</li> <li>• Is it easy to talk about differences in your country?</li> <li>• Do you believe everyone has the same opportunities in life?</li> </ul> <p><b>Main Discussion Questions (On Inclusion &amp; Discrimination)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is racism still a problem in your country?</li> <li>• Have you ever been judged for something you can’t change (like your background, accent, or beliefs)?</li> <li>• Do you think schools do enough to teach about inclusion?</li> <li>• Are people from poor backgrounds treated fairly where you live?</li> <li>• Do you feel represented in media and politics?</li> <li>• Is talking about discrimination uncomfortable for most people?</li> <li>• Do you think inclusion implies more than just tolerance?</li> </ul> <p><b>Closing &amp; Reflection Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have your thoughts about inclusion changed after hearing other people’s stories?</li> <li>• Do you feel more aware of your own biases now?</li> <li>• Would you like to take action for more inclusion in your community?</li> <li>• Was this activity helpful for understanding others’ perspectives?</li> </ul> <p>Prepare the signs people can answer with (printing it out, glueing it together).</p>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Begin by explaining the purpose and rules of the activity.
2. Ask participants to form a circle so everyone can see each other's responses.
3. Ask a question aloud. Each participant answers by holding up one of their cards (Yes, No, Good, or Bad).
4. Start with light, general questions and gradually move toward deeper questions about inclusion and discrimination.
5. For each question, ask 2-3 participants to explain why they chose their answer (voluntarily).
6. Allow respectful discussion or comments on others' answers and experiences.

### Closing

- End with reflective questions that help summarise the group's insights and learning.
- Encourage participants to think about how their perspectives on inclusion have evolved.
- Ask for final feedback on the activity using the answer cards.

### Tips for facilitators

- Maintain an open mind, promote active listening, and respect all participants and their perspectives.





## Activity Welcome to diversity

<b>Number of participants</b>	10-15	<b>Duration</b>	15 and 20 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage mutual understanding and connection among participants.</li> <li>• Practice active listening and empathy.</li> <li>• Reflect on the unique identities present within the group.</li> <li>• Recognise and appreciate the diversity of experiences and backgrounds.</li> <li>• Introduce the concept of <b>intersectionality</b>—how different aspects of identity shape experiences in society.</li> <li>• Acknowledge power dynamics related to social identity.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large room or an open space where one can move freely.</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No preparation needed</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Invite the participants to form a circle, facing the centre and looking at each other.
2. Explain that you will make a series of statements, and each time, those who agree are invited to step forward toward the centre of the circle, while others remain still in the circle.
3. After each statement, invite everyone to look around and recognise both those who stepped forward and those who did not, without judgment.
4. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers, and the purpose of the exercise is to acknowledge and value the diversity present in the group.

Examples of statements:

Please step forward if:

- You feel tired.
- You are curious about the workshop/training.
- It took you more than half an hour to get to today's session.
- You were born in the same place where you currently live.
- You were born in the same place as at least one of your parents.
- You were born in the same place as at least one of your grandparents.
- You can speak more than 3 languages.
- You prefer to be addressed as "she."
- You prefer to be addressed as "he."
- You prefer to be addressed as "they."
- You enjoy spending your free time in nature.
- You consider yourself a creative person.
- You are concerned about social inclusion and solidarity, and feel you are doing something about it.
- You can define "solidarity."

After each statement, ask a few participants (both those who stepped forward and those who did not) to explain why they positioned themselves that way and how it affects them.

5. After completing the activity, thank everyone for their participation and acknowledge the diversity present in the room, both the diversities named in the exercise and those that were not mentioned, as well as those that might not directly affect the group but are present in society.

### Step-by-step instructions

6. Introduce the idea of welcoming and valuing the diversity within the group, emphasising the importance of being aware of the power dynamics it implies. Acknowledge that diversity should not go unnoticed, and give it a ritualistic quality within the group. Use the following examples to guide the process:
  - Welcome to those who may feel uncomfortable using their bodies. Your presence is very important.
  - Welcome to those who have no difficulties and can engage fully in the activities without problems.
  - Welcome to those who know solidarity and inclusion issues, and welcome to those who feel they lack such knowledge. Acknowledge that those with more knowledge might have more power in the group, and recognise the insecurities of those who are less informed.
  - Welcome the diversity of ages, recognising that we may approach topics differently based on our age. We might have more conservative or progressive perspectives—welcome them all.
  - Welcome to those in good health, who may take it for granted, and welcome to those with chronic illnesses or mental health struggles. All are welcome.
  - Welcome all bodies and the diversity they represent.
  - Welcome the different levels of education, including those with higher education in peace and human rights studies.
  - Welcome the diversity of spiritualities, religions, and beliefs, and think about how we approach sensitive topics like solidarity and inclusion from these perspectives.
  - Welcome the diversity of origins, migration experiences, and skin colours.
7. Finally, invite the group to add any other diversities they feel are important to acknowledge, remembering that by gaining awareness of the diversity present in the room, we can create a safe and inclusive space for everyone.

### Closing

Guide the session with the following questions:

- What was easy?
- What was difficult?
- Did you discover something new about yourself?
- How does the way we position ourselves in the world or life impact our relationships or society?

### Tips for facilitators

- This exercise aims to embrace the diversity of the group and work on intersectionality, which is the interaction between two or more social factors that define a person (identity aspects such as gender, ethnicity, race, and geographical location).
- In the description of the activity, you will find examples of statements. However, you can adapt them to the group, and ask questions that may provide insight into the group's perspective on the central topics of the workshop/training.



## Activity Individual Statues

<b>Number of participants</b>	10-20	<b>Duration</b>	15 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make participants reflect on the topics discussed during the activity.</li> <li>To start working with the body.</li> <li>To introduce image theatre techniques.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A big room or an open space where participants can move freely.</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare the room/space so that it is as spacious as it can be, without obstacles.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask participants to make a circle in the centre of the room facing out.
2. Explain that when you say a word, each person will have to make a statue with their bodies, expressing what the word means to them. The statue should be elaborated with their whole body, not only with their hands. The statue has to be thought of in silence and in a relaxed way. When each person is ready, they turn inwards into the circle and make the statue to show the others.  
Examples of words/statements to make the statue:
  - An elder person
  - A young person
  - Solidarity
  - Social exclusion
3. Once participants are in the circle doing the statues, ask them to freeze their statues and look at the others. Invite participants to look at them and think about the similarities or differences between them.
4. Do a couple of rounds. With the last statue, ask participants to create groups of 3 or 4 people that they think have similar statues.
5. Ask participants to come back to the big circle and work on another image. This time, ask participants to make groups with other statues that seem to be very different from them.
6. Choose one group of statues that have been created and ask them to freeze. Ask the group of participants to come and see the group of statues.
7. Ask participants, "What do you see?" Start a discussion on what each person can see in this statue composition. Explain that there is no right or wrong answer, but that, rather, the power of the image is that everyone can see themselves in it somehow, like a mirror.

## Closing

Start the debrief using the following questions:

- Does this relate to some situations you have lived in your life?
- Does this bring memories to you?
- Was there something difficult?

## Tips for facilitators

- Remember, there can be as many interpretations of an image as there are people viewing it. In Boal's words, Image Theatre functions as 'the multiple mirrors of others' views.'
- Working with images leads to a variety of approaches and allows ample space for creativity and imagination. Images create blind spots, and thanks to the opportunity to share experiences, we can bring light to those blind spots.
- Avoid making comments on participants' input; instead, listen actively and provide support if needed.
- You can ask participants where they are focusing their gaze while creating the statue so they can clarify their intention.
- You can also inquire on how the entire composition (with several statues) can change the meaning of an isolated statue.

## Resources

- Boal, A. (1974). Teatro del Oprimido y otras poéticas políticas. Buenos Aires: Ediciones La Flor.
- Boal, A. (1998). Juegos para actores y no actores. Barcelona: Alba Editorial.





## Activity “IMAGINARY LINE” on the floor

<b>Number of participants</b>	6-20	<b>Duration</b>	10-50 minutes; depends on the number of questions
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Sociometry is the doctrine of group structures and interactions developed by J. L. Moreno. It is an excellent way of working that can be used to make visible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure of the group.</li> <li>• The interaction between the members .</li> <li>• The roles of the group members.</li> <li>• Relationship of the group members with various issues.</li> <li>• It is also a good method for giving and receiving feedback.</li> </ul> <p>Sociometry is always a measurement of the moment, not a permanent reality set in stone, and this should be emphasised to the participants. Sociometric work always changes and strengthens group structures when the criteria, i.e. what is measured, have been carefully considered. In this activity you will use the imaginary line - method.</p> <p><b>An imaginary line on the floor</b> is a simple way to look at a group member’s relationship or experience related to some issues. You can also use the line-up to help explore decisions. You can get people to line up based on whether they like or dislike something, such as an idea that was proposed, and then get people to share why they stood where they did.</p>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No materials needed.</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enough free space for people to move around the space. If you want, you can have some symbols on the floor showing the ends of the imaginary line.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. First, warm up with some likes and dislikes related questions while showing an imaginary line on the floor. One end of the line is “complete agreement” and the other end is “complete disagreement”. What do you think of this? “Early morning is the best time of the day”. Go to the section of the line that describes how you feel about early mornings.  
When everyone has found their place, ask their opinions.  
Another statement could be: “Social media and digital platforms strengthen solidarity between people” Do you agree, or disagree? Ask participants to position themselves in the section of the line that describes their thoughts about the topic.  
The third proposition/theme can be: “A single person can change the world,” or “Homelessness (or drug addiction) is the result of a person’s own choices.”  
Ask participants to position themselves in the line section describing their thoughts about the topic.
2. After every question, you can say: Now that you’ve heard others’ arguments, do you want to change your position within the line? It would also be nice to hear why.

### Closing

- Was it easy or difficult to express one's own opinion?
- Was it easy or difficult to hear a different opinion (than yours)?
- Was it easy or difficult to change your own opinion?

### Tips for facilitators

- When a sociometric exercise is done for the first time, the participants' minds may focus more on the technical side (is this the right place, what do others think, etc.), but as they gain experience, it often becomes easier to do the exercises.
- Start hearing the answers alternately from different ends of the line.





## Activity Concentric Circles

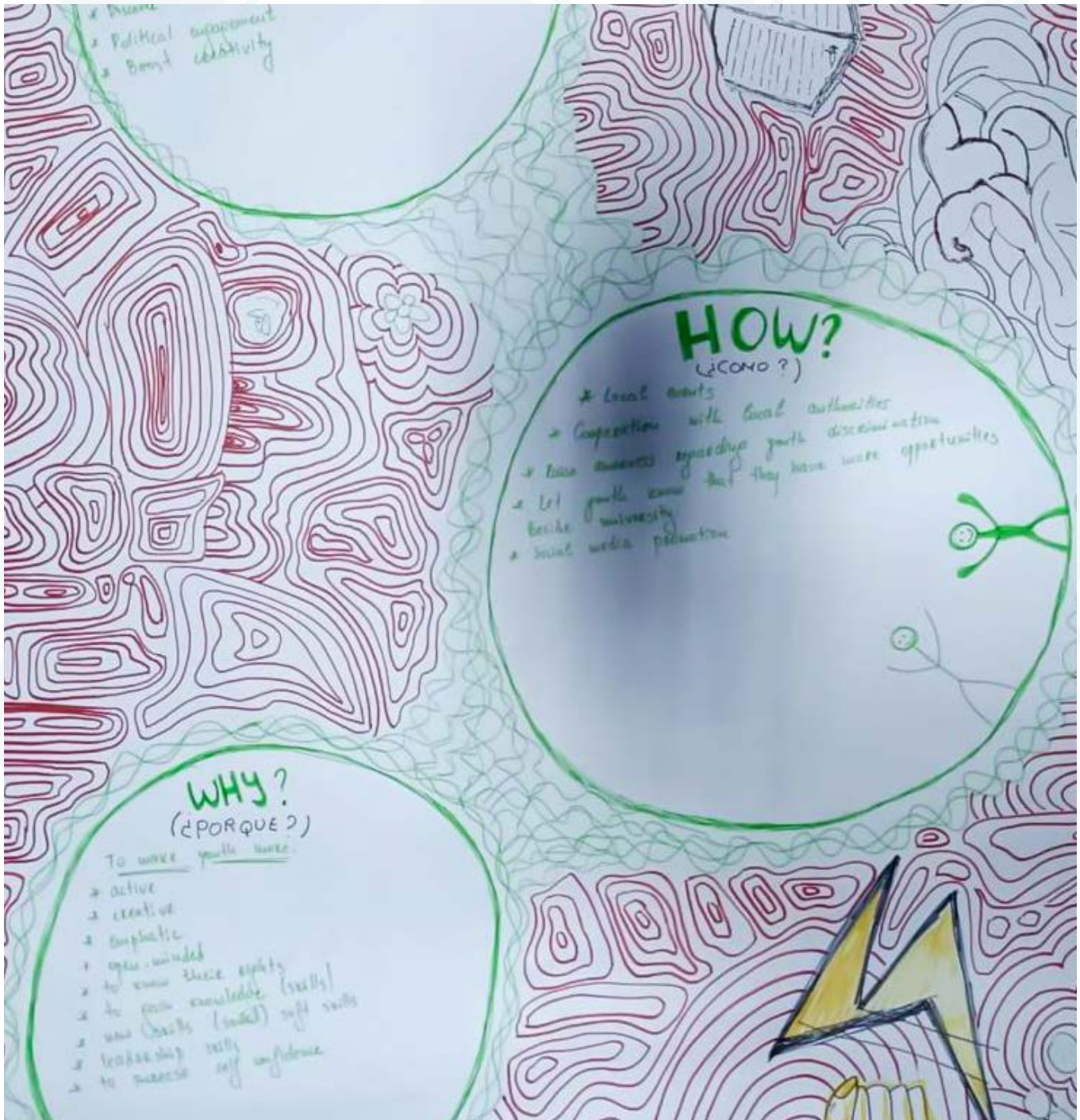
<b>Number of participants</b>	5-25	<b>Duration</b>	60-100 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop an understanding of our underlying reasons to act on a specific topic.</li> <li>To form a connection between personal motivations and the idea of social change.</li> <li>To creatively think about it means to create social change.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flipchart paper.</li> <li>Markers (different colours).</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No preparation needed.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

- Start with an individual activity in which participants think of a hobby, trend or activity they are currently fascinated by. They must then think why they are fascinated by these actions. The participants will notice that it can be more difficult to understand why we like something than how we engage with it or what it entails.
- Then ask the participants to form groups of 4-5 and share their “fascinations” and the underlying reasons, “why” they are fascinated by this particular hobby, trend or activity. This will allow participants to get to know each other better and understand what motivations/reasons underlie our interests.
- Inform participants that they will do a similar activity within their groups. The first step is for the group of participants to think about a social issue they are passionate about/would like to change and a specific objective related to this issue.
- Participants will be given a flipchart paper and asked to draw three concentric circles. They will also be given markers of three different colours, each used for one circle.
- Inform participants that they will have around 10 minutes to discuss each circle. If needed, they can allocate different roles within their groups so that each person has a specific task such as taking notes, keeping track of time etc.
- The inner circle is “WHAT?”. In this section, they will write the objective related to a social issue they agreed on. This could be a statement such as:
  - To increase the number of women and girls involved in sports.
  - To increase the number of young people voting in elections.
  - To raise awareness about mechanisms safeguarding human rights.
- The second circle is “HOW?": Participants must list tools, actions and activities that will contribute to achieving the objective. In addition to traditional means of participation and activation, encourage participants to think about the fascinations they have previously mentioned and ask them to think about how they can integrate their interests with ways to create social change. They could try to integrate their interests to develop innovative ways of addressing social issues and empower the involvement of other people.
- Then they must move on to the final circle, about the core reasons for their motivation and passion to create this change. They must dig deep and write “WHY?” They want to achieve this goal. This may include various reasons such as personal experience, information received, observations, etc.
- Once the groups have completed their circles, they will each present them.
- During their presentations, the group should start with the answer(s) to “Why?”, then “How?” and then “What?”. Each group will have around 10 minutes to present their circles. If time is limited, you may ask participants to stick their circles on the wall for the remaining groups to observe.
- Then ask the participants to join the plenary to debrief the activity.

### Closing

- How did you find the activity?
- Was it difficult to think about certain aspects? If so, which part was more difficult?
- Why do you think it's important to understand the underlying motivations/reasons of our actions?
- How do you think the “why” of the actions can encourage others to join our endeavour?





## Activity Games without language

<b>Number of participants</b>	20	<b>Duration</b>	60 min
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster a sense of connection and solidarity among participants.</li> <li>• Explore how inclusion can be built beyond language, through empathy and body language.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage participants to reflect on how nonverbal communication affects group dynamics and belonging.</li> <li>• Step out of the comfort zone to strengthen trust and cooperation.</li> <li>• Slips of paper with various <b>nouns</b> (e.g., “refugee,” “community,” “friendship,” “teacher,” etc., some related to inclusion/solidarity).</li> <li>• Slips of paper with <b>actions</b> (draw, mime, describe).</li> <li>• Optional: Background music (instrumental or emotionally resonant).</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare word cards that include both neutral and socially meaningful terms.</li> <li>• Prepare action cards.</li> <li>• Arrange the space so participants can move freely and interact.</li> <li>• Have soft background music to set a welcoming tone.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

#### 1. Icebreaker – Human Knot (Silent Solidarity Version):

- Everyone closes their eyes and slowly moves around the space.
- Without speaking, each person grabs the hand of two different people.
- Once everyone is connected, open your eyes.
- **Without letting go or talking, the group must untangle itself.**
- **Solidarity Focus:** This physical task symbolises how inclusion often requires cooperation, patience, and nonverbal understanding.

#### 2. Icebreaker – Human Knot (Silent Solidarity Version):

- Participants form pairs and share 3 short personal facts: 2 truths and 1 lie.
- Partners guess which one is the lie.
- Rotate pairs every 2 minutes.
- **Inclusion Angle:** Encourage curiosity about others’ backgrounds and challenge assumptions lightheartedly.

#### 3. Group Game – Body Language Challenge (Words of Inclusion):

- Break into small teams.
- Each team draws a word related to human connection or social experience (e.g., “friendship”, “exclusion”, “support”, “teacher”, “refugee”).
- They must act out the word using only **body language**; other teams guess.
- **Reflection Point:** After a few rounds, ask: “How did your team decide how to show this word? Did everyone feel heard or seen in the group?”

#### 4. Taboo / Mime Game – Actions of Inclusion:

- Divide into two larger teams.
- Each round, one participant draws a **noun card** and an **action card** (describe, draw, mime).
- The player must communicate the word using the specified action.
- Rotate roles to ensure everyone gets to participate.
- **Inclusion Angle:** To subtly reinforce core concepts include words like “acceptance”, “diversity”, “helping”, “listening”, “belonging” in the word pool.

### Closing

- Gather participants in a circle and invite them to reflect:
- “What was it like to rely only on body language?”
- “Did you feel included in the group? Why or why not?”
- “What does this experience teach us about how we treat people who don’t speak the same language or come from a different background?”
- Allow space for a few voices to share openly.

### Tips for facilitators

- Pay attention to who might be withdrawing or feeling unsure—gently include them.
- Model vulnerability and playfulness to help others open up.
- Highlight how solidarity doesn’t always require words—it can be felt through actions, gestures, and presence.





## Activity From Image Theatre to Forum Theatre

<b>Number of participants</b>	8-20	<b>Duration</b>	45 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage participants to reflect on the topics addressed during the activity.</li> <li>To begin working with the body and forum.</li> <li>To introduce Image Theatre.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A large room or an open space where one can move freely</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up the room/space to be as spacious as possible, free of obstacles.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

- Choose one scene to work with:  
You can choose yourself or divide the group into 2, and when the first half watches the images created by the other, you ask spectators to stay near the image that is stronger or more interesting. In this way, the images that have been chosen by the majority will be the ones with which you'll work.
- Create a sequence:  
Remake the chosen scene. When participants are on the image, ask them to go to their next movement, the next action their characters need and stop a freeze in a new image. Give them a signal or clap your hands so they can improvise and move at the same time.  
Repeat this step 3 more times, so now you have 3 different images.
- Start a forum:  
You can now ask what is happening in this image. Remember, there is no wrong or right interpretation.

### Closing

Guide the session with the following questions:

- What did you think of the activity?
- Was there anything difficult?
- Did you discover anything new?

Explain the purpose of this exercise: free interpretation and collaborative physical representation.



## Activity Playback Theatre - Dance Past Technique

<b>Number of participants</b>	10-30	<b>Duration</b>	30-60 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>The <b>Dance Past</b> technique is designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen teamwork skills.</li> <li>• To study how different attitudes are felt and visible in our bodies and expressions.</li> <li>• To study the tensions that can be caused by the encounter of different attitudes.</li> <li>• Strengthening empathy.</li> <li>• Sharing own experiences in closing.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is good to choose and use rhythmic music in the background. It helps build the dance/marching past.</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audio equipment</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. The exercise will be implemented in groups of four participants. Try to divide people into smaller groups (up to 4 people for each group).
2. Give the group an emotion/ topic to discuss. Explain that they should discuss briefly how these attitudes are reflected in people's actions and how this behaviour could be described through four / five different movements.
3. After the discussion, the group should come up with ideas and choose four or five different movements.
4. Ask them to practice as a series of movements, like they were dancing, by walking across the room (1st step -first movement- 2nd step -second movement- etc.).
5. Consider choosing an example of words to be represented through movements (it depends on the topic of the workshop or the discussion):  
*The theme of the first group is empathy*  
*The theme of the second group is prejudice*  
*The theme of the third group is solidarity*  
*The theme of the fourth group is exclusion*
6. When the groups have practised their movements and are ready, they can begin.  
 Groups 1 and 2 go to stand on opposite sides of the space and start dancing past each other at the same time. This can be repeated a few times. Then groups 3 and 4 do the same.
7. Ask the other group members to observe the dance and the mental images evoked by the dance/movements. If necessary, shake off the unpleasant feeling from the body after the exercise.

### Closing

- What kind of feelings did dancing evoke?
- What kind of feelings did watching it evoke?
- How easily were the attitudes behind the dance recognisable?
- What insights did you gain as a viewer/dancer?
- How much of these attitudes are visible in the world / your life?
- Is there something else you would like to say?

### Tips for facilitators

- In this exercise, it is good to give the small groups enough time to plan different poses and practice expression by dancing.
- Small group dances can also be "mixed" – what happens when prejudiced and judgmental people meet? Or empathetic and solidarity?
- If you have time, you can add lights to the exercise or try a different kind of music.



## Activity Playback Theatre - Conflict Pair Technique

<b>Number of participants</b>	6-20	<b>Duration</b>	30-60 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>The <b>Conflict Pair</b> is a short Playback Theatre technique designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and bring to life internal conflicts experienced by an individual.</li> <li>• Highlight ideas that may not be opposites but clearly pull in different directions.</li> <li>• Provide new perspectives by seeing internal conflict portrayed “on stage” from an outside viewpoint.</li> <li>• Strengthen empathy through embodied storytelling.</li> <li>• Apply the principles of Playback Theatre, which emphasise empathetic listening and improvisational performance to reflect personal experiences on stage.</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific materials required</li> <li>• Optional: rhythm or percussion instruments</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No special setup is required other than creating an open space where participants can sit in a semi-circle, leaving room in the center for the “stage.”</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

This technique allows the group to explore internal conflicts collectively.

#### 1. Setup:

Invite participants to sit in a semi-circle. The empty space in the middle is the stage.

Say: “Who would like to begin by sharing a personal internal conflict? It can be something that came to mind during our earlier work.”

#### 2. Storytelling:

The participant shares their story. The facilitator may ask clarifying or deeper questions to better understand the nature of the internal conflict.

#### 3. Casting:

The storyteller chooses two pairs (four participants) to represent the opposing sides of their internal conflict as actors.

#### 4. Versions of Performance:

The conflict can be explored through two different versions:

##### Version 1 - Physical

- The actors express the opposing sides of the conflict through both words and physical interaction.
- They may push or pull, compete for space, or move in contrast (e.g., one is lethargic, the other lifts them repeatedly).
- Each actor speaks in the first person (“I”) as they represent one side of the same person.

##### Version 2 - Verbal

- Actors begin seated back-to-back. They rotate to face the audience when speaking.
- Each side presents and argues its own perspective verbally.
- At least two rotations are recommended to make both sides of the conflict clear.
- This version often brings out the verbal reasoning or emotional tension more explicitly than the physical version.

### Closing

- How did it feel to see your own inner conflict represented outside of yourself?
- Did you gain a new perspective or insight?
- How did it feel to see the internal conflicts of others? Could you relate to them?
- Did you experience empathy?
- What were the themes of the conflict stories? Were there any common patterns?

### Tips for facilitators

- Choose the version best suited to the nature of the conflict (physical or verbal), or allow each pair to perform one version.
- After the performance, ask the storyteller if the essence of their conflict was captured. If not, the scene can be replayed or adjusted.
- Invite another participant to share their story if time allows.
- If participants are unfamiliar with Playback Theatre methods, provide encouragement.
- Emphasize that this is not about acting skill but about empathy, expression, and human connection.
- Encourage natural use of voice, speech, and body language to convey emotion.
- If using music, focus on matching the emotional tone of the story rather than playing melodies.
- If needed, rehearse the soundscape separately by brainstorming sound elements for a pair of opposing ideas.
- The most important aim is to **share** stories of conflict and to **discover new perspectives through externalization and group reflection**.



## Activity Talk to the head, heart and hand

<b>Number of participants</b>	5-25	<b>Duration</b>	60-90 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop an understanding of the importance of communicating our message</li> <li>To understand the elements needed to communicate a call to action</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flipchart paper</li> <li>Internet access (if applicable)</li> <li>Laptops/smartphones (if applicable)</li> <li>Markers</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No preparation needed.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

- Start a conversation on societal issues that are faced in today's world. At this point, ask participants to express what social issues they observe and face. You may create a list of these issues on a flipchart or board. If they have already discussed social issues/topics in previous activities, they may continue to work on the same topics to ensure continuation.
- Ask the participants to divide into smaller groups of 4-5.
- If applicable, in their groups, they must discuss the social issues listed and decide on one issue they would like to tackle. If there's a social issue currently being focused on, you may skip this step.
- For more information about the specific topic, if applicable, they may use their laptops/smartphones to find key information, statistics or any other relevant data. They can also refer to knowledge they already have about the given topic. You may adjust the duration for research/knowledge sharing based on the available time.
- Following this, inform participants that they are expected to create a campaign message. This will be based on Head, Heart and Hand messaging.  
You may prepare a presentation slide, handout or use a QR code with the information about head, heart and hand messaging or verbally explain.
  - Heart:** How can you make your audience care about the message? What type of emotions do you want to trigger? What language/tone will you use?
  - Head:** What information and facts could strike your audience? What is the concrete data regarding the issue at hand?
  - Hand:** How can the audience help? What can they do? What actions can they take?
- Each group will be given markers and a flipchart paper to list the following:
  - Heart:** For the heart messaging, the groups should list feelings that they would like to evoke.
  - Head:** For the head message, the groups should list information that is key to understanding the social issue. This could include statistics, concrete data or any other relevant information.
  - Hand:** For the hand message, the groups should list what they would like their audiences to do regarding the issue
- Once they have created their lists, they should think about how they want to construct their message. It should be concise and clear. Then they must present their flipchart paper by explaining their thought process and their final message.

### Closing

- What did you think about the activity?
- Do you think this is an effective way of communicating a message? Why?
- What other aspects of creating a message should be taken into consideration?

### Tips for facilitators

- No specific suggestion.

### Resources

- European Youth Forum - Advocacy Handbook  
[https://www.youthforum.org/files/230524-AdvocacyHandbook-150x240mm-digi\\_2023-05-25-092834\\_prmy.pdf](https://www.youthforum.org/files/230524-AdvocacyHandbook-150x240mm-digi_2023-05-25-092834_prmy.pdf)





## Activity Evaluation and Feedback

<b>Number of participants</b>	5-25	<b>Duration</b>	15 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To evaluate the training</li> <li>To express feelings related to the activities implemented</li> <li>To open a discussion on things to improve</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A large room or open space where one can move freely, paper, pens and post-its.</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the paper to set up 3 stations: past, present, future.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask participants to take a moment to think about how they were feeling before the training, how they felt during the training and how the training can impact their future actions.
2. Ask participants to write down in three different post-its the feelings they have been thinking about.
3. Ask them to stick their post-its near the station they belong to. They will have to stick one Post-it for each station.
4. Open a conversation based on what is written in the post-its. People who want to add something are welcome to join the conversation.

### Closing

- Thank everyone for their active involvement in the activities and share some positive thoughts on their commitment and participation.

### Tips for facilitators

Guide the session with the following questions:

- What did you think of the activity/workshop?
- Was there anything difficult?
- Did you discover anything new?

Stress the importance of anonymity to help people express how they feel.



## Activity Sociometric Closing Exercise – Sociometric Selection

<b>Number of participants</b>	6-20	<b>Duration</b>	20-30 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Sociometry is the doctrine of group structures and interactions developed by J.L. Moreno. It is an excellent way of working that can be used to make visible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure of the group.</li> <li>• The interaction between the members.</li> <li>• The roles of the group members.</li> <li>• The relationship of the group members with various issues/topics.</li> <li>• It is also a good method for giving and receiving feedback.</li> </ul> <p>Sociometry is always a measurement of the moment, not a permanent reality set in stone, and this should be emphasised to the participants. Sociometric work also always changes and strengthens group structures when the criteria, i.e. what is measured, have been carefully considered. This form of sociometry is excellent for closing a workshop / giving and receiving feedback.</p>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No materials needed.</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enough free space for people to move around freely.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

In this closing activity, you can give and get feedback.

1. Ask participants to walk in the space and think about the workshop and the discussions that took place.
  2. Ask people to watch other participants as they walk.
  3. Ask them to stop and place their hand on the person's shoulder who expressed their thoughts clearly and well throughout the workshop or activities carried out. They can only choose one person.
  4. When the choices have been made, everyone's reasons for the choice/feedback will be heard. It is important that the speech is addressed to the chosen person directly.
  5. Ask them to walk again in the space and make another choice, but not the same person as before. The next criterion will be to place their hand on the shoulder of the person whose thoughts made them feel strong empathy. They can only choose one person.
  6. Ask participants to start walking again in the space and choose a third person who cannot be the same as the two rounds before. Ask them to place a hand on the shoulder of the person who made them rethink the topic of the session in a new way. They can only choose one person.
- When the choices have been made, everyone's reasons for the choice/feedback will be heard. It is important that the speech is addressed to the chosen person directly.

### Closing

- How does it feel to make choices and give feedback?
- How does it feel to get feedback?
- Is there someone here who didn't get any feedback? (If there is, it is important that participants express their feedback because everyone needs to get some feedback.)

### Tips for facilitators

When a sociometric exercise is done for the first time, the participants' minds may focus more on the technical side (is this really the right place, what do others think, etc.), but as they gain experience, it often becomes easier to make sociometric choices.



## Activity Ball Toss

<b>Number of participants</b>	5-25	<b>Duration</b>	10-30 minutes
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reflect on the workshop</li> </ul>		
<b>Material needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ball</li> </ul>		
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No preparation needed.</li> </ul>		

### Step-by-step instructions

- Participants stand in a circle in which everyone can see each other.
- The person who has the ball has the opportunity to reflect on their experience by answering, "What will you be taking away from this experience?". Once they answer the question, they toss the ball to another participant. This process continues until everyone can speak. If any participants prefer not to speak, they can just throw the ball to someone who has not spoken yet.
- Thank the participants for sharing their feedback and their participation in the workshop.





# 4. Appendix



## 4.1 THE SPANISH LOCAL WORKSHOPS

The YSI-ACT Spanish Local Workshops were an enriching experience, particularly impactful due to their focus on a vulnerable group of young individuals. The program prioritised inclusivity, and activities were adapted to overcome language barriers and ensure every participant felt comfortable.

The workshops were hosted at the Convive Fundació Cepaim in Barcelona, and the facilitators tried to ensure that the activities implemented suited the group context and needs.

### **BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH MOVEMENT AND INTERACTION**

The first session focused on creating group cohesion and a comfortable and welcoming environment for participants. The ice-breaking activities like “Name and Ball” and “Paired Introduction” were useful to learn names and practice quick thinking. At the same time, facilitators tried to build trust within the group using activities such as “Contact Points” and “Nobody with Anybody,” which encouraged physical contact and collective problem-solving without needing a common spoken language. These activities were reinforced by exercises such as “1,2,3 Bradford” and “Encounter in Pairs”, which gave space to non-verbal expression and gave participants the possibility to share experiences through verbal and non-verbal communication.

### **EXPLORING IMPORTANT CONCEPTS THROUGH ACTION**

A significant part of the workshop experience was dedicated to understanding complex social concepts through active participation. During “Welcome to Diversity”, participants physically demonstrated their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, giving space to deep discussions about migration journeys and their contact with prejudice. During the workshops, facilitators also touched upon topics like empathy, prejudice, solidarity, and exclusion. Participants explored these ideas not just through discussion but by creating living statues through Image Theatre, forming physical representations of abstract concepts. This powerful method allowed for several interpretations of these concepts and even the exploration of alternative scenarios, demonstrating that theatre builds capacity for social transformation.

### **CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY AND REFLECTING ON GROWTH**

The idea of the facilitators for these workshops was to help participants discover local resources for implementing solidarity actions and take an active part in the community. Through engaging activities led by representatives from community organisations like Esplai and Cau, participants learned about existing support networks in Barcelona, encouraging them to think of how they could further integrate and build stronger community ties. The workshops culminated in a reflective evaluation, where participants physically positioned themselves to express their satisfaction and acknowledge their newfound knowledge, providing a clear visual representation of the program’s impact.

## TANGIBLE OUTCOMES AND DEEP-SEATED IMPACT

The YSI-ACT Spanish Local Workshops were a great success. The most visible impact was how happy and satisfied the participants were, and how much they learned. Many said the experience helped them feel more confident, especially when it came to speaking in front of others.

People really enjoyed working together. They liked meeting others from different backgrounds, sharing ideas, and learning from each other. The way the workshops were designed to support different languages and comfort levels made it easier for everyone to take part and feel included. One participant said that activities like mime and body movement were especially helpful for migrants, as they helped people feel less afraid and more sure of themselves.

Participants also said they had a much better understanding of important topics like prejudice, solidarity, exclusion, and empathy. They found that acting things out and doing creative activities made these difficult ideas easier to talk about and understand.

Everyone had different favourite moments, but overall, people felt that the workshops made a real difference. They felt more confident, more connected, and more open. It was a space where young people could grow, feel safe, and build a strong sense of community.

### CONCLUSION

By the end of the workshops, participants said they felt more confident, more connected, and more aware of the people around them. The group had become a space of real trust, where everyone was seen and their voices listened to. People left feeling stronger, kinder, and more ready to carry out acts of solidarity in their everyday lives.



## 4.2 THE FINNISH LOCAL WORKSHOPS

Across the four sessions, participants explored solidarity through a series of interactive, reflective, and creative exercises. Each workshop built progressively, deepening both conceptual understanding and embodied experiences of solidarity, while also confronting its opposite forces.

### EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF SOLIDARITY

Participants began by discussing what solidarity means, working in small groups to reflect on definitions and images it evoked. Using rotating stations, they explored concrete examples of solidarity, contexts where it occurs, the emotions it generates for both giver and receiver, and the barriers that prevent it. This structured dialogue highlighted solidarity as communal responsibility, belonging, and goodwill that extends beyond close ties to global respect. By the end, participants shared that the activity allowed them to better articulate both the motivations and the challenges of acting in solidarity.

### ACTS OF SOLIDARITY WITHIN THE GROUP

The second session shifted the focus inward, encouraging participants to identify and enact solidarity within their own group. Warm-up activities fostered playfulness and trust before participants created statues embodying solidarity versus egoism. This visual exploration opened discussion on how these forces shape group dynamics. Groups then listed concrete acts of solidarity experienced within the session and transformed them into still images showing “before,” “during,” and “after.” Observing and interpreting these images made the impact of small acts of care visible, reinforcing empathy and recognition. Participants concluded that noticing solidarity in everyday interactions strengthens group cohesion and inspires replication in other contexts.

### SOLIDARITY AND ITS OPPOSING FORCES – PREJUDICE

In the third workshop, participants engaged in movement and drama exercises to explore inclusion versus exclusion. Through activities like the “counterpart dance,” they embodied empathy and prejudice, experiencing contrasts in atmosphere and group energy. Working with imaginary characters built on stereotypes, participants mapped how prejudice generates emotions and unmet needs. This exercise encouraged reflection on how stereotypes operate in society and in personal perspectives. The session’s outcome was a greater awareness of the mechanisms of prejudice, paired with tools for understanding and addressing its underlying needs.

## SOLIDARITY AND INFLUENCE

The final session emphasized how solidarity translates into influence within communities. Through “cocktail party” style dialogues, participants exchanged personal experiences of solidarity and empathy. A sociometric “imaginary line” exercise helped them position themselves on controversial statements, such as “One person can change the world,” and reflect on how hearing others’ views influenced their own positions. Finally, small groups developed mini-projects on topics they cared about, identifying messages, emotions to evoke, and possible methods of action. These collective exercises underscored the role of solidarity as a force for social influence and personal responsibility. Participants reported leaving with stronger convictions about their ability to act and contribute to positive change.

### CONCLUSION

The activities combined reflection, dialogue, movement, and image theatre to make solidarity a lived experience. Participants reported:

- A clearer understanding of solidarity and its everyday expressions.
- Greater awareness of internal group support and its role in building trust.
- Recognition of how prejudice and exclusion operate, and how empathy can counteract them.
- Inspiration to translate solidarity into influence, seeing themselves as capable of shaping their communities.

These sessions not only generated knowledge but also fostered shared experiences that deepened bonds, empowered participants, and offered practical strategies for applying solidarity in diverse contexts.



## 4.3 THE CYPRIOT LOCAL WORKSHOPS

### THE CYPRUS LOCAL WORKSHOPS EXPERIENCE

The YSI-ACT Cyprus Local Workshops offered a valuable and meaningful experience that engaged youth from the local context. Within the context of the YSI-ACT local activities, two sessions were organized by YEU Cyprus: One session took place in the scope of a retreat in Agros, Limassol, in collaboration with the young leaders program of a local organisation, United Sports Cyprus. The program aimed to empower young people to be agents of positive change and peace by engaging them in activities that inspire, motivate, and lead to positive social change. The second session took place in the YEU Cyprus premises based in Nicosia, Cyprus.

### ICEBREAKERS, NAME GAMES, AND TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITIES

Participants had already established a sense of collaboration prior to the workshops; however, in order to familiarise themselves with the facilitators and the project, an introductory session took place with the participants. This included an introduction to the organization and the YSI-ACT project, aimed at developing an understanding of the project's overall objectives. To ease participants into the process, icebreaking activities and teambuilding activities – such as Encounters in pairs and Points of Contact were implemented. These helped strengthen the existing communication and encouraged interaction among participants who may not have engaged with each other previously.

At the start of the workshop, through the introduction of topics relevant to the project, facilitators were also able to set the tone of the entire session by underlining the importance of respecting diversity of both people and perspectives, and the significance of active listening and mutual respect.

### EXPLORING SIGNIFICANT CONCEPTS AND TRANSLATING TO ACTION

The sessions were designed to ensure the exploration of core concepts within the project – diversity, inclusion, exclusion, empathy, solidarity – and other relevant topics. Through interactive methodologies – including activities such as Welcome to Diversity, Imaginary Line, and Individual Statues – participants were encouraged to reflect on and discuss these concepts.

The young participants eagerly shared their perspectives, experiences and observations, clearly demonstrating a willingness to engage with such themes given a safe platform. A variety of methods – activities that included elements of movement, non-verbal communication, debating, and direct opinion sharing – enabled participants to express themselves in ways that felt most comfortable and natural. The approach of combining different methodologies and activities fostered an open dialogue around issues such as empathy, solidarity, and social action while also enabling an opportunity to practice active listening.

To translate these reflections into action, participants were asked to divide into smaller groups and identify a social issue they felt strongly about. In their smaller groups, they explored these topics in greater depth. The identified issues were topics such as access to culture and arts, the integration of refugee and migrant children, accessibility and transportation issues in the local context, well-being and mental health, and bridging divides between communities across the island.

Overall, the activities serve the purpose of encouraging and initiating dialogue on topics relevant to solidarity, inclusion, and empathy. They also inspire the participants to go a step further by encouraging them to acknowledge that they have the agency to contribute to changes in their communities.

### CONCLUSION

Across all sessions, the workshops emphasised that solidarity is not only an abstract value but also a lived practice. Acts of solidarity foster belonging, resilience, and mutual trust, while also requiring courage to overcome fear, unfamiliarity, or self-interest. By moving between dialogue, physical expression, and reflection, participants gained both a deeper understanding of solidarity and practical examples of how it can be carried forward into different contexts.



## 4.4 THE BULGARIAN LOCAL WORKSHOPS

### EXPERIENCE: FOSTERING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SOLIDARITY AND INCLUSION

Within the YSI-ACT (Youth Action for Solidarity and Inclusion) project, four workshops were carried out in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, led by Active Bulgarian Society (ABS). ABS facilitators adapted the Toolkit activities to the local context, introducing them to a new group of participants. The sessions served both as training and as a gateway into the values of inclusion, diversity, and civic participation.

#### BUILDING TRUST AND GROUP REFLECTION

The first workshop established a safe and open atmosphere. Using the activity “Welcome to Diversity”, participants positioned themselves physically in response to personal statements. The exercise encouraged openness, empathy, and recognition of different lived experiences. It created a foundation of mutual understanding and highlighted the varied backgrounds, privileges, and challenges in the group.

#### COMMUNICATING WITHOUT WORDS

The second workshop explored intercultural communication through a mime-based game. Teams acted out everyday situations without words, sparking laughter while underlining that meaningful connection is not limited to language. This reinforced the message of inclusion and showcased the multiple ways young people can engage across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

These exercises provided a safe framework to acknowledge the impact of discriminatory behaviors while also recognising the universal human needs behind them. The debrief discussions encouraged empathy, awareness of personal biases, and dialogue about how prejudice can be challenged in everyday life.

#### DEBATING PERSPECTIVES

The third session introduced a debate format where participants placed themselves on a spectrum from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” in response to provocative social statements. The activity prompted respectful dialogue, encouraged critical thinking, and revealed diverse viewpoints within the group. It also initiated deeper discussions on discrimination, inequality, and the role of solidarity in addressing social issues.

## COLLECTIVE VISION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

The final workshop centered on the guiding question: “Why and how should we give youth the necessary tools to take active participation in their communities?” Together, participants mapped their answers visually on a shared board, creating a collective vision. This exercise emphasised how youth-led initiatives can generate community change, promote human rights, and reinforce inclusion.

## OUTCOMES AND REFLECTIONS

Over four sessions, young people engaged with solidarity, inclusion, and communication, through movement, games, debate, and creative reflection. The workshops highlighted EU values while offering participants a chance to grow both individually and collectively.

### A participant reflected:

*“These were my first activities with ABS and I immediately felt part of the family. Nobody judged me, and I could always share my thoughts. The best part was meeting people from different cultures and feeling united. It was a fun and powerful way to learn about inclusion and teamwork.”*

## CONCLUSION

The Bulgarian Local Workshops illustrate how non-formal methods can nurture confidence, stimulate dialogue, and build strong community ties. By combining play, reflection, and debate, the activities fostered a sense of belonging and demonstrated the transformative power of youth action for solidarity and inclusion within the YSI-ACT project.



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Co-funded by  
the European Union