



# **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP:**

## **A GUIDE OF PUTTING IDEAS INTO WORK**



NORDPLUS HORIZONTAL  
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# **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP: A GUIDE OF PUTTING IDEAS INTO WORK**

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# INTRODUCTION

Active citizenship is a combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills and actions that aim to contribute to building and maintaining a democratic society and it is one of the most important steps towards healthy communities. Active citizenship means people getting involved in their local communities and building democracy at all levels, from towns to cities and nationwide activity. Active citizenship can be as small as a campaign to clean up your street or as big as educating young people to recognize and strengthen their democratic values and skills which lead to active participation.

Education towards gaining this knowledge and developing and practicing the skills take place in all levels of our shared social life, but schools play a very important role in it. How citizenship is taught in schools can have a profound impact on the development of young people's ability and willingness to participate in public life.

In Finland, citizenship education is integrated in curriculum in upper secondary school and gymnasium as social studies, including matters of family, economy, consuming, and work life, system of justice, power structures and knowledge of the European Union. Citizenship education has always been an essential part of the adult education system, and it is important to have new ideas on how to integrate active citizenship learning in different contexts. The aim of non-formal adult education is to give students a practical approach to active citizenship and improve their necessary skills in how to be active citizens with options to impact.

In Iceland, the national curriculums for compulsory and secondary are built on six pillars of literacy, sustainability, health and welfare, democracy and human rights, equality and creativity. Schools can guarantee youth an opportunity to prepare for active participation in a democratic society, exercise critical and creative thinking and to face diverse social and cultural circumstances.

In Lithuania, there are mandatory citizenship education lessons for 9-10th grade pupils of comprehensive schools. Citizenship education is one of the most important goals of education, according to the National Education Strategy, with a need to find new engaging ways to teach pupils how to be active citizens of their country.

In Norway, citizenship education has never been a special subject in schools, but has emerged as part of the general aspect of socialization. However Norway differs from many other democracies in that their students have one of the highest comparative rates of participation in different civic activities at school. A major cause of this is the close contact between the school and students' parents, as demonstrated by the Norwegian contribution to this book.

According to the project description a main aim for the project was to find and develop

innovative methods of teaching active citizenship through participation that should enrich already existing learning and teaching materials. The four partner organizations of this project all work in different education sectors - higher education, adult education and lower/upper secondary schools that will facilitate and ensure the sharing of best practices and expertise in each of the sectors.

All the participating organizations began the project by carrying out needs analysis in each country. The purpose was to find a mutual ground to accomplish the project. It was fundamental to examine the content of active citizenship education to find a mutual understanding of the topic, valid in Finland, Iceland, Lithuania and Norway. The data from the needs analysis conclusions reveals national perspectives on active citizenship education both from official content and personal views from congenial target groups.

The content of many official documents, curriculums, articles etc. were categorized and key words identified according to the three overlapping perspectives: *structural factors*, *contextual conditions* and *global trends*.

The target groups in the field research were somewhat different. In Finland it was students of KSL Study Centre's School for Politicians. The target group in Iceland was immigrants who had been living for more than a year in the country and former students of Símenntunarmiðstöðin á Vesturlandi, a lifelong learning center. The target group in Norway consisted of former teacher students from Østfold University College. In Lithuania the target group was high school students. Despite the differences of target groups in each partner's country, similar research methods were used, except in Norway where a method of reflective processes was used in the field research. The methods applied were the use of questionnaires, group discussions and answering written questions.





Findings from the field research were categorized in four groups: 1. Interacting effectively and constructively with others, 2. Thinking critically, 3. Acting in a socially responsible manner 4. Acting democratically. The outcome of the analysis led to agreement of dividing the guide book content into four sections; *personal development, communication, active participation* and *global citizenship*.

The following chapters are based on the results from the analysis, and the training methods will hopefully meet the needs of teachers and trainers to apply engaging active citizenship education in their professional settings.

The chosen methods are developed considering and evaluating already existing best practices in the partner countries and have a wide range of application - in formal and non formal education settings, for various ages of learners and institutions, such as upper/lower secondary schools, higher education institutions, adult education centers, youth organizations and local communities.

The most innovative aspect of the project has been to create active citizenship learning materials that are widely applicable to a broad range of local and global issues and education settings. The methods and activities appear as innovative in themselves, varying from a deeper description of a research-based method for supervision and training with reflective teams to a large amount of more or less detailed descriptions of self-directed, cooperative and project based learning activities.

With this exuberant collection of learning materials we wish to promote lifelong learning and stimulate learners to generate ideas from learned theory and put them into work in the real world, according to the aims of Nordplus and the project "Alternative Active Citizenship."

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small, colorful globe of the world. The globe is held in a way that the continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia are visible. The text 'THEME 1: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters with a black outline. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

# THEME 1: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP



# THEME 1: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

## INTRODUCTION

We live in an increasingly globalised and interconnected world. Our world today is shaped by highly complex interdependencies in almost every aspect that touches our lives - socially and culturally through the media, travel and migration; economically through trade and international finance, environmentally through sharing one planet, politically through international political relations.

By definition, global citizenship involves engaging with distant places and different cultures, but this is never undertaken in isolation from our own lives and communities. The focus is rather on exploring what links us to other people, places and cultures, the nature and equality.

Global citizenship aims to build and strengthen young people's critical thinking skills, and their ability to challenge inequalities, injustice and stereotypes and it aspires to strengthen pupils' respect for diversity, for human rights and for the environment. It aims to help them understand the global connections and empower them to take actions themselves, founded on values such as solidarity, inclusion and co-operation.

The essence of education for global citizenship is its commitment to enabling learners to bring about positive change. This requires knowledge to make informed choices, a desire to change things and skills to do so. Active global citizenship is about enabling students to participate fully in a global society, to provide an experience of being able to make a difference through action.

Education for global citizenship does not involve telling people what they should do, but it supports learners in making their own informed choices through critical evaluation of the options open to them and the possible implications of their choices.

## Education for global citizenship – key elements as defined by Oxfam

(Global Citizenship in the Classroom, Oxfam)

| Knowledge and understanding       | Skills                                       | Values and attitudes  |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Social justice and equity         | Critical and creative thinking               | Sense of identify and self-esteem                                     |
| Identity and diversity            | Empathy                                      | Commitment to social justice and equity                               |
| Globalisation and interdependence | Self-awareness and reflection                | Respect for people and human rights                                   |
| Sustainable development           | Communication                                | Value diversity   |
| Peace and conflict                | Cooperation and conflict resolution          | Concern for the environment and commitment to sustainable development |
| Human rights                      | Ability to manage complexity and uncertainty | Commitment to participation and inclusion                             |
| Power and governance              | Informed and reflective action               | Belief that people can bring about change                             |

Oxfam sees the global citizen as someone who:

- Is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen.
- Respects and values diversity.
- Has an understanding of how the world works.
- Is passionately committed to social justice.
- Participates in the community at a range of levels, from the local to the global.
- Works with others to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place.
- Takes responsibility for their actions.

The activities presented in this chapter are learner-centred and interactive, they are skill-based and aim to engage young people and thus empower them to become active and responsible young citizens with a concern and aspirations for a more just and equitable world. They focus specifically on building and strengthening learners' skills, encourage attitudinal change along with increased understanding of global issues. These skills and qualities cannot be developed without the use of active learning methods which involve learning by doing and collaborating with others solve problems, make decisions, think critically, communicate ideas effectively and work well within teams and groups.

A key part of the global citizenship learning cycle, involves reflecting on progress and on what has been learned through action.

In a participatory classroom environment the role of the teacher is often that of facilitator, supporting learners as they learn to assess evidence, negotiate, make decisions, solve problems and work both independently and with others. The teacher has to

encourage learners to consider the global effects of local actions, to think in terms of responsible action that takes account of the law, school policies and ethical considerations. He/she can choose activities that best meet students' needs. The activities can be adapted and used in various combinations.

The choice of methods should be based on the learning contents, with a main emphasis on social and interactive learning. Since global citizenship addresses sensitive issues like racism and forced migration, it is of particular importance to create an atmosphere where all participants are at ease, where free expression is welcome and where conflicts and different opinions are discussed with respect. It is respect that makes it possible to live together and that enables taking responsibility for the way we live our lives. At times being empathetic can be quite challenging, but only when we confront ourselves with different viewpoints we are able to develop critical ways of thinking.

But the main aim of the activities is to provide learners with a clear understanding of active global citizenship and be equipped with the skills to do something positive to effect change.



# GETTING ACTIVE

## Objectives:

- Encourage learners to brainstorm various options for taking action, and think through their relative merits
- Encourage young people to join, organize campaigns in order to spread the word about global issues, injustice and take an active role in the events.
- Provide some basic ideas that could support them to engage with wider movements of people and if they choose, to start their own campaign
- Create change, whether in relation to an issue young people personally feel strongly about, or about change in their school, local community, nationally or internationally
- Develop skills of co-operation, critical thinking and decision-making.

**Age /target group:** School, university students, young people

**Materials needed:** Activity sheets 1-3, pens

## Instructions:

### Activity 1: Pictures

Stick the 4 photos from **Activity Sheet 1** on a wall. Ask everyone to look at the photos.

Ask the group:

- What methods of influencing people's opinions can you see in the pictures?
- Can you see familiar logos?
- Is it easy to run a campaign in the community on a certain issue?
- What are the advantages of grass root activities?



**Activity Sheet 1**



## Activity 2: Opinions

Give each person a copy of **Activity Sheet 2**. There are 5 statement cards that everyone can read and fill in. Discuss the opinions:

### Activity Sheet 2

| I would buy a Fairtrade product |       |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Yes                             | What? |
| No                              |       |

| I would join a Facebook campaign to raise awareness of global poverty. |            |
|--|------------|
| Yes  | Which one? |
| No   |            |

| I would become a volunteer in a community or human rights organization |            |
|--|------------|
| Yes  | Which one? |
| No   |            |

| I would take part in activities on international days |            |
|---|------------|
| Yes   | Which one? |
| No  |            |

| I would take part in a TV program |                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Yes                               | What topic would you choose? |
| No                                |                              |

### **Activity 3: Action cards**

Put all 9 action cards from **Activity Sheet 3** into a box, let everyone choose one card, read them out loud and discuss the statements as a group. Try to diamond rank them as a group in order of which action best suits the group.

Emphasise that there is no right or wrong answer – there will be advantages and disadvantages to every option, and young people should rank them as they think best.

Alternatively students can identify up to nine possible actions that they could take in response to an issue. They write each action on a separate piece of paper. When using ready-made cards, include some blank cards so learners can substitute their own ideas for those on the cards.

### Activity Sheet 3

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>The best action is to find out which organisations can help us, and join their local, national or global campaigns.</p>                        | <p>The best action is to put our arguments to someone in a powerful position, for example, write a letter or an email, send a petition or an opinion survey, or visit them.</p> | <p>The best action is to perform a play on how the issue affects people, for example, in assembly, or in other schools.</p>                                    |
| <p>The best action is to use social media to raise awareness and inspire others to take action.</p>   | <p>The best action is to make a leaflet, poster or collage on the issue and display it to people in school and in the local community.</p>                                      | <p>The best action is to make different choices about your life based on what you have learned, for example, change what you eat, wear and spend money on.</p> |
| <p>The best action is to make a video, audio or photograph presentation to stimulate discussion about the issue, and get people to debate it.</p> | <p>The best action is to raise money and donate it to a charity working on the issue.</p>   | <p>The best action is to work with the media, for example, give a talk on local radio, invite the media to the event</p>                                       |



## Debriefing and reflection:

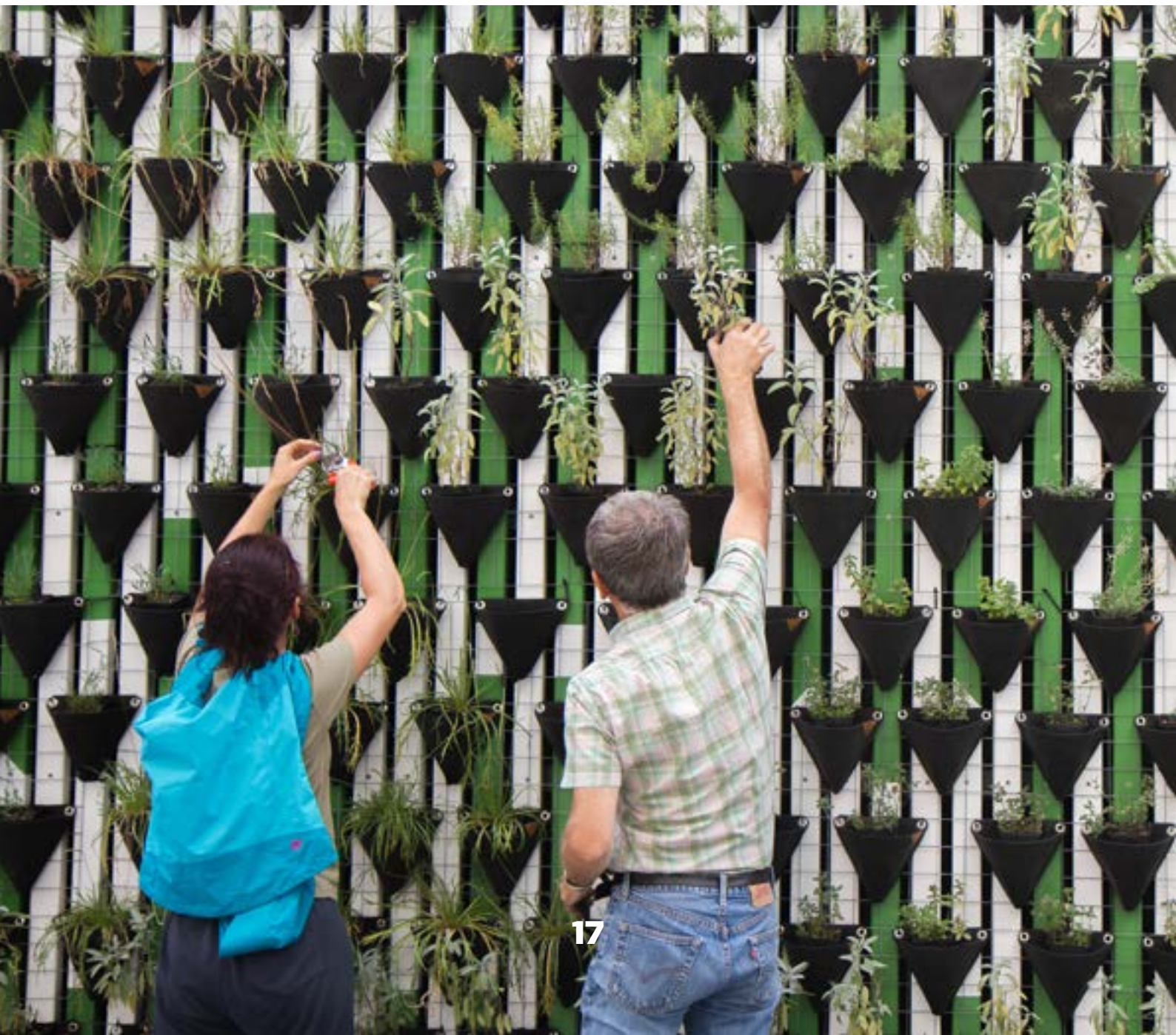
Encourage participants to reflect upon how they take action or start a campaign.

Ask them to think about their impact on the world.

Invite them to find out which local organisations are working in sustainable development, global education or humanitarian aid and start volunteering.

Questions for discussion:

- Do young people feel passionate about something?
- Do they want to make a difference and do something positive?
- Are they aware of the wider world and have a sense of their own roles as world citizens?
- Are they ready to take responsibility for their actions?



# **CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT**

## **Objectives:**

- Encourage young people to examine their own actions as consumers and citizens
- Understand the the impact we have on the wider environment
- Identify ways in which they could contribute to care of the environment

**Age /target group:** School students, young people

**Materials needed:** Activity sheet, pens

## **Instructions:**

- Explain that in many everyday actions, we use the world's resources. Every time we turn on heating, write a letter or eat a sandwich we make an impact. Oil, wood and beef all have to come from somewhere. Oil has to be extracted, processed and transported. Trees have to be grown, logged, transported and processed in different ways.
- Explain to pupils that they can play an active role in conservation. Encourage them to examine ways in which what is taken out of the environment can be put back in, so that land and resources such as water, soil and air can be replenished and are available to future generations.
- Ask pupils for examples of renewable and non-renewable resources.
- Introduce the concepts of Reuse, Reduce, Recycle and ask for examples of how they apply to their lives.
- Ask groups to review their daily life over the previous week, using the worksheet. Include paper use, water use, travel, waste disposal, school lunch contents and packaging etc. to which Re-use, Reduce, Recycle might apply.
- Finally decide on one manageable action the group might take to help the environment.

## **Debriefing and reflection:**

Debrief the activity by asking questions such as these:

- Was there something new that you have learned?
- Was it hard to get the task done? Was it easy?
- Were you suprised how many things around you have sometining to do with?

The activity could be expanded into a Project.

### Activity sheet: The 3Rs

Review your effect on the environment over the past week. List what you, your family or your community could **Reuse**, **Reduce** or **Recycle** to contribute to a more sustainable planet.

| REUSE | REDUCE | RECYCLE |
|-------|--------|---------|
|       |        |         |
|       |        |         |
|       |        |         |
|       |        |         |
|       |        |         |





# REFLECTING STATUES

## Objectives:

- Share experiences related to the topic
- Develop listening and communication skills

**Age/target group:** all age groups, needs motor skills

**Group size:** any size, usually in pairs

**Time:** 30-60 min (depending on the group size)

**Materials needed:** No materials needed

## Instructions:

- This exercise can be used to support the conversation. At the same time everyone in the group gets to participate and rise their own voice to conversation.
- Divide the group into pairs, standing face to face.
- Ask participants to share an experience in their own lives related to subject. For example; you are discussing about recycling: “Tell your partner an experience about recycling in your life. It can be something that made you very happy or something that made you very angry.” It is important that you rise something involving strong feelings – because feelings make it easier to remember and to reflect.
- If the group is big (over 20) you can share it in two – so the presenting part is easier and takes a shorter time.
- Give participants strict timelines. Example two minutes for each to tell the experience and two minutes to shape the statue. Remind that in this task there is no right or wrong, every experience is as good as the other.
- After the first one has shared the experience the other one shapes the statue from the story reflecting the things he heard so that the listener is a sculptor and the story teller is a statue.
- The listener shapes the statue by moving the other limbs by hand or by spoken instructions to the desired position. He can also ask the other to make expressions on her face and whole body.
- When the statue is ready the listener presents it to others: “This statue presents...” telling the things that he pointed out of the story. This part can take some time and the comments are usually welcome, so the discussions can take place. Try still to give the same time for every pair to introduce their statues and stories.
- And then the roles are changed, one of the pairs telling the story and the other shaping the statue.



## **Debriefing and reflection:**

Debrief the activity by asking questions :

- Which part was easier – to be the statue or the sculptor?
- Was it easy to share your experience?
- Did you find any new perspective for your experience when listening to others?



# I PROMISE

Craftivism is a good way to activate thinking and expressing yourself with arts. Using handicraft as a part of learning activates different learners and helps participants to express their feelings and opinions also in different ways.

## **Objectives:**

- Express one's opinion and to make it visible.
- Sew one's promise to be visible on the board after a joint discussion.

**Age/target group:** All age groups, needs motor skills

**Group size:** any size, the discussion part can be done in smaller groups

**Time:** 45-90 min

**Materials needed:** cardboard for everyone (size A4), pencils, needles, thread/wool of different colors and scissors

## **Instructions:**

### **Warm up for the theme:**

You can work on a topic or theme together with a group by the method you choose. Important is to make the participants to think what they are willing to do for the matter. For example:

If the topic is Climate Change, the group can first start talking in groups of three: What means do they know what an individual can do in their daily lives? What concrete choices and actions everyone can make? During the conversation they can collect these ideas to the board or flip. After the means are visible at the board the group can go through these together.

### **Make your promise visible:**

- Ask the participants to choose the appropriate action for themselves to which they can commit.
- Have the cardboards and other supplies ready for the next step.
- First guide the participants to write their own promise on the cardboard with a pencil. Remind them that the letters should be big enough for the sewing.
- After writing or drawing, they make holes over the letters with the needles, about the width of the finger. When the text is pre-perforated, you can start sewing the pattern with the thread. Sew each letter to make it visible by stitching at each hole.

## **Debriefing and reflection:**

- Ask everyone to present his/her own work and justify why he/she chose this act.
- You can also take pictures of every job and share them in social media and can invite others to join the discussion on this topic.

# FASHION AND GARMENT INDUSTRY

## Objectives:

- Make young people to think of their own positions regarding questions on fashion and consumption
- Visualize different opinions and attitudes about the topic within the group
- Raise some important issues in the discussion about fashion/consumption by using provocative worded statements

**Age/target group:** 17+ (can also be adapted to younger participants, depending on the questions you choose)

**Group size:** 10-30 participants

**Time:** 40 - 60 min.

**Materials needed:** 1 paper “I agree”, 1 paper “I disagree”

## Instructions:

- Start the activity with a quiz, which could be as an icebreaker and provides more knowledge of the interdependence of the consumption habits in Europe and international garment industry.
- Think of polarizing statements connected to the topic of fashion and garment industry. Try to find a good mix between local/global, personal/social, easy/serious, political/economical dimensions.
- Prepare the room, so that you have enough space for this exercise.
- Put two papers in two corners of the room and make sure that there is enough space between them.
- Ask the participant to stand on the FASHION BAROMETER (the invisible line between “I agree” and “I disagree”) according to their own opinion to the statements the teacher reads out loud.
- After each question ask some of the participants to tell the group why they stand on this specific place between “I agree”/”I disagree”.
- Tell the participants that they could move and even change their position during the process of “explaining your opinion
- **Note:** Important: just ask them, don’t judge the answer! And try to avoid that the participants start a discussion. This exercise is more about making different positions visible and not about direct discussing.

## Suggestions for statements:

- My clothes help me to express my personality.
- Garment workers in Bangladesh should feel happy to at least have a job.
- Our generation is much more addicted to fashion then the generations before.
- To call for a boycott of clothes made in Asia is the only way to support workers’ rights.
- I am a fashion victim.

- Workers unions have a bad influence to workers and just cause problems.
- Fair trade clothes are too expensive for young people.

## **Debriefing and reflection:**

After the exercise you can ask the participants to sit down and start the feedback. Following questions could be:

- How did you like this exercise?
- Was it easy to decide where to take position?
- Was it difficult to just listen to the statements of the others without answering spontaneously?
- Did you realise something you knew before but never reflected on?



| QUESTION  | ANSWERS  |
|---|--|
| What is the main material your Jeans are made of?   | <b>A cotton</b><br>B wool<br>C synthetic fiber<br>D linen  |
| In which countries are the majority of our clothes produced?  | A Germany, Austria and Switzerland<br>B Italy, France and Portugal<br>C USA, Canada and Australia<br><b>D Bangladesh, China and Cambodia</b>   |
| What is the name of organizations of workers that fight for their labour rights in Europe and in other countries? | A NGOs<br><b>B unions</b><br>C cliques<br>S networks   |
| What is the name of a movement in Europe that tries to re-use different materials and products by themselves?     | A Everything-alone movement (EA movement)<br>B Yes-we-can movement (YWC movement)<br>C Why-the-fuck-not movement (WTTFN movement)<br><b>D Do-it-yourself movement (DIY movement)</b> |
| What groups of young people in Europe do commonly criticize fashion labels and conventional consumption?          | A hippies and skater<br>B punks and skater<br><b>C hippies and punks</b><br>D emos and skater  |
| How many kilos of old clothes per person per year end up in the trash in Germany and Austria? <sup>1</sup>        | A 30 kilos per person/per year<br>B 4 kilos per person/per year<br>C 45 kilos per person/per year<br><b>D 15 kilos per person/per year</b>   |
| What is a new trend among young people to re-use old clothes?   | <b>A organizing clothes swap parties</b><br>B doing online shopping<br>C throwing clothes into the trash<br>D passing their old clothes to their younger sisters and brothers        |
| How much water is needed to produce one single T-Shirt?   | A 5 litres<br>B 100 litres<br>C 500 litres<br><b>D 2000 litres</b>   |

<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.wearfair.at](http://www.wearfair.at)



# HUMAN RIGHTS BINGO

## Objectives:

- Share the knowledge and experiences of human rights
- Know that human rights are relevant for everyone and everywhere
- Encourage respect for other people and their opinions

**Age group/target group:** School students, young people

**Group size:** No limits

**Time:** 10-20 min.

**Materials needed:** The quiz sheet and a pencil per person, flipchart paper and markers

## Instructions:

- Familiarise with the basic rights listed in the UDHR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> and <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> )
- Hand out the quiz sheets to the participants
- Explain that people should find a partner and ask them one of the questions on the sheet. The key words of the answer should be noted down in the relevant box and to get a different person to answer each question.
- The pairs then split and find others to pair up with.
- Whoever gets an answer in every box first shouts out "Bingo!" They win.
- Move on to the discussion. Take the question in the first box and ask people in turn to share the answers they received. List the key words on the flipchart. Allow short comments at this stage
- When the chart is complete, go back and discuss the answers in each box more fully.

## Debriefing and reflection:

- Were all the questions related to human rights? Which rights?
- Which questions were the hardest to answer? Why?
- Which questions were the most controversial? Why are rights controversial?
- How did people know about human rights and human rights violations? Do they trust the sources of the information?

## Activity sheet: HUMAN RIGHTS BINGO

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| The name of a document that proclaims human rights | A special right all children should have                    | The sister organisation of the Red Cross                     |
| A right denied to some people in your country      | A human right that has been denied to you personally        | An organization that fights for human rights                 |
| A duty we all have in relation to our human rights | An example of discrimination<br>A right sometimes denied to | A right sometimes denied to women                            |
| Someone who fights for human rights                | A violation of the right to life                            | An example of how someone's right to privacy may be violated |

Source : Compass – A Manual on human rights Education – A Council of Europe Publication, 2012

# TAKING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TEMPERATURE

## Objectives:

- Evaluate school's human rights climate in the school
- Encourage discussion about strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Suggest actions for human rights education

**Age /target group:** School students

**Materials needed:** The questionnaires related to human rights in school

## Instructions:

- Have participants evaluate their school's human rights climate by completing the survey questionnaire. They have to read each statement and assess how [accurately](#) it describes their school community in the blank next to it. They have to keep in mind all members of the school – students, teachers, administrators and other staff. At the end, participants total up their score to determine overall assessment score for their school.
- Prepare for class discussion by creating a 1-4 rating scale on a large piece of paper and ask participants to call out responses to each item.
- Discuss the findings from the survey, drawing on the following questions to move from analysis and evaluation to development of action plan.
  - In which areas does your school appear to be promoting human rights principles?
  - In which areas do there seem to be human rights problems? Which of these are of particular concern to you?
  - What needs to be done to improve the human rights climate in your school?
- Review questionnaire, stressing the importance of assuming responsibility and acting accordingly. Think about what the participants might do to improve the human rights situation.
- Decide on a short list of options for action and discuss it thoroughly.

## Activity sheet: THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON HUMAN RIGHTS CLIMATE IN SCHOOL

Rating scale: 1- no/never 2- rarely 3- often 4 – yes/always

Total temperature possible - 48 human rights degrees.

| RATING | STATEMENT   |
|--------|---|
|        | My school is a place where students are safe and secure.  |
|        | Members of the school community are not discriminated against because of their lifestyle choices, such as manner of dress, associating with certain people, an non-school activities.   |
|        | My school provides equal access, resources and activities for all individuals.  |
|        | Members of my school community will oppose discriminatory or de-meaning actions, materials, or remarks in the school.   |
|        | When conflicts arise, we try to resolve them in non-violent and collaborative ways.   |
|        | In matters related to discipline (including suspension and expulsion), all persons are assured of fair, impartial treatment in the determination of guilt and assignment of punishment. |
|        | A person accused of wrongdoing is presumed innocent until proven guilty.  |
|        | My personal space and possessions are respected.  |
|        | My school community welcomes students, teachers, administrators, and staff from diverse backgrounds and cultures.   |
|        | Members of my school have the opportunity to participate (individually and through associations) in democratic decision – making processes to develop school policies and rules.        |
|        | Members of my school community have adequate time for rest during the school day and work reasonable hours under fair work conditions.  |
|        | I take responsibility in my school for ensuring that other individuals do not discriminate and that they behave in ways that promote the safety and well-being of my school community.  |
|        | <b>Your school's temperature</b>  |

Source: The European Convention on Human Rights. Starting points for teachers.

## **IDEAS FOR ACTION:**

- Start a discussion or debating group in your school or college to discuss the human rights issues in your community or country and invite guest speakers from local government, NGOs, etc.
- Write articles for your school/college magazine.
- Develop a web site about your interest in human rights.
- Organise fundraising events for a local charity or global emergency.
- Get publicity for the work through local radio, newspaper , social media.
- Become a volunteer in a community or human right organization
- Start a school project with young people on human rights and make a video of the project for publicity
- Establish a self-help group to work with other young people with learning difficulties
- Take part in activities on international days for human rights events.





# SENTENCE BUILDING

This activity is focused on the importance of shared goals and objectives-particularly when trying to resolve differences. Sometimes, the only thing two or more people can agree on is what they want to accomplish. This can be especially true during times of conflict or when communication is strained.

What this activity shows us is that when we find a way to focus on a common objective, we can overcome many of the challenges we are facing. Even if the outcome is not perfect-like the grammar in some of these sentences-we can still achieve some success by establishing an objective.

## Objectives:

- Practice participants using a shared goal to overcome obstacles
- Develop creativity skills

**Age /target group:** School students, young people

**Time:** 15 -30 min.

**Materials needed:** Flipchart paper and markers, tape

## Instructions:

- Break the group into teams with between five and ten people each.
- Have each team line up in front of a blank flipchart that has been taped on the wall
- Give the first person in each line a marker
- Explain to the teams that they are to write a sentence on their flipchart by having each person on the team to write one word. Sentence can be in any form: question, statement, or exclamation.
- Explain to the teams that they are not allowed to speak to one another during the activity
- The first person in the line writes the first word and the last person writes the last word and punctuation mark.
- Specify a topic or theme for this activity. This helps to create an additional discussion point later. For example you may ask to write a sentence about gender stereotypes. The main benefit of assigning a topic is to find out what people are thinking about that topic or idea
- The team must create a sentence that makes sense.
- Ask the participants to read their sentences and find out how they think it went.
- Once each team has written a sentence, and read it aloud, have the teams move to another team's flipchart and write another sentence that pertains to the previous team's topic. They must still follow the same rules. Continue this changing until each flipchart has three or four sentences on it about a particular topic. The more sentences they are able to write, the more the group has to talk about.
- End the activity by telling everyone they did a nice job on their sentences.

## **Debriefing and reflection:**

The questions for discussion:

- How did you decide what word to write first?
- How did you decide how or when to end the sentence?
- How did you communicate without talking?
- Was it difficult to add to other teams' sentences?
- What were some of the obstacles you had to overcome in order to achieve the goal?



# GET PLANNING AND DOING

## Objectives:

- Explore possible ideas for taking action
- Investigate the local and global effects and plan how best to implement them
- Support students in making detailed plans on what they need to do to be active
- Consider the local and global effects of the action.

**Age /target group:** School students, young people

**Materials needed:** Activity sheets, pens

## Instructions:

- List possible actions on the action list table and consider each one using the questions (Activity sheet 1)
- Choose which action is most acceptable and interesting for the group
- Use already completed graphics to complete the Action plan template (Activity sheet 2 ). The boxes need to be filled in before the action begins, and the white last box after the action has happened.
- It is possible for students to choose one action for the whole class, or for smaller groups to plan and implement their own actions. In most cases it may be best to plan a schoolbased action before a community-based action at the beginning. The advantage of a school-based action is that it is easier to judge the needs of the school community and manage the project simply because the students are members of it and know it well.
- Actions chosen by students may include the following: making a video highlighting the issue of pollution; setting up a peer education project around issues of human rights, democracy, refugees, racism, HIV/AIDS, volunteering, etc.; giving presentations to school community on recycling; developing a play about youth crime to be performed by a theatre group.
- Make an account of the action as it happens. Include what evidence was collected at each stage, eg photographs, leaflets, video or tape recordings, stories, pictures.

## Debriefing and reflection:

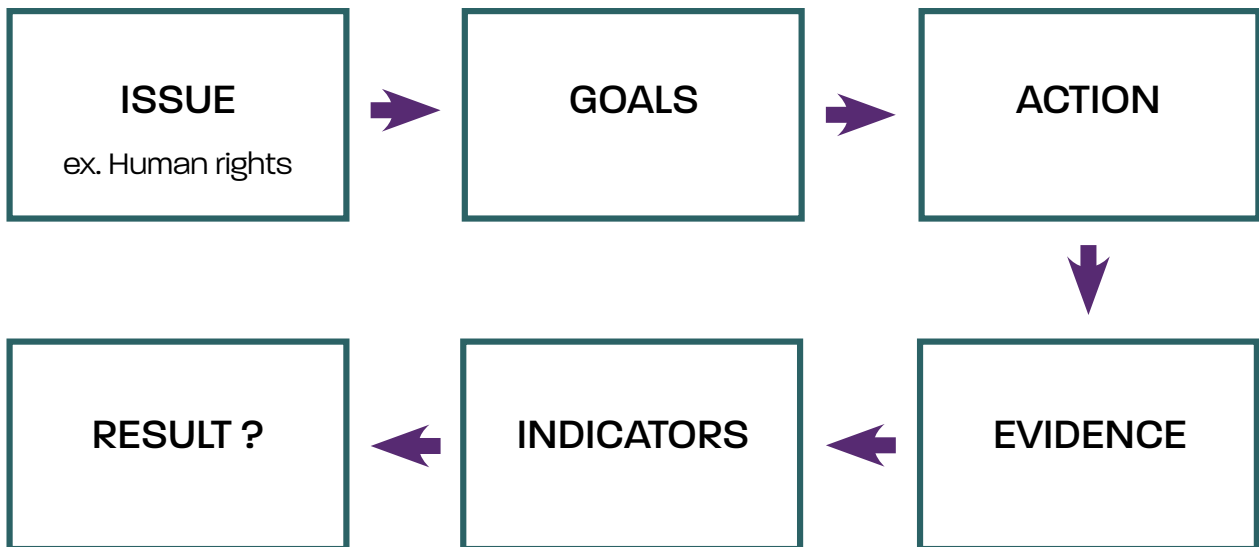
Discuss how well the group worked together; whether the action made a difference; how it affected each individual; and what could be done differently next. Questions for discussion:

- Did the group have enough information, resources?
- What were the challenges?
- Did the action make a difference?
- How would you like to make a difference next time?
- Do you think that you are an active citizen?

## Activity sheet 1: CHOOSING THE ACTION

| The action | How long it will take for planning | Local and global impacts of the action | Who could help us | What difficulties may arise |
|------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------------|
|            |                                    |  |                   |                             |
|            |                                    |  |                   |                             |
|            |                                    |  |                   |                             |
|            |                                    |  |                   |                             |
|            |                                    |  |                   |                             |
|            |                                    |  |                   |                             |

## Activity sheet 2: ACTION PLANNING



## **REFERENCES:**

Council of Europe (2007). Compass - A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People

Council of Europe (2002). The European Convention on Human rights. Starting points for teachers.

ERASMUS Program (2017). Global education. Tools for Trainers and Facilitators.

European Commission (2014). Youth of the World! – mainstreaming global awareness in youth work.





# **THEME 2: ACTIVE PARTICIPATION**

# THEME 2: ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

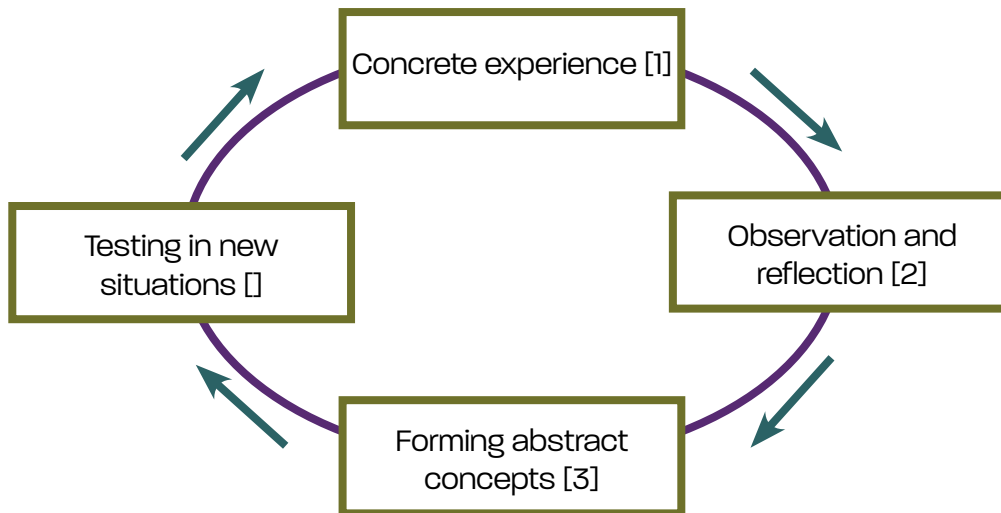
## INTRODUCTION

Active participation in civic engagement is vital for the society to thrive. The civic domain contains all kinds of acts and moral dilemmas, and sometimes situations where civic values are challenged. Individuals must decide whether to act or not, as well as how to act, in response to situations. The reasons that lead people to civic action can be either moral motivations or self-interested motivations. When individuals act to uphold or restore the civic values or out of a desire to help others, they are demonstrating moral motivation. When they engage in civic activity to support personal growth, or feel good about themselves, they are demonstrating self-interested motivations. But individuals can obviously be driven by both in their civic engagement. However; it is an important fact that the distinction between moral and self-interested civic motivations is critical in understanding differences in civic commitment.

The concept of „active citizenship“ indicates working towards a better society with economic participation, official service, volunteer work and other matters implying better life conditions for everybody in the society.

When training democracy and citizenship the focus must be on the individual's experience and methods should support sincere and open communication. The training must revolve around the individual and his communication with others, how the identity of an individual and a group is and forms, and the circumstances which evolve when people live in a society. The main goal is to foster democracy and human rights, so each individual finds it easier to participate in this mutual task of making a society. Education about active citizenship can help students to become more active citizens and to make responsible decisions in their society. Participation is the key to encourage and strengthen democratic culture built on awareness and support of certain core values, such as human rights, freedom, equality and provision of laws. Participation in democracy is demanding but it can be trained.

Experience learning involves acquisition of abstract concepts that can be applied in a range of situations. In Kolb's theory the motivation for the development of new concept is provided by new experiences. "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." (Kolb,1984).



Experience learning is a valid theory to keep in mind when applying all training in active participation. Individuals have experience, the experience is observed and reflected upon, then concepts are formed and tested in new situations. Trying methods in the classroom can either be a precursor or follower in training situations, giving participants the opportunity to reflect on prosocial acts built on motivations. Trainees should be encouraged to think globally but act locally. Various prospects can be useful and be linked directly to the training such as:

- Networking/finding a community of like-minded people
- Civil society organisations/local groups
- Discussion/conversations
- Election/voting
- Politics/changing laws
- Volunteering/helping others
- Organizing events/going to events

# BRAINSTORMING

## Objectives:

- Produce ideas, thoughts and solutions for further work
- Encourage participants to think without criticism
- Take advantage of different perspectives and experiences, free from conceptual thinking

**Age group:** 12->

**Group Size:** No limit, share a big group into small groups of 3-8 participants

**Time:** 30-45 min

**Materials needed:** Depending on implementation, note tools, drawing tools.

## Instructions:

- These new ideas are for everyone to know and to use in the future. It is important that the director knows how ideas or solutions can be put into practice after this exercise.
- Depending on the size of the group, it is possible to do the exercise in divided groups: for example, a group of more than 20 people can be divided into half. The director takes care of a good and relaxed atmosphere before and during the exercise. If necessary, you can do a warm-up exercise before doing brainstorming, for example a word association.
- First, the rules of brainstorming are agreed upon: criticism is forbidden and everyone has the responsibility to participate. You must also agree on how ideas are put up and shared. No idea is incorrect and all ideas are worth noting.
- Ideas can be made, for example, in a ring or in a free order. Or by throwing the ball from one participant to another. Time needs to be given to the task as it must first be possible to produce the most common solutions. Thoughts are freed from concise solutions slowly, with time increasing creativity. The director should also give a few examples, so that the participants realize that there are no limitations for ideas.
- Brainstorming can also be carried out in writing, so that everyone writes up their own thoughts in turn.

## **Debriefing and Reflection:**

The purpose of Brainstorm is to produce ideas, thoughts and solutions for further work. Dissection can go through ideas and vote or agree on thoughts or solutions that can be raised in handling.

It is important that the director has considered the way in which ideas are processed. In the future, for example, you can compile the solutions available in small groups or prepare events based on ideas.

Expected learning outcome:

Eventually the exercise should have produced new ideas, thoughts and solutions for further work. The participants have tried to think without criticism, they have taken advantage of different perspectives and experiences, and become free from conceptual thinking.





# WHO AM I?

## Objectives:

- Make students be more aware of their own specialties and others and know what they have in common with others.
- Encourage solidarity and respect.

**Age group:** 12->

**Group Size:** 8+

**Time:** 25–40 minutes

**Materials needed:** Photos/pictures (from magazines and newspapers) of people of different origin.

**Methods:** Active learning, cooperative learning, reflection.



## Instructions:

- Each student chooses 3-4 pictures. They note down a few things they conclude about each picture.
- The teacher directs group discussions – asks various questions:
  - Who are the people?
  - Where do they live? In a city? In the country site?
  - What are they like?
  - What do they like? What do they dislike?
  - How do they feel?
  - What kind of families do they have?
  - What do they do for a living?
  - What is their culture like?
  - What do they have in common? What is different? In comparison to the students? Is it okay to be different? Why?
- Summon up: What do students learn about themselves and how does it relate to human rights? What did they think about the diversity and how can it be difficult and rewarding to live in a multicultural society? What are their prejudgement about the people?

## Debriefing and Reflection:

Who am I? I am what I am, you are you who are, she is who she is, but we have a lot in common. Group discussions about what it is to be a human, to be yourself, and let others be themselves. The right to be who you are, equal right for honour and respect, the right to be included, the right to enjoy freedom and security. The right to be a citizen.

**Expected learning outcome:** Students should be more aware of who they are in relation to others, what their specialties are and what they have in common with others. Solidarity and respect for other humans will have increased.

# WHO ARE WE?

## Objectives:

- Get to know each other
- Realise what we have in common in spite of differences.

**Age group:** 12->

**Group size:** Pair work

**Time:** 15- 20 minutes.

**Materials needed:** No material needed.

**Methods:** Sharing stories, sharing experiences.

## Instructions

- Pair participants together two and two.
- Tell them to think of a personal story from their own life, that they should share with each other. Give them about five minutes for each story.
- Then tell them to retell their partner's story as if it were their own story.
- (It is also possible to give them more direct instructions about their story, to tell about when a certain thing happened in their life, for example when they encountered another foreigner for the first time, or when they experienced feeling foolish or left out e.t.c. depending on the group).

## Debriefing and Reflection:

Participants will be amazed how we can relate to each other stories, and how we listen and learn from each other. They will also understand that humans have incredibly much in common.

**Expected learning outcome:** Students have realised that they have a lot in common in spite of differences.

# DO YOU HEAR OR SEE WHAT I DO?

## Objectives:

- Get understand how people can see and interpret exactly the same things differently
- See other's point of view

**Group size:** 6+

**Time:** 15- 20 minutes.

**Materials needed:** Pictures or any statements prepared ahead, paper and pens

**Methods:** It is good that students feel in their own skin that not everybody thinks alike. Try the following exercise to show it to them.

## Instructions

- Write a statement to the participants or show them a picture.
- Ask all of the them to write on a piece of paper what comes to their mind when they see this or hear.
- The papers should be anonymous and gather them when everybody has written something.
- Then everything is read aloud to the group. The students are asked if everybody was thinking and writing the same?
- Then discuss why/why not? Ask if they can see or think about what the other person saw.

## Debriefing and Reflection:

Participants will be surprised how different they can view the same thing, and how it is possible to see things from others point of view. How it is possible to put your self in others' shoes.

**Expected learning outcome:** Students have an undstanding about how people can see and interpret exactly the same things differently.

# WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

## Objectives:

- Think about the concept Democracy and realise that there are different definitions
- Be able to distinguish different ideas about democracy

**Methods:** Active learning, participative learning, cooperative learning

**Group:** Size doesn't matter

**Time:** 3 x 45 minutes.

**Overview:** This a group project where students gather information, analyze them and represent. Equal right and respect.

**Material:** Paper, pens or computers. Large carton, markers or computers and a projector.

## Instructions:

- Students are divided in groups (3–4 in each group).
- Homework: to interview someone (a friend, a family member, co-worker etc.) about how they see and interpret democracy. It is desirable that interviewers are from a broad group of people.
- Students surf and find more information about democracy online (official definitions).
- Students make posters with their findings or use a computer and a projector.
- Students present their findings.
- Teacher leads and directs discussions about definitions of democracy, are there any contrasts between what their interviewers maintained compared to official definitions. What was similar, and what was different?
- Summary and evaluation; discussions. Was the any surprise? Were the definitions different and what could be the reason. The teacher and the participants discuss their findings.

## Debriefing and Reflection:

What were the different definitions and would they have thought something else?

**Expected learning outcome:** Students have thought about the concept Democracy and realised that there are different definitions. They should be able to distinguish different ideas about democracy.



# ELECTIONS: HOW CONVINCING ARE YOU?

## Objectives:

- Think about disputes in a democratic society
- Practise listening, talking and persuading skills
- Encourages cooperation

**Group:** Size doesn't matter

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Overview:** Discussions about rights and responsibility related to democracy, democratic discussions. The right to participate in a democratic process, the right to have opinions and express yourself (freedom of speech).

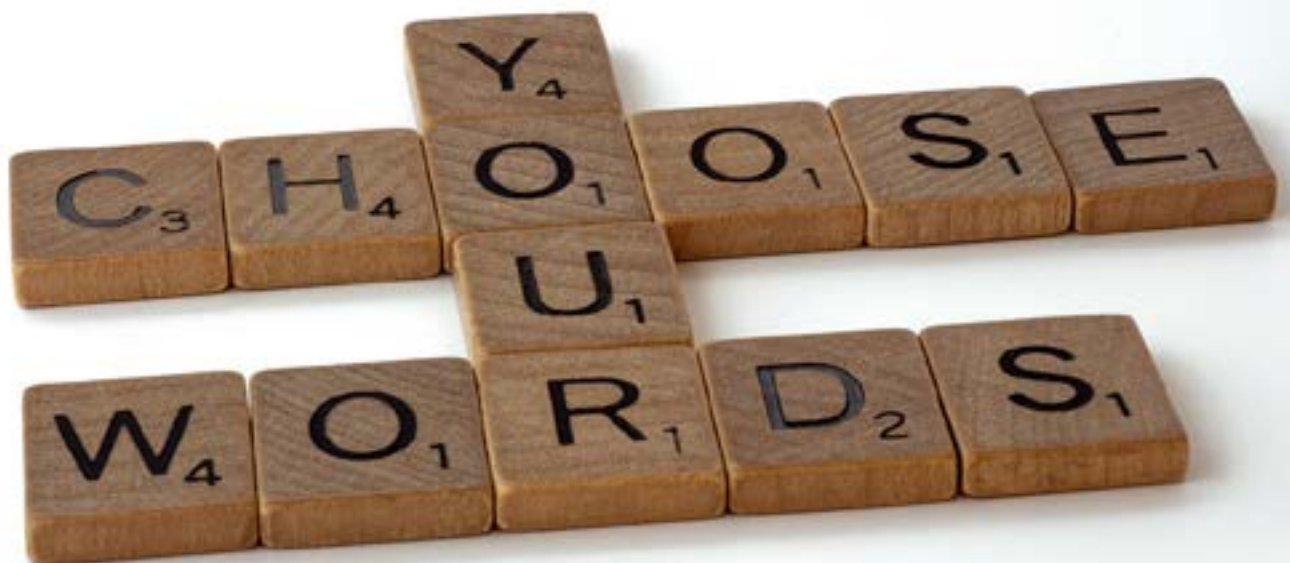
**Methods:** Active learning, cooperative learning, reflection, participative learning

**Material:** Paper (cartons size A4), markers, glue, small cards and pens. Chairs.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Two cartons are made which say either **agree** or **disagree**. They are put upon each end of a long wall. Be careful that there is enough space along the wall to make a straight line. Two chairs are put in the middle of the room, with 50 cm space with between them and enough space around them so participants can move around freely.

- Point out the cartons (**agree** and **disagree**) at each end on the wall, and explain that you are going to read a statement which they will either agree or disagree with more or less.



- Choose on a statement from the list below and read to the group.
- Tell the students to place themselves along the wall between the cartons depending on how much they agree or disagree. If they agree totally or disagree they should stand as close to the cartons as they can, or else somewhere between.
- When the students have placed themselves along the wall, the two who stand closest to each carton are invited to take a seat on the chairs. The other students gather around the chairs, i.e. behind the person they „most“ agree with and if they are indecisive they place themselves between the chairs.
- Give the people who are sitting one or two minutes to explain why they agree or disagree the statements. No One can interrupt or help them.
- When the minutes have passed, the other students place themselves behind one of the chair – everybody must take a side and no one is allowed to be indecisive. Now we have one group for the statement and another against it. Each group gets ten minutes to prepare arguments which support their opinions, and to choose a new spokesperson to present the arguments.
- The groups meet again and the new spokesmen sit in the chairs, surrounded by their supporters.
- Each spokesperson gets about 3 minutes to present the arguments and after that people can change their opinion and join the other group if they think their arguments where convincing.
- The groups now get five minutes to find further arguments and a third spokesperson is chosen from each group. After they have expressed their views, the students have another opportunity to change their mind and join the other group if they want.
- Finally there is a sum up with everybody

#### **Statements that the teacher can choose from:**

- *We are ethically committed to use our vote in elections.*
- *We should obey to all laws, even those which are unjust.*
- *The only people who have any democratic power are the politicians.*
- *People get the leaders they deserve.*
- *It is the responsibility of the citizens to monitor the acts of the authorities.*

#### **Debriefing and Reflection:**

- What is the purpose and process of discussions like these, and what are the reasons to evaluate constitution where many different forces and institutions are involved.
- Did anybody change their opinions during the discussions, if so what were the arguments that convinced them?
- Did the students experience peer pressure or other influence rather than changing because of the real arguments?
- For those who didn't change their minds, was there any purpose of talking about the case? Could they imagen any argument that could persuade to change their mind?
- Why do people have different opinions? What should be done about it in a democratic society? Should all opinions be tolerated in a democratic society?



- **Other issues for the teacher:** The first part, when the students are placing themselves along the wall shouldn't take more than few minutes. The main thing here is simply to get the students in a starting point, so they can see where they stand in comparison to others.
- The purpose of the exercise is to practice communication skills and persuasiveness, as well as think about the statements. Hence students should be to encourage the students to think not only about what sentiments they have privately and how they present them, but also what kind of arguments are most convincing and how to persuade others. Each and every one should get as many as possible on their side. They can use the time in between to consider a different view and think about ways to weaken it.
- It is possible to use other issues (statements) as good ground for discussions as those which are represented here. Most important is to choose a statement that not everybody agrees upon.
- Please observe that it could take 30 minutes to discuss one statement as going a few rounds in the discussions.
- It is also possible to have different implementations, according to the group's premises.
- For example to go more rounds, so more students can be spokesmen. To encourage people to find arguments against their own etc.

**Expected learning outcome:** Students are aware of disputes in a democratic society, they have practised listening, talking and persuading skills. They have exercised cooperation.

# A HOT CHAIR

## Objectives:

- Think about disputes in a democratic society
- Practise listening, talking and persuading skills
- Encourage cooperation.

**Group:** From 8 up to 16.

**Time:** 45 - 90 minutes.

**Overview:** Discussions about rights and responsibility related to democracy, democratic discussions. The right to participate in a democratic process, the right to have opinions and express yourself (freedom of speech).

**Material:** Chairs

## Instructions

- This exercise can be good as a warming up because participants will have to avoid to find supporting arguments for their opinions.
- The chairs are arranged in a way it is possible to move around them, but now you have two more chairs than the number of participants.
- They sit on the chairs, and turn their backs to each other in two rows where an empty chair is at each end.
- Tell the participant that you are going to read a few statements aloud.
- Read each statement twice. Those who agree with the statement sit still, but those who disagree or are not sure shall change a seat. They should not speak or say anything. Start reading from a list you have made beforehand.

- When you do this exercise for the first time you can use the following list:
  1. Red is the most beautiful colour in the world
  2. Fish is my favorite food
  3. Men should always wear a tie at work
  4. Women should wear more makeup
  5. Men are smarter than women
  6. I support equality
  7. Muslims should attend their own school
  8. Education should be free for all
  9. Immigrants should adapt to the dominant culture in the new country
  10. There are too many migrants in the world
  11. It is normal to have prejudice
  12. All people are racist.
- The practice will be more successful if you have made the list tailored according to the participants and the organize of the course.
- When you have finished the list, three of the participants should sit on three chairs in front and discuss each statement, or one statement should be chosen. These three participants discuss together what their opinions are, and then others are able to tap a shoulder of a sitting person who then stands up and the new person can express his opinion and add to the conversations. This may be done a few times, as participants can take turns.
- The teacher can take notes alternatively, but should direct the conversations, and make sure there is active participation in the discussions.

## **Debriefing and Reflection:**

This is a good exercise for expressing opinions.

**Expected learning outcome:** Students have thought about disputes in a democratic society, they have better skills in listening, talking, persuading and cooperation.

# ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP- EACH VOTE COUNTS

## Objectives:

- Understand what valid and democratic elections mean
- Practice valid elections
- Gain knowledge about how democratic elections take place
- Realise the importance of participation in decision making

**Group size:** 12- 20

**Time:** 45 - 90 minutes.

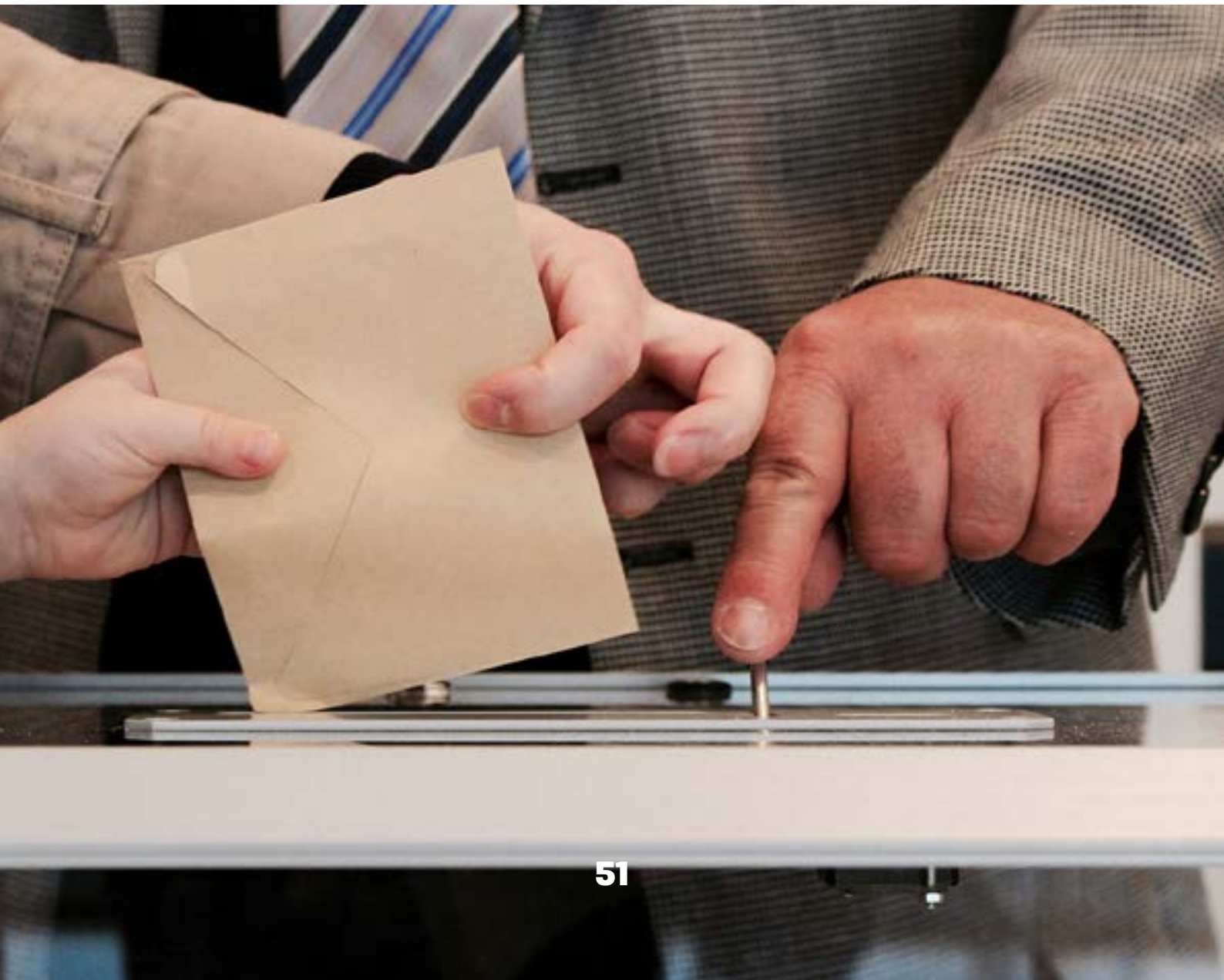
**Method:** Discussions, planning role playing. Participants plan how to take decisions in a democratic way and hold elections according to one of their plans.

**Material:** Status-statements for each group, paper and pencils for the voting.

## Instructions:

- Copy a status paper for each group (see at the end of the description).
- Tell the participants that human rights statement guarantees everybody the right “to take part in governing their country, directly or by electing a candidate in free elections” and furthermore that “the will of the nation should be the base of government’s power“.
- Ask the participants:
  - *What are valid elections?*
  - *Why should elections be secret? (voting by ballot?)*
  - *Who can vote?*
  - *What does it mean to be a candidate?*
  - *What are his duties?*
  - *Name somebody who is a local candidate in the parliament? in the municipality?*
- Let each participant find out when he can vote/what is needed to be eligible to vote?
- Tell the participants: Even if some of them can’t vote, they can still take part in all kinds of decisions that may affect them. Tell them to discuss their possibilities about choosing and discuss the following matters:
  - *Can you name any circumstances where you can have influence and franchise?*
  - *Is it a “valid” decision making or voting?*
  - *Are they secret?*
  - *Who decides or votes?*
  - *Who decides what is being chosen or voted for?*
- Explain for the participants that in this project you have democratic ways of making decisions. Divide the participants into groups (with the number of groups are even) and there should be 5-6 people in each group. Give each group a **status- paper** and have at least two groups work on the same situations.

- When the participants have had time (15- 20 minutes) to prepare themselves in their groups, you should ask each group to represent their situation and the decision process they have organized.
- After each presentation you should ask the participants to comment on the plan:
  - Is it democratic?*
    - *Did everybody have a chance to say their opinion?*
    - *Is it fair?*
    - *Is it a secret?*
    - *Does everybody who votes about who or what they are voting?*
- When all has been represented you ask the participants to compare the plans.
  - *In what way are they similar?*
  - *In what way are they different?*
  - *What ideas will work the best?*
  - *Which should be used?*



**Status A:** Our school has been invited to send a foreign candidate as a representative to a festive agenda at the town hall celebrating the 10th anniversary of multicultural policy. In the school there are at least 200 students of foreign origin. How are you going to select a candidate in a democratic way?

**Status B:** A director for the sports association is needed. There are 60 members in it, and how can you decide in a democratic way who will be the next director?

**Status C:** Should mobile phones be allowed in the school? Some students say yes but other find it disturbing. The teachers say that the students should decide on their own or each teacher should decide. How can you decide what best in a democratic way?

**Status D:** Do we need new and fresh opinions in the labour union? Two people are candidates for election of a new director for the labour union. One is 60 years old and has been the director for 20 years. The other is 30 years old and has been a commonality worker and a member of the union for more than 10 years. There are arguments that the old one has long experience but the young one is bringing new ideas. Ask the participants to discuss the pros and cons in this situation and how they would decide which is best?

**Status E:** The school got 2000€ as a present but is obligated to use it for the students. The group must decide how to use it. Some want to throw a party, others would like to go on a trip, others would like to make the classroom look nice and some would like to use it directly to improve teaching somehow. One would like to save the money and only spend it in emergency, and another would like to buy a new computer. How can you decide democratically how to spend the money?



## **Debriefing and Reflection:**

The students have reflected on everybody's right to participate in decision making. This gives a great opportunity to compare their thought about democracy and free elections which may not be the reality they are familiar from their home countries. This could also be an opportunity to inform them how the government work, bot locally and nationally.

### **Expected learning outcome:**

Students have understood what valid and democratic elections mean, they have to practiced elections, they have gained knowledge about how democratic elections take place, and have realised the importance of participation in decision making.

# STATUE OF VOICE

## Objectives:

- Encourage to participate
- Give voice to a matter, saying ones opinion
- Good exercise as a warm-up or reflection

**Age group:** 10->

**Group Size:** No limit, share a big group into small groups max.10 participants

**Time:** 15 -30min

**Materials:** No materials needed.

## Instructions:

- The idea in Statue of voice is to let the group make a sound installation of some issue that they are working with. The voice and sounds can be anything from singing, clapping, humming, sound effects with you body to saying out loud single words or sentences. The most important thing is to make a group work together and create a common sound with a message. The participants can make echoes of what they hear, or copy on participate to other sounds. The important thing is to keep this sound moving, so that there will be a start, (maybe a highlight) and an ending.
- Ask the group to place themselves comfortably. Sometimes it is best to lie on the floor or sit comfortably. Tell the participants briefly what they are expected to do and highlight the importance of listening to others. Give, or ask participants to give a name for the statue associated with the subject you are discussing. For example:

*“Make a Statue of Voice about climate Change”*

*“Make a Statue of Voice about Human Rights”*

- If you use this as a reflecting exercise you can talk a while about feelings and the tasks you have already done. You can use the themes and feelings that arise in the conversation to name the voice installation.
- Ask the group to close their eyes and start the statue after a moment of silence. It is important to give the Statue some time to develop, people often need to warm up. That is why it is useful to do at least two Statues, if possible. One Statue lasts usually from 3 to 10 minutes. If the statue seems to be repeating and freezing, you can direct it to completion by giving additional instructions: fading to the end or making a final statement.

## Debriefing and reflection:

Good reflection is a few common questions about exercise:

- How did it feel to participate in this?
- Was there any special moment on the Statue of voice that touches you?
- What did this statue tell you about the subject?

# A STEP FORWARD

## Objectives:

- Encourage empathy with people who are not part of the majority society.
- Awareness of the unequal distribution of opportunities in society.
- Understanding of the possible personal consequences of belonging to certain social minorities or cultural groups.

## Overview:

We are all equal, but some are more equal than others. In this exercise Participants experience how it is in their society to be “different”.

Topics addressed:

- Discrimination and strangers hostility, poverty, human rights in general
- Social inequality, which often leads to discrimination and exclusion
- Empathy and its limitations

**Age group:** 10->

**Group Size:** 10-30 participants

**Time:** 60 min.

**Materials:** Role cards, an open space (corridor, large room or outdoor area), Tape recorder or CD player and gentle / relaxing music

## Instructions:

Preparation:

- Read the exercise carefully. Go to the list of “situations and events” and customize them for your group.
- Make a role card per person. Copy the (customized) Sheet either by hand or on the photocopier, cut the Strip out and fold them together.

The Process

- Create a relaxed atmosphere with quiet background music. Or just ask for peace.
- Randomly give each person a role card that they should keep to themselves and show nobody.
- Everyone sits down (preferably on the floor) and read their role card.
- Now ask the participants to put themselves in the role. To help, read some of the following questions aloud. Take a break after each question, so that everyone has time to get an idea of themselves and their lives:
  - How was your childhood? What kind of house did you live in? What kind of games did you play? What was your parents employment?
  - What is your everyday life like today? Where do you meet with your friends? What do you do in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening?
  - What is your lifestyle? Where do you live? How much do you earn per month?

What do you do in your leisure time? What do you do during your holidays?

– What do you find exciting and what are you afraid of?

- Then ask the participants to be quiet and stand side by side in a row (as at a starting line).
- Explain that you will now read a list of situations and events. Each time, when they answer yes to a statement, they should take a step forward. If not, they should stay where they are and not move.
- Read the situations one by one. After that, take a short break so that the participants can take their steps forward and look around as they do stand in comparison to the others.
- In the end, everyone should remember their final position. Then give them a few minutes to slip out of their role before meeting in plenary.

## **Follow-up and evaluation**

Ask participants first for their opinions on the exercise. Then speak about the issues raised and what they have learned.

- What was the feeling of taking a step forward - or staying behind?
- When did those who often took a step forward find out that others did not move forward as fast as they did?
- Did anyone ever feel that their basic human rights were being violated?
- Can anyone guess the roles of others? (At this stage, the roles may be announced.)
- How easy or difficult was it to play the different roles? How did they get that picture of the person they represented?
- Does the exercise reflect our society? In what way?
- Which human rights are at risk for each role? Can someone say that his human rights were not respected or that he / she was excluded?
- What steps should be taken first to tackle inequalities in our society and why should they be taken?

## **Tips for the moderation**

When you do this exercise outdoors, you have to make sure that the participants are can hear you, especially with large groups! Maybe the co-moderators can pass on the statements.

In the beginning, when it comes to getting an idea of the own role, some participants may say that they know too little about the life of the person they should represent. Tell them that it does not matter and that they should use their imagination and do it as well as they can.

To strengthen the effect, it is t important that you adapt roles so that they can reflect the realities of the participants. The adjustment must be made so, that only few people can take many steps forward (ie answer with “yes”).

This is also the case if the group is big and many roles must be given.

The strength of this exercise lies in the effect of seeing the growing gap between the

participants, especially towards the end, where the distance between those who take many steps forward and those who move very little gets bigger and bigger.

In the evaluation, it is important to identify from where the participants get their knowledge about their role. Through personal experience or through other sources (news, books, jokes)? Are you sure your information is realistic? Here we can discuss how clichés and prejudices work.

Poverty and social exclusion are not just a formal, legal problem - even if the often seems to be the case for example, to refugees and asylum seekers. The problem often lies in whether these rights are at all accessible to them.

## Possible Roles

|  |   |
|--|---|
| You are an unemployed, single mother   | You are the daughter of a local bank director. You study economics at the university              |
| You are the daughter of the American Ambassador of the country in which you live now             | You are a 17 year old Roma who has not completed elementary school                                |
| You are chairman of a party political youth organization (whose “mother party” is now in power). | You are an unemployed teacher in a country whose new official language you do not speak fluently. |
| You are an Arab girl of Muslim faith living with your religious parents.                         | You are a disabled young man, confined to a wheelchair.   |
| You are a middle-aged prostitute and HIV-positive  | You were a worker in a shoe factory but now retired.  |
| You are an unemployed young man and 27 years old   | You are a soldier and do your military service  |
| You are the owner of a successful import-export company  | You are an illegal immigrant from Mali  |
| You are the son of a Chinese immigrant, Who runs a fast-food business.                           | You are a 24-year-old refugee from Afghanistan  |
| You are 22 years old and lesbian.  | You are the 19-year-old son of a farmer in a small village in the mountains.                      |

## **Situations and events**

Read the following statements aloud. After that, take a break every time, so that the participants can take their steps forward and look around, as they compare to the others.

- You have never been in serious financial trouble.
- You live in a modest house with telephone and television.
- You feel that your language, religion and culture are respected in the society in which you live.
- You feel that your opinion on social and political issues plays a role and that people listen to you.
- Other people ask you for advice on various issues.
- You are not afraid to get into a police check.
- You know where to go if you need advice and help.
- You never felt that you were discriminated, based on your background.
- Your social and medical needs are adequately covered.
- You can travel once a year and go on vacation.
- You can invite friends and family home to dinner.
- You have an interesting life and are confident about your future.
- You feel that you can study and take on your dream job.
- You are not afraid to be molested or attacked on the street or in the media.
- You can cast your vote in national and local elections.
- You can celebrate the most important religious festivals with your relatives and friends.
- You can attend an international seminar abroad.
- You can go to a cinema or to theatre at least once a week.
- You are not worried about the future of your children.
- You can buy new things to wear at least once every three months.
- You can fall in love with who you want.
- You feel that your knowledge and skills are recognised in the society in which you live.
- You have access to the internet and benefit from it.

## **Debriefing and reflection:**

Good reflection is to discuss the exercise:

- How did it feel to participate in this?
- How did each and everyone feel about their role?
- What did this statue tell you about the subject?
- How did it feel to participate in this?
- Was there any special moment on the Statue of voice that touches you?
- What did this statue tell you about the subject?



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# THEME 3: COMMUNICATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Being able to communicate with other humans is an essential life skill for everyone. We have a need to understand and to be understood, and that requires a lot more than just exchanging words. Basic elements of communication are for instance listening, talking, writing, body language, tone of voice, confidence, open mindedness, being empathetic, respect, and giving and receiving feedback. They are all things to be learned and therefore essential in the field of education.

When talking about active citizens in a democracy, communication skills should be constructive and effective. Democracy allows diversity, it develops societies and is fair. That is why communication of active citizens must also be inclusive, constructive and fair.

Communication happens on different kinds of platforms. It happens more and more in digital form and it can be seen, that communication culture for instance in social media is not very well developed yet. It is also a matter of education, of learning communication skills. The platforms are different, but the basic rules of good communication still do apply. Be respectful, think of consequences before you say or write and be curious but be also constructively critical of the information that you hear or read from the others.

Non-verbal communication skills are essential in face-to-face situations. On the internet, however, information and media literacy skills are a necessity for today's active citizens. That's why ability to think critically is a cross cutting theme for teaching active citizenship.

Regardless the platform, it is important to understand what you want to communicate and with whom. What are your intentions of interaction with other people as an active citizen (or a potential one)? Do you want to make an influence and convince others about the importance of your mission? Or are you in a situation, where you want to understand a complex issue better and learn mutually? Or would you like to find confirmation for your thoughts with like-minded people? Or are you interested in other perspectives to develop your own thinking?

Whatever the intention is, some common features are always involved in good communication. Nordic tradition of democratic education involves three simple elements: talk, listen and be ready to change. Some of the key elements of democratic participation and involvement according to Swedish Arvsfonden (Demokratihandboken 2019) are:

- Say “Hello!” to everyone in the group.
- Speak so that everyone understands.
- Place furniture in rooms smartly so that everyone can feel involved and everyone can see each other.
- Listen!
- Take turns in speaking.
- Have discussions in pairs.
- Involve everyone.
- Burn for something that you find fun!
- Laugh.
- Be kind.
- Help others.
- Trust each other.
- Talk.
- Have the courage to say “No”.
- Be constructive.
- Debate.
- Create campaigns in social media.
- Make a public manifestation (in your city).
- Write debate articles.
- Call a politician.
- Ask fundamental questions.
- Be proud.



During our project “Alternative Active Citizenship”, we did a needs analysis. In the Finnish needs analysis’ field research, the active citizens themselves told us what kind of communication situations they meet and what kind of skills they require:

- giving speeches
- writing skills
- debating skills
- negotiating skills
- ability to deal with provoking
- being able to provoke
- making complaints
- being able to have conversations
- making research
- ability to make initiatives
- being present
- having empathy
- sharing knowledge and ideas
- understanding the world
- discussing
- ability to speak up, when something is bothering
- being persisting
- being diplomatic
- ability to genuinely listen to people and accept them
- give people a sense of being heard and understood
- ability to understand people

As mentioned, communication skills are a lot more than exchanging words. When educating active citizens and their communication skills, it is important to take care of the environment of trust in the study group or class room, as well as equal opportunities for everyone to improve all the aspects of good communication: being present, listening actively and speaking courageously without fear of rejection. Everyone’s voice is equally important.

# STATEMENT RING

## Objectives:

- Warm up the group for a theme
- Get background information of the group and get feedback from the group.

**Age/target group:** 10->

**Group size:** 8-20 participants

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Materials needed:** Written ten statements or questions in advance

## Instructions:

Sometimes it is important to have information about the group's ideas as neutral as possible. In the Statement Ring, the participants express their views with closed eyes. This may be easier for those who otherwise find it difficult to take a stand or to express their opinions. You as an instructor can thus gather information and issues for further work, without the participants being exposed to criticism. You can use this for any theme and many different age groups by adjusting the questions suitable for the group.

- Participants are set to stand in the ring / line with their eyes closed.
- You can present ten different statements and participants respond by stepping forward or backward.
- You can come up with a claim of a common affair or situation and gain valuable background information about the group's different opinions. In the beginning, it is advisable to provide easier statements and deepen them towards the end.

## Debriefing and Reflection:

After completing this assignment, you can give the group feedback on the fine participation. It's good to ask if there were any difficulties in reacting to some statements and recall that often the answers may vary according to the situation.



# LIVING STATUES

This communal and bodily method can be used as an introduction to any chosen theme. Method helps to focus on a theme with light and functional way by erecting teamwork in smaller groups or in pairs. Deeper discussion is possible when going through the output of the practice.

**Age/target group:** All ages depending on the theme

**Group size:** 8-20 participants

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials needed:** Some space where everyone can see each other

## Instructions:

Practice can be done in smaller groups of 2-5 persons in two different variations.

**Variation 1:** Divide people in pairs. The other one is a sculptor and the other one is a statue. The pair agrees which one is which on the first round. Instructor gives a topic and the sculptor either orally or by touching instructs the statue to go into a position that reflects his/her idea of the topic. Statues are supposed to hold position and you can either ask from every sculptor his/her idea of the statue or just ask people to look around all ready-made statues. Time for sculpting can be quite short, 2-3 minutes. After this pairs switch roles. Topics can be quite easy and light to start with and then move into deeper and more abstract themes. For example, if the broader theme is active citizenship: first statue could be active person, second good listener, third empowered person, fourth lifelong learning, fifth equality etc.

**Variation2:** Divide people in groups of 3-5. The whole group makes a statue of the given topic and presents it to rest of the group. Time to form the statue is around 5 minutes and requires negotiation between the group members. Each group can have their own topic and rest of the group can guess what it is when the statue is ready.

## Debriefing and Reflection:

Forming statues requires teamwork and can be done even between strangers, especially when instructions are only oral. This method builds up trust and creates discussion. It can be efficient way to address mental images, stereotypes or abstract concepts. It can work as an introduction to deeper discussions.

# LISTENING AND TEAMWORK

## REPEAT WHAT YOU HEAR

### Objective

- Listening and focusing

**Age/target group:** from 12 ->, basic language skills

**Group size:** 8-30 participants

**Time:** 20 -30 minutes

**Materials needed:** none

### Instructions:

This exercise is done in pairs. The idea is to tell a short story about any subject, for example of one's morning. One of the pairs listens carefully to the story of the other and repeats the story from word to word as accurately as possible. There should be no interpretation or assumptions, only the things the other one has told. Storyteller can correct if the other one is telling the story wrong. After the first one has heard his own story repeated correctly they change the roles.

Especially with younger participants you can start the exercise with a sentence or two.

### Debriefing and Reflection:

After the exercise it is good to give some time to the discussion. Pairs can reflect on the experience with another pair and discuss how it felt. Was it difficult to repeat the other's message? How often do you listen someone this closely? How did you know that the other is listening to you? How did it feel to listen to your own story?

Then pair shares these feelings with the whole group.

# FOCUSED LISTENING

This method is to practise listening and to focus on what the other person is saying. It also helps to understand what active listening is and how to learn to express it without words. One aim is to get the experience of what it feels like to be heard and someone shows that he is actively listening. At the same time, it's a good exercise in getting to know each other.

**Age/target group:** From 12 years up

**Group size:** Any number that can be divided in pairs

**Time:** 15-30 minutes

**Materials needed:** Notes, music for the warm up, chairs, if it is not comfortable to sit on the floor

## Instructions:

The main task is to listen to each other in pairs for 5 minutes in turns. The other one has 5 minutes to talk while the other one is quiet and listens. Before that it's important to have a relaxed and trusting atmosphere by doing a warm up with the group.

- Warm up: Put some calm music on and ask the participants to start walking in the room. Tell participants to take eye contact with someone passing by and keep it for a while. After that they keep walking on. Repeat this few times, remind them to stay quiet. The last person they have eye contact with will be their pair for next phase. These pairs should find a place to sit facing each other.
- You can ask the pairs to make themselves comfortable, so that it is possible to listen actively and appreciatively to each other. It is important that the group is still silent. Pairs decide which one listens and which one speaks first. Listener must not speak at all during listening. Feedback can be given through expressions, gestures and body language. Eye contact is very important, and it must be kept through the exercise.
- You can give choose any topic or it can be about self-knowledge, active citizenship or humanity. You know the best subjects to your group. It's important to have quite big questions to make participants to think about it and think what they want say about it. The one who speaks can have short brakes while thinking, but he must try to continue talking after this.

What you can talk about:

How can I tell my own opinion in my family/ work?

How to take care of myself?

What brings me joy?

What does it mean to be actively present?

How to be a good person?

What is the heart of humanity?

- It's time to talk and listen. Give 5 minutes for the first one to talk. After you give the sign to stop the participants must not speak. Pairs switch roles and next speaker one has the same 5 minutes. And again, after you give the sign to stop, participants must not speak.
- After this the pairs thank each other for listening without using words. Then they place themselves sitting back to back. They tell each other how it felt doing the exercise, was it easier to listen or to talk. The other one is talking and the other listens quietly.
- Finally, pairs tell each other about their visual observations. What kind of eyes does the other have? What clothes does one have? What kind of hair does one have? And what does it tell about us, if we don't know the answer to these questions.

## **Debriefing and Reflection:**

Place your sets so that everybody can see each other. Ask few questions and give the group time to discuss together:

How did it feel to be the speaker or listener?

How was it to give feedback with only your body and face?

What does it take to be a good listener?

Do we really hear each other in everyday life?

How can you show empathy?

What is the meaning of eye contact in a situation when you are facing someone?

# TEAMWORK ICEBREAKER

**Goal/aims:** This method aims to create communality between group members. Method is fun and good way to raise energy levels. It can be used as an introduction to themes like communication, equality, everybody's possibilities to participate, networking, and co-operation.

**Age/target group:** All ages

**Group size:** Any number that can be divided into groups of three

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials needed:** Two sets of same objects, around 5 two-set objects. For example, two same coloured pencils, two sharpeners, two liners, two mugs, two forks. Any set of two same objects can be used. You also need blindfold and earmuffs or earplugs. Some space between people is required to ensure success of this exercise.

## Instructions:

Divide people in the groups of three. Group needs to figure out the order of objects and to arrange another set of objects in the same order. First person can see the already arranged order of objects but won't be able to speak. Second person can speak but cannot hear and uses earmuff. Third person needs to arrange the objects in front of him/her but cannot see them and uses blindfold. First person needs to figure out how to tell second person the order of objects without speaking, second needs to forward message to the third one without hearing and third person arranges the objects without seeing them.

More than one group of three can do the exercise at the same time if there are multiple sets of objects and every group has a blindfold and earmuff or earplugs. Group can decide roles among themselves. Exercise can also be a competition where the first group to arrange objects correctly wins.

## Debriefing and reflection:

Teamwork icebreaker builds up co-operation and can be fun and playful way to introduce big societal issues. Sense limitations can evoke meaningful discussions about possibilities of disabled and equality. Debriefing should be done carefully to ensure that everyone feels positive and to make sure that people understand the meaning of the exercise.

# COMMUNICATING AND RISING OPINIONS

## GIVING GIFTS

**Goal/aims:** This exercise is for listening and focusing and is very good exercise for using imagination.

**Age/target group:** All age groups, oral practice – language skills needed.

**Group Size:** 8-30 participants

**Time:** 15 – 30 minutes

**Materials needed:** No materials needed

### Instructions:

You can do this exercise with the group or in pairs. The important thing is to listen and be open for new ideas.

In pairs the other one give his/her pair imaginary gift "from the air" without saying anything. The receiver of the gift must accept it and tell the giver what it is. After telling what the gift is, the gift giver must tell why he/she gave this gift.

You can also make this easier by defining the size of the gift based on how you give it. Then change the roles.

For example:

The first one gives the gift silently.

Second one: "Oh, thank you. This is a beautiful sock."

The first one: "Isn't it. I remember you always have cold feet. Now you can wear double socks."

If you do this with the whole group, you as an instructor can start by giving gift to the person next to you and he/she passes that same gift on. Everyone keeps adding more information about the gift (what it looks like, where it came from, what you plan to do with it and so on) until it feels done. Then start a new one.

As an instructor, try to help participants to be open for new ideas. Remind the group to always accept the other one's ideas.

### Debriefing and reflection:

Short feedback in small groups / or in pairs:

Was it easier to give a gift or to receive it? Why is it important to say yes and to accept the gift?



# IN ANOTHER PERSON'S SHOES

**Goals/aims:** This is a good exercise if you want participants to think and see another people's perspectives. For adults this can be used as conversation starter on how to approach different people and target groups and reflect their needs. This exercise also strengthens empathy.

**Age/target group:** from 10 years up, physical, requires movement

**Group size:** 8-25 participants

**Time:** 45-90 minutes

**Materials needed:** 10-20 statements

Important part of communication is to see and understand other perspectives. Active citizens often give voice to others who do not have the opportunity to participate in social decision making in society.

You can moderate the statements to the topic you are working with. By moderating the statements, you can also use this with many different target groups. With children the instructions and statements must be simple and understandable.



# **Instructions:**

## **1. Phase**

Give the group following instructions to help them settle for the position of another person. Ask everyone to imagine someone that they want to understand or whose life they want to study in relation to the topic. At first participants will walk around in the room and imagine that they are following that person. Depending on the group and theme this can be a real person or imaginary one. Once they have got the impression of the person start asking helpful questions. Give participants time to stop after each question to imagine the person in different situations.

Think about her/his background:

- Who is she/he? Where does she/he live?
- What does she do in her life - is she at work, studying, unemployed, retired, sick, something else?
- What kinds of opportunities has she had for education?
- What opportunities has she had for hobbies?
- Does she have a family, close relatives, friends or other networks?
- What does she enjoy doing? What is she dreaming?
- What she does not like? What would she like to change in her life?

Ask participants to imagine that person right in front of them and to step into this person's shoes for a moment. Things that participants just thought are true to this person are true to them when they are in imagine person's shoes. Instruct them to feel that person for a moment within themselves.

Once participants have got the impression of the person in their minds they can step on his shoes and start the second phase.

## **2. Phase**

Ask participants to settle on the line staying in the role of the other person. Ask participants to take a step forward whenever your statement is true to the person they now identify with.

### **An example of a workshop at the KSL study centre:**

This guidance was given to a group of adults who want to affect in politics by giving a voice to people who don't get their own voice heard. Through this exercise they could prepare themselves to face these people and identify themselves with them. They were instructed to reflect on how people experience their own influence in their lives and on societal level.

Activity steps - statements:

- You can decide what food you eat
- You can live in satisfying way
- You can influence your everyday life issues and decisions
- You can do a variety of leisure activities
- You can buy the clothes and goods you need

- You have a family or other support network in your life
- You have friends or loved ones with whom you can share your thoughts and opinions
- You have opportunity to disagree
- You participate in an organization
- You have not been discriminated against because of your background or your family or family background
- You have had the opportunity to educate yourself as you wish
- You get support for your own decisions
- You vote in the elections
- You work or study in a meaningful field for yourself
- You are satisfied with your income
- You can carry out your work or study on an equal basis with others
- You have received feedback on your work or studies
- You have the opportunity to participate in decision-making in your residential area
- You have been involved in developing or planning your region
- You are a full member of society
- You feel loved and appreciated

## **Debriefing and Reflection:**

### **3. Phase**

After the statements, it is assumed that the participants are at very different points. Instruct the participants to discuss with a person who is at the most different point of the line.

What kind of person did they present?

What notions did they get during this exercise?

How can they take advantage of these remarks in the future encounter?

After a short discussion in pairs you can ask participants to give notions for the whole group. And remember to ask also how they felt doing this. It is important to give space for the feelings of the task itself.

When ending ask the group to come back to circle and shake the rest of the other person out of their body. You can also let everybody say their name few times and make a gesture or movement that they feel as their own to confirm their return to their own body and mind.

# VOTE WITH YOUR FEET

**Goals / Aims:** This activity allows students to be more physically active in their learning, which helps them later in recalling information gained from this strategy. Participants embody and compare their opinion to others' opinions in a group and explore the various reasons behind different viewpoints. Individual choices are very visible as all participants stand on a single contiguous line together. This strategy can be used with any topic that poses a debatable question.

**Age/Target group:** 12->

**Group size:** 10-30 participants

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials needed:** Blank paper, marker, tape, questions/ statements on a topic that will evoke an opinion

## Instructions:

Make your questions/ statements ready and make room for an imagined line where all participants can fit to stand in a row. Mark the ends of the line with strongly agree and strongly disagree notes. Students can express their opinions by positioning themselves on the imaginary line across the classroom - those agreeing with a statement standing nearer to one end and those disagreeing nearer the other. The participants can choose to stand anywhere on the line in between these two points. They will silently move to place themselves in response to each statement. It is good to read the statement once and let participants take some time to consider their opinion on the matter and then ask them to move after you read it the second time.

Once this has been done you can ask a small selection of students to explain their location along the line. This is a quick and easy way for all students to participate, and for instructors to apprehend where students stand on an issue.

You can use these instructions in side – coaching during this exercise:

- *Remember, this is about your opinion only. There is no right or wrong answer.*
- *Remember to be respectful of each other's opinions.*
- *No one must elaborate their opinion. You can say "pass" or "it's been said" if wanting to pass elaboration.*
- *Any time during our discussion if your opinion changes, you may move.*
- *Turn to someone who is standing near you and discuss why you are standing on this point in the line.*

## Debriefing and Reflection:

After each question/ statement and after participants have voted with their feet, use these questions for reflection in pairs or in the group.

- *What did you notice about the responses?*
- *What did we learn about the group from this activity?*
- *How might these statements make us think differently or understand a bigger picture?*



Finally, ask the debatable question again, and have students “vote with their feet” again.

### **Additional lead - Practising to debate:**

You can also allow students to engage in discussion among themselves to gather more information about the topic and others’ viewpoints or arrange a debate between two different opinions. The purpose of the debate is to broaden the perspective of the subject. Before the debate, give debating groups time to think their arguments and to choose two representatives. Debate must be carried out in accordance with good practice and in a proper manner. You as an instructor can facilitate the debate.

Have students debate for 5 minutes. After the debate groups can discuss for a while. If the subject needs more information, they can be set to a task to study more about it.

Obtaining more information can be given also as a homework. In the next meeting allow each group to share their information with others. Finally, ask the debatable question again, and have students “vote with their feet” again.



# MEDIA

## THE STORY BEHIND...

**Goals/aims:** Media Criticism, interpretation of image and content, critical thinking

**Age/target group:** 12->

**Group size:** 6-25 participants in divided groups

**Time:** 45-90 minutes

**Materials needed:** Newspapers, magazines, articles or pictures. Carton, pens, paper, glue and scissors.

### Instructions:

- Divide participants into groups of two to four. Groups explore magazines, ads, news, or pictures. They choose pictures or articles that arouse interest or annoyance.
- Task is to reflect what kind of image or visions these contents confirm and spread? Who they describe, what is left untold and what happens outside the pictures?
- Pictures and articles are collected on a carton. Participants will write notes, thoughts and questions about the subject next to the pictures.
- After the groups have finished their posters, set them to the wall / tables for everyone to see.

### Debriefing and Reflection:

Participants circle the room to explore and discuss the work of others. After everyone has had time to review everyone's posters, get everybody together to discuss about them:

- What kinds of perspectives were there to be found from the posters?
- To whom was this news/ add/ picture made for?
- What was not told?
- What would be the information that you would still need?





# **BEFORE OR AFTER... (THE PICTURE)**

**Goals/aims:** Media Criticism, interpretation of image and content, critical thinking. This exercise is effective way to interpret pictures. It can be used to cover themes of your choosing by selecting pictures from those themes. This exercise requires trust among the group and it's not advisable to use this as the first exercise for a new group.

**Age/target group:** 12->

**Group size:** 8-20 participants

**Time:** 1- 3 hours

**Materials needed:** Pictures or photos

## **Instructions:**

- Set the pictures or photos on the desk or wall. Arrange the room so that there is open space for acting in the middle and a proper place for the audience.
- Divide participants into groups of four to six. Let the groups choose the picture they want. (If you use this for a special theme, warm up the group for the theme before giving the pictures.)
- Each group chooses a picture and reflects it: What are the objects in the picture? What are they used for? To who are the objects important? Are they beautiful/ugly and why? Who are the persons in the picture (if there are any)? What are they doing? Do they know each other? How are they feeling? What did they do before the picture was taken? What do they do after? What is the atmosphere in the picture?
- After talking for a few minutes, group plans and trains a short scene (2-5 minutes) that happened before (or after) the picture was taken. Give time for planning and discussion, this is an important step in working and sharing opinions.
- Groups then present their scenes to the rest of participants. Audience can ask actors after the scene who they were, why were they there and how did they feel.

## **Debriefing and Reflection:**

After all the scenes have been played and the pictures have become alive, talk together about the feelings of doing this exercise.

You can also ask the groups to think of something totally different that happened after the picture and then make a human statue about it. For example, if the theme is very delicate or sad, you can turn the scenes into comedy by changing the pictures for different groups and asking them to do a funny statue about it.

# MAKING YOUR OWN SUBVERTISEMENT

**Goals/aims:** This exercise is to learn media criticism in practise, to experiment with a new form of self-expression and to participate in discussions about controversial issues by making subvertisements individually, in pairs or in groups.

**Age/target group:** All age groups

**Group size:** 8-20 participants

**Time:** 45-90 minutes

**Materials needed:** A large selection of advertisements printed or cut from magazines, pens, paper, glue and scissors.

## Instructions:

These are the instructions you can give to your students:

- First, choose one or more advertisements that you think have an interesting or provocative message or design.
- Next, think about ways in which each advertisement's message could be changed by modifying the logo, image and/or text, by adding or erasing something, or by some other ingenious method. A subvertisement can be made straightforwardly by modifying an advertisement. You can question and argue with its message or imagery by adding your thoughts directly to the ad. You can start with a blank piece of paper to make a subvertisement that doesn't necessarily mimic a specific advertisement but parodies the language of the advertisements on a general level. You can cut images and text from the ads and create new meanings for them with or without your own drawings and sketches. You can use scissors, paper, pens and glue.

As an instructor, it's therefore important for you to help everyone to get started. You can discuss about the emerging work and provide positive comments with suggestions for further developments. For example, "That's quite a powerful slogan, how could you change it?" or "Would your idea work better if you drew or wrote something on the advertisement?" Here, less is often more. Tiny modifications to an advertisement can be just as powerful as major reworking.

No matter the age of your students, they will need encouragement. As they experiment it's a good to go around the class and remind individual students what subvertising is about. Adding a moustache, eyelashes or missing teeth to a model's face is something that many will have done before. But, if you see this, ask how it helps to illustrate the modified slogan or message they have come up with? Will these additions make that message clearer to their viewers? How could they make a subvertisement with originality and style?

## Debriefing and Reflection:

Topics as marketing, world trade, advertising and subvertising are almost certain to come up during the exercise. When participants are presenting their subvertisements, you could highlight and encourage discussion on underlying cultural or societal phenomenon, used terminology, provide tools of analysis and deepen the themes. These underlying themes might be inequality, environmental problems or binding beauty ideals. At its best, this can guide lively discussions about what is going on in the world.

You could also arrange an exhibition for the subvertisements for example to the library or other public building.



# **BEST PRACTICES IN KSL STUDY CENTRE**

KSL - Study Centre works strongly in the field of non-formal education throughout Finland. Our students are adults from different organizations, mostly non-governmental-organizations. The aim of the KSL Study Centre training is to increase active citizenship, develop organizational expertise and promote the well-being of individuals and communities. Our education is based on equal debate, critical pedagogy, openness and peer support. Communication is therefore a basic requirement for the success of our trainings.

We provide new information and tools to develop organizations and their operations, for example: basic organization skills, expertise in organizing and operating an event, activate people to participate and influence in organizations and society. Trainings often derive from the organization's own needs, and the educator is more in a role of a sparring and making space for conversation. Different tools and working methods help the educator to work with the group and he/ she in turn helps the group to internalize new tools and find new operating models.

## **Few examples**

Content of our education concerns a lot of social influences. We train organizations' actors to do campaigning and to influence and organize various events. As examples we organize Lobbying Training, Campaign & Event Training and School for Politicians. Aim of the Lobbying Training is to teach how to influence political decision-making through a direct influence campaign. Second example aims to teach how to build an affective campaign or event, considering the arrangements, budgets and timetables. In addition to the previous contents The School for Politicians includes political content and above all the creation of a social and political network.

Trainings provide participants with new information and new tools but also encourage participating group to share their experiences and views during the training. This has been acknowledged as a good practice to adopt new knowledge and to review it critically. Educator does not lecture alone in front of the class. Instead participants' own experience and skills are always seen as the most important aspect of the training. This way each participant can obtain essential information about the new issue for themselves.

In our trainings Articulating Your Message Clearly and Social Media Trainings the aim is to learn how to make impressive written and visual communication in paper, speech or in social media. In addition to trainer-centred teaching on tools for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, training is also based on peer learning in small groups. Participants sharing their own experiences of using social media and bringing out their own expertise for shared use is the goal of the training. At the same time, participants learn to listen, collaborate, work in a group and act in a civil society.

This hidden learning is included in all our trainings and it's seen as an essentially important part of our pedagogy in KSL – Study Centre. Learning to listen, empower, discuss, work in a civil society and build a community of like-minded people, as well as making social initiatives and giving voice to a social problem are in the centre of our action. This is also what good communication is about. As educators we are responsible for enabling interaction within a group and in a learning situation.

## **Students' experience and feedback**

KSL - Study Centre is constantly striving to develop training through feedback. Feedback is collected after each training. It is compiled and evaluated at least twice a year.

Group forming is seen as a very important part of a training and from this we receive particularly good feedback. It's important for the educator to know and to support through exercises group's ways of communicating and sharing information. We often use group forming exercises at the beginning of courses, such as the Living Statues or Teamwork Icebreaker. These exercises based on group support and familiarization create also rules for the group that will help it to work and function in the future. When the group's mutual communication is open and respectful, it's easy to discuss and study different topics confidentially. With open and trustful atmosphere in the group, participants are prepared to present different opinions on the given themes and to raise difficult topics in the discussion.

Use of different methods and peer learning are highlighted in our feedback too. Participatory methods, discussions, and teamwork support participants own learning based on received feedback too. Different methods allow participants to find their own ways of embracing new things. This way participants with different learning difficulties are able to learn together with the group.

## **References:**

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<https://www.ksl.fi/materiaaleja/julkaisut/osallistavat-menetelmat/>

Drama – Based Instructions:

<http://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu>

<https://support.thinkcerca.com>

Medialukutaitoa vastamainoksista - opas vastamainostyöpajan pitämiseen by Eeva Kemppainen & Anna Ylä-Anttila, 2015. ([www.eetti.fi/medialukutaitoa](http://www.eetti.fi/medialukutaitoa))



A young person with short, wavy blonde hair is looking upwards with a serene expression. They have vibrant, multi-colored eye makeup in shades of pink, blue, and purple. They are wearing a dark blue t-shirt with the phrase "Love who you are" written in a colorful, cursive font. The background is a lush, out-of-focus green foliage.

# THEME 4: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



# THEME 4: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Introduction

Being an active citizen requires self-knowledge, learning and curiosity. Of course, personal development takes place continuously. When it comes to active citizenship, we want to support the kind of self-development, that eventually helps people to participate in the society.

In the needs analysis done in this project, we found key words describing some aspects of personal development such as empowerment, self-awareness, self-respect, making initiatives, duty and responsibility, education, getting knowledge and lifelong learning. Dialogue skills as well as listening and expressing one's own opinion were considered key skills in life. Strengthening these skills and developing self-esteem can support students to have an active role in society and decision-making. It is important to know yourself before you can open up to the surrounding world.

When training personal development, it is essential to give the students a feeling, that they have been heard, when they speak out. Teacher/trainer and the study group should always show respect to a student expressing their opinion. That will require creating a safe environment with trust and feeling of belonging.

When an individual understands their own experiences, feelings and reactions, they will be able to learn from that understanding through reflection. Self-reflection is the key word for personal development. A study group can help the process of reflection by giving impulses and different perspectives to feed the reflective process. In the context of active citizenship self-awareness will lead to understanding of individual's power to make changes in the world in interaction with others. That is why communication skills are essential also in personal development.

The Social and Health Education Project is a knowledge organisation of personal development education in Ireland. They have listed some basic elements for learning awareness of what is going on in people's lives as well as how they deal with feelings and communicate with others.

- Listening and communicating
- Managing stress
- Being assertive
- Handling feelings
- Understanding what blocks us in life
- Handling criticism and praise
- Dealing with conflict
- Building self-confidence

- Making good decisions
- Setting goals

The Social and Health Education Project: <https://www.socialandhealth.com/short-courses-in-the-community/introduction-personal-development/>

In this part you can find practical methods with instructions and also a practical research based on an article about using dialogue method and reflective team as education and communication tool.

## **Norwegian partners experience and best practises**

In this resource book our contribution is a relevant study of how to promote active citizenship with pedagogical means in a school context. We are inspired by grounded theory research (Glaser, 1992) with its systematic research process that works to develop a process, with action and interaction about an important topic. In this case the difficult conversations between teachers and parents about their children, with a certain focus on children with special needs. This is consisted with the results from the previously implemented desk research, where the demands and opportunities for today's children and young people to become active citizens appears very clearly.

In our desk research, we reported that some of the most important keywords for Norwegian education are lifelong learning, knowledge and competence. Lifelong learning together with equal rights and opportunities for all citizens are basic principles in Norwegian education policy (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007).

The steering documents show us that the Norwegian government perceives knowledge as a source of self-reliance, social mobility, democratic understanding and participation and of achieving success in working life. Acquiring relevant knowledge is fundamental for each individual's possibilities throughout life, and has a huge impact for weaker groups, such as children with special needs.

Many teachers report that this is a challenging part of their work as it requires both resources and expertise. A particular challenge is the motivating conversation with parents. The teacher must emphasize that every child have the right to inclusion and development according to their prerequisites. The parents must be aware of their resources and opportunities in challenging situations concerning their children's schooling. In these conversations both teachers and parents may be stuck in patterns of attitudes and behaviour that obstruct necessary changes. The focal point of the parental calls is however the best interest of the child. Prior to this, teachers need an addition of empowerment (Lazarova, Sträng, Jensen, Sørmo, 2016).

As researchers and lecturers of the special education master's programme, we find deliberate dialogues between teacher students, teachers and parents highly relevant for maintaining and defending equal rights and opportunities for young people with special needs. This goes in line with the educational objectives for the Norwegian state and society.

This chapter will introduce the term “Personal development” from a social perspective, as well as an individual matter. We present a project from a Norwegian elementary school, where both of these understandings are important parts of the teacher’s social responsibilities. Our main focus is to examine how the Reflecting Team method may develop and increase personal competence and common strategies to approach “The difficult conversation”, which was the topic of the project.

In practice the reflecting team consists of a minor group of individuals who assume an observational position towards the conversation between the mentor and a focus person. The reflecting team adds a meta-position in order to help and assist all participants achieve a productive dialogue that promotes development (Sträng & Sørmo, 2015).

We also wish to discuss the utility of reflecting team as a didactic method, in order to learn more about how teachers best can prepare for and process their everyday challenges.

In the teaching profession you have to deal with demanding situations with no days alike. In addition to preparedness regarding both subject matter and the pedagogical framework, the teacher must also be mentally prepared to cope with various situations both in the teaching profession and as part of the society and the community.

Based on this, we draw upon relevant theory on communication, observation, ethical issues, learning perspectives and method in guidance. This is discussed against an ethical approach to guidance, where the intention is to gain more knowledge about the topic “The difficult conversation” and the ability to use this method in a sustainable and useful way.

The Norwegian field research design has the aim to fill the concept of empowerment with qualities that enable the parents to take a higher degree of responsibility for their actions. Our activities have a qualitative approach, founded in a social constructivist view of knowledge perceived as situated and socially constructed. This view on research is based on the assumption that understanding and meaning are created when actively interacting in a certain context (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Jensen et. al 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Postholm, 2010)

At the end of this mainly theoretical chapter, we have attached a number of practical exercises in how to best train the reflective team’s communicative skills. We also show some varieties of teamwork, depending on the current situation and the chosen topic.

## **Theoretical perspective**

There are three theoretical perspectives that makes up the fundamental basis for the work with reflecting teams. These are *guidance theory*, *communication theory* and *ethical approaches* to the method. This kind of guidance is based on the work that psychiatrist and family therapist Tom Andersen started at the University of Tromsø in the 1980s, and is now to be seen in an increasing number of contexts. Particularly within psychiatry, mental health care and family therapy, various practices have been established from Andersen’s thoughts on the reflecting teams (Andersen 2007).

As a psychiatrist, Andersen experienced that his patients felt great anxiety about seeking help when they were ill. Andersen believed that it could actually be harmful

for psychiatric patients to turn to a hospital for help. Most of us see hospitals as gigantic collections of people and medicine, corridors, doors and rooms, combined with a particular smell throughout the buildings. Many of Andersen's patients had problems adjusting to such an environment. Hence, he thought that it was a better starting point to talk to the patients in the familiar and safe surroundings where the patient belonged.

To Andersen, this was also linked to a connection to the local community, the impact of nature and neighbours, as well as family and acquaintances who were all part of the patient's more or less close-knit network. Although this was a resource-intensive task, his impression was that the patient feel more secure and could recover faster in this way. It was easier to draw familiar conditions into the network surrounding the patient, and together they could listen to different solutions, and learn how individuals could contribute with support and help.

## **Turning the mirror around**

In the hospital, a method was developed where the therapist or doctor was talking to the patient in a relatively small room. In the room next door, a professional team could observe the conversation through a one-way mirror. Now and then, the therapist or doctor would leave the room to consult his/her colleagues about the progress of the conversation or the treatment (Andersen 2007). Andersen noticed that this seemed stressful for the patient, who was left alone in the room, wondering about what happened behind that mirror. After several occasions where the conversations had shown little development, he got the idea to turn the mirror around, to give the patient full access to the conversation between the therapist and his professional team. He also invited the patient to join him for a short coffee break during the team's conversation.

The new situation changed the conversation between patient and therapist afterwards. This created a sense of security and a considerably more symmetrical relationship, which made the patient more confident in the situation. Power relations were dissolved and it was easier to get back to the conversation. When the patient was able to hear how the doctor's colleagues perceived the conversation, he now had the opportunity to comment on what they were talking about, and to modify their opinions on the conversation. Then the conversation started again, and it was now more obvious what were the problems or further challenges. The risk of being misunderstood was subdued, while the possibility of finding the *significant difference*, increased (Bateson 1972).

The patient had now cleared away all irrelevant observations, as well as perceptions that could have put an end to the communication, and it was easier to see what they needed to continue to focus on together. Through the feeling of security, the diminishing asymmetry and the reflection rounds, Andersen believed that the work with reflecting teams proved useful. Eventually, this way of working was implemented as a system. The team, now called "Reflecting team", was moved into the same room as the doctor and patient, where they sat listening to the conversation.

The therapist would then paused the conversation and draw some kind of "invisible curtain" to mark the distinction between the conversation with the patient and the conversation with the professional team. When the conversation with the team

started, “the invisible curtain” was removed, so that the patient could listen to the professional’s reflections, considerations, summaries and questions. The patient was not given the opportunity to participate in their conversation, but was present listening to what was said (Andersen 2007).

## **Crucial questions**

Although Andersen (2007) is often sceptical to the use of metaphors, as they give different understanding to different listeners, he draws a comparison to a practice of a physiotherapist with whom he had collaborated. He describes how the physiotherapist treats back pains in the way that is most beneficial for his patient. If the physiotherapist pushes too hard, the client will tighten the muscles and react with resistance. If the physiotherapist presses too gently, this will have no effect whatsoever. The treatment will be most efficient when the client exhales completely so that all the muscles are relaxed. The pressure on the back will then be just right to make a change.

Andersen (2007), transfers this process to the conversation in the guidance session, where the questions posed to the subject of guidance are crucial for the outcome of the conversation. If the questions touch upon sensitive and difficult areas, this will be met with resistance from the supervisee, and not be a fruitful way to move forward. If the questions are superficial and irrelevant, they will have the same effect. However, if the questions concern issues that are centrally important to clarify, it will make it easier to find good solutions where the supervisee gets help to find his/her own ways forward. Thus, the attention to what the supervisee is actually trying to express, is of vital importance. Both the supervisor and the reflecting team listen for the message that is of greatest importance for the supervisee.

In a pedagogical context, the therapeutic perspective is far more absent, but it is important to be aware that all communication affects (Bateson 1972). Through guidance with reflecting teams, we see the opportunity to use guidance also as a learning method. This can be done by drawing examples from a teacher’s experiences from his/her own workplace and from the planning of learning activities.

The justification for choosing specific methods and learning strategies can be questioned, whether it is about a situation the teacher has experienced, or about how the teacher should prepare for a conversation that is perceived as problematic. Good teaching experiences can, through the conversation with a supervisor, be analysed in order to identify the good practice and what was useful in that particular context.

Other situations, which have affected the teacher negatively, or maybe episodes with provocative behaviour, can also be analysed through guidance, and thus detect useful strategies and possible solutions. In this way, guidance with reflecting teams can prove a useful educational tool, rather than a therapeutic one.

Nevertheless, we often see that our educational use of reflecting teams can affect the teacher’s personal experiences, and thereby seem almost therapeutic. The teacher gets “treatment” for his experience from the learning situation, and may have to confront his/her own practices and way of reacting. The purpose of such guidance is always linked to the learning outcome it can provide.

## Ethical dilemmas

Any type of guidance or communication with others reveals an ethical attitude. The main ethical question will be based on both values and the actions connected to these. In a democratic context, it is important that the value of equality is prominent. Symmetry between the participating roles is essential in the guidance, where one party is in possession of knowledge or power that might be directional for the guidance.

If the guidance is intended as practical supervision for a job, a symmetrical relationship might not be beneficial. In these cases, you may succeed better with an asymmetric relationship, where the supervisor is giving the supervisee advice on how to solve a task. Such a conversation is advisory, and has no other purpose than to help performing a job in the best possible way.

All kinds of guidance are motivated by the purpose of the guidance. In schools, this can be a number of areas. The guidance may have to do with how the school, as organization, should carry out statutory activities in connection to i.e. children's rights, as a workplace or as a local institution. It can be about the school fulfilling its mission, that the teacher is present and is carrying out the teaching tasks, or that the framework is respected both financially and physically.

The ethics can confirm that the school is doing what is expected of a school. The quality of educational activities, such as teaching, competence development, financial and organizational challenges, and the collaboration between teachers and parents, can be characterized by a different ethical understanding. This because the standard for measurement is now the outcome of the teaching, not just that it is carried out, but that the conditions and frameworks helps guarantee the quality of teaching.





It can also be related to how a teacher or a team of teachers should develop better understanding and strategies to face complex issues such as collaboration, challenges related to behavior, difficult conversations, preparation for unexpected events or debriefing in the aftermath of incidents at school. Each of these considerations may require different guidance methods, based on different ethical principles. If a teacher is teaching just for the sake of the salary, it is completely different from the teacher who teaches to facilitate children's learning. The pedagogical insight is not necessarily related to other derailed agendas, such as the teacher's working conditions.

## **Background of the project**

As researchers, we have previously worked with reflective processes and methods, both in teacher training, and in former development projects with a schools and preschools.

We have experienced that reflective practice may lead to learning and growth for the members of an educational organization, even if changing an organizational culture can be challenging and dangerous, according to the participants (Sträng and Sørmo, 2014). We have learned that successful collaborative partnership between researchers and practitioners also depends on how to cope with the complexity of different standpoints and experiences, and the unpredictable and opaque processes which are being initiated. Less concentration on the collection and processing of data and a stronger focus on interpretation and reflection is essential for a successful research and development project (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). Therefore we have made great efforts to maintain an extensive dialogue between ourselves and the practitioners.

After a series of reflective guidance sessions the participants often express they have learned a lot and are looking forward to further development in daily work. In the light of our positive experiences, we decided to use the method of reflective teams even in the Alternative Active Citizenship project.

Most people are familiar with school reality, both through personal experiences from their own childhood or through their own children's experiences. Nevertheless most people probably do not know how the teacher's role has changed and what professional challenges and expectations every teacher is faced with despite more years of studying and higher requirements than ever before. Nevertheless, some areas are in urgent need of special training. This is especially relevant when it comes to conflict resolution, conversations with children and parents in crises, and negative feedback from colleagues and management, which can all be perceived as demanding and stressful, and in worst-case lead to burnout and the feeling of failure.

The project described show how teachers in a primary school through guidance with reflective teams develop a higher level of empowerment in how to prepare and face difficult conversations with parents, colleagues and other parties involved. Schoolteachers often face emotionally stressful and irrational situations. Conflicts, grief from failure and lack of communication strategies make their daily work complex and often difficult. Teachers express that they suffer from sleeping difficulties and stress, because everyday challenges are hard to handle.

Most teachers have been poorly prepared for problem solving through their education, and the youngest of them lack the experience to handle unpredictable situations. Although the teacher normally is surrounded by good colleagues, these are often

busy with their own challenges during a hectic day. Teamwork can thus be limited to practical tasks such as planning, assessments and meeting activities. There might be little time left for collegial feedback and reflection on academic challenges, but also for planning, pedagogical reasoning and personal experiences in meeting with students and parents. If these meetings are perceived as stressful because of disruptive and negative behavior, it is important to have good strategies to dealing with these experiences. There might be reason to increase the personal competence in relation to recognize one's own limits and to learn more about how to prepare for, and handle such challenges.

## **Empowerment**

In this context, empowerment is important to describe how guidance helps to promote reflection on one's own perceptions and competence, and how this can be used to strengthen the teacher's possibilities to succeed. Through guidance with reflecting teams and through the processes that follow, the participants develop greater insight into their own resources and opportunities. Participants are challenged to reflect on their own practice and to justify it, with strong support from colleagues who assist with feedback through reflecting teams.

In this project, we have chosen to use this type of guidance as a method for placing teachers in an even better position to meet challenges in their daily lives. People are met with such challenges in various contexts, both related to tasks at their own workplace, but naturally also throughout their lives in general.

Often, it might be difficult to see opportunities and solutions, but through reflecting teams, the supervisees receive feedback on their own perceptions and thinking. We see that collegial and supportive feedback promotes the supervisee's empowerment. She is no longer alone with her experiences, but through reflection and conversation we see that the teacher strengthens and finds good strategies to move forward. This applies to both highly experienced teachers as well as newly graduated ones, in every role of the work with reflecting teams. It turns out that this guidance helps to identify contexts and understandings that may be hidden.

All together, the reflections and feedback from the reflecting team will be affirmative and increase the opportunities to face challenges in a new or different way. In all projects where we have used reflecting teams, the success factor has been high (Sträng & Sørmo, 2014).

Traditionally, education has often been linked to knowledge dissemination, which is mediated or facilitated by the person responsible for the education. Schools and studies are classic examples on institutions that convey knowledge in the traditional way. Furthermore, knowledge is transferred through own practice and in collaboration with others. Different didactic methods are tools for making the teaching relevant and comprehensible to the student.

Guidance can also be perceived as a didactic approach to learning. When we use guidance in such a context, it becomes important also to identify what kind of guidance is appropriate. Because guidance spans over a wide range, it is necessary to clarify why we choose this type of guidance in order to face "difficult conversations". There might be various ethical implications that need considering, especially in relation to who is

subject to the guidance and who benefits from it.

An important question is whether the aim of the guidance should be to develop the teacher's competence, or rather the teacher's ability to relational and loyal behavior.

## **Method and Implementation**

The participants of our project is a group of teachers in elementary school in a medium-sized Norwegian city. We have organized a series of Reflecting Team sessions (Sørmo, 2015) with the target group, training them in the role of moderator for discussions with the authorities and parents of children with special needs. With the educational emphasis in Europe on reflective learning, we believe this technique will support and enrich the alternative active citizenship education and training in the same way as it has influenced practice in many other contexts.



## **The Reflecting Team**

The Reflecting Team method is well known within the therapeutic field, but through prolonged research and testing we have converted the method into an educational tool for competence building and personal development. The method is based on a number of theories that are closely interlinked and mutually interdependent. Hence, we consider it necessary to include some of the theory behind the method to elucidate and justify how you can benefit from this method for educational purposes.

As professional guidance is mainly about communication, observation and reflection, we see this project as a systemic understanding of the interaction between people. We show that what is happening during the moment of guidance, is part of an extended reflective process, where the time aspect is of importance.

In order to reflect on, and embrace new thoughts, an amount of time is required. We consider the expenditure of time as a natural part of a hermeneutic process, where one learns through experiences, reflection and new challenges. Input from a reflecting team can give immediate response during the guidance session, but the thoughts set in motion by the guidance, can be brought into everyday practice as part of the reflective process.

As this is about personal development, the activities are also linked to an individual perspective, though in a community context. The project is described and explained through examples on how teachers in an elementary school develop empowerment in relation to parents and to each other, based on a guidance sessions with reflecting team.

## **Citizen development**

Personal development is about developing as a citizen, with all the duties and rights that follow, but also developing one's own knowledge, skills and general competence as a fellow human being in an increasingly complex world. In daily life, changes occur quickly and unpredictably. Our digitalized world gives us immediate access to information through various media, as soon as something happens. This can be accidents and disasters as well as political changes, war, uprising and unrest.

Simultaneously, we have developed a global trading system that allows us to buy goods and services continuously from around the world. The development is fast and the requirements for competence and participation are often based on completely different terms than before. The life of the young generation is so unlike the lives of previous generations that understanding and respect for history is in danger of being brushed aside.

The generations that are now about to leave us, can almost describe their life as a journey from "medieval" to virtual reality, where much is unreal and merely projections created by technical and digital inventions. Many young people hardly know how food and goods are produced or where it comes from. For the older generations, this seems unheard of, because they remember this as part of their everyday challenges back in a time when they had to make their own clothes or be involved in the harvesting and

processing of food. On the other hand, the older generation is not as familiar with digital payment systems or the broadband technology's contribution in areas such as production, finance, health, commerce and education.

The world has become smaller, and former developing countries are now able to make technical leaps forwards without going in the same direction as us. One example is the mobile technology, which takes every country many steps closer to tomorrow by means of solar energy and computer networks. This contributes to the political debates on democratization, on who is running the country, the personal development of competence, as well as economy, culture and human behavior.

## **Sustainable impact**

At the same time, it has impact on people's attitudes towards sustainability; what is sustainable and what is short-term gain. Many ethical issues and dilemmas need to be considered. Human and personal development balances between survival, self-development and success, while evolving into a global citizen, consuming the same products around the world. Because of this, it has never before been more important to work for a mutual understanding between people and cooperation to save the future. Pollution and over-consumption does not only lead to the destruction of our own environment, but also allow us to close our eyes for the differences between people.

Studies in recent years show that a small group of people owns almost everything of value and property in the world, while the majority is dominated by this group's economic and political superiority. At the same time, a large part of the humanity lives on the verge of destruction through global warming, over-consumption and pollution.

## **Respect for human values**

Seen in such a context, it would be meaningful to challenge each other across borders to safeguard each and every one of us as valuable citizens, who show responsibility and depend on each other. Personal development does not have to be linked to success in politics and economics, but more about developing respect for human values. It is important to be confident in coping with life's challenges and to be enabled to help others doing the same. Such a challenge is necessary both internationally, on global level and for the individual citizen on a personal level. Such work requires both courage and knowledge. In various ways, we develop expertise that we want to share with others and create useful tools through international joint initiatives.

Personal development is also about seeing the individual, and recognize how each individual can help to create a better world and be part of the social community. The belief that single individuals are able to contribute to resolutions can be crucial. To achieve this, there is need for competence development and participation, rather than self-realization, which does not necessarily have the same effect on challenges in working life and society.

Learning is linked to a number of theories. In this context, we consider the socio-cultural perspective as most useful to us, especially when linked to cognitive learning processes where knowledge is gained through social interactions and such learning processes. By using the reflecting team method, the reflecting team and the supervisee's involvement will be based on what emerges from the conversation between

the supervisor and the supervisee, and how the team reflects and comments on the ongoing conversation. In this way, the guidance can also be used as a scaffolding to secure confidence both in the role as supervisee and as a member of the reflecting team (Bruner), towards personal and sustainable development.

## **A pedagogical method**

The purpose of the method is to help reinforce the individual teacher's competence, develop the teacher's quality in relation to the professional assignment, and as a contribution to personal development or even self-realization.

We realize that our undertaking is based on people's ability to develop their own competence as a result of the challenges they face. Unlike a common and more or less academic approach, this project is aiming at a practical and somehow "straightforward" approach. Hence, we meet with the supervisees in practical guidance programs where the topic is given in advance. This may in some ways be in conflict with regular guidance practice, but in this context, the goal is to develop competence in the work with difficult conversations.

The assignment is thus linked to the acquirements of skills through increased competence and collaboration methods to face difficult challenges. The guidance method has its origin in the field of family therapy, but we have developed a pedagogical model, particularly suited for use between collaborative teachers in kindergartens and schools

Reflecting team guidance, is a support function to help develop empowerment in everyday and demanding situations. The set-up is based on a guidance situation where the person who receives guidance (supervisee) gets support from a team of colleagues (the reflecting team), who are present at the guidance sessions, and who are listening and talking among themselves about what is going on in the guidance situation. The assignment also involves reflecting on what is coming up in the conversation, in order to identify matters worth following up, or to ask questions about statements that may need clarification.

Furthermore, the method includes a meta-observer who after the observations contributes to the analysis of the conversation and gives feedback on observations that were imperceptible to the participants. In addition, the participants contribute by handing in logs after the sessions. In this manner we learn how the participants experience the situation and attain empowerment. Our findings in this project, as well as others we have worked on, show that the supervisee feels strengthened in her own decisions and practices.

## **Selection of participants**

The teacher education program at Østfold University College, is in close contact with kindergartens and schools in the field of practice. Students have part of their education through practical work in schools. This training is supervised by dedicated teacher education graduates employed at the schools. The students receive supervision, advice and help to identify their own role as a teacher, with all the challenges that teachers normally face in the field of practice. Furthermore, they meet other teachers at the



schools and thus gain access to useful experiences from school life.

When selecting participants for our project, we contacted the management at one of the schools in our local community. They were very positive about a collaboration and immediately announced the opportunities to participate in the project. Three teachers were then invited to participate. We did not know any of them from previous teaching practices, but they had different backgrounds and age, they worked with different classes or groups of children and also had different professional backgrounds. One of the participants had competence in special education and worked mainly with children with special educational needs. The majority of the teachers in Norwegian primary school is female, and so were the ones in our selection.

## **Describing a guidance session**

Guidance sessions are arranged in advance via the school's management. The meetings are held immediately after ordinary school hours, with a time frame of an hour and a half each time. The participants come together in one of the school's meeting rooms. In the room, there is a conference table with chairs around. On one of the end walls, there is a window facing the school yard, and on the opposite wall there is a TV connected to a PC. In addition to learning how to use reflecting teams as an educational methodology, everyone wants to try the different roles in order to continue using the method after the project is completed.

The idea is that this way of learning, through guidance, can also help the participants to gain new perspectives on learning and develop empowerment. This is important in order to make use of own skills and resources that otherwise might be held back because of uncertainty and lack of support. The guidance is supposed to make the teacher even more familiar with herself as an educator and to give him/ her courage to trust and use own skills. The teacher also get to feel the strength that comes with good and constructive feedback, and through participation, contributes to create curiosity and reflection on the performance of own vocational theory.

## **A crash course**

The first part of each gathering consists of a crash course in aspects related to the practical work with the guidance. These are highlighted topics from various programs in the teacher education, mainly educational guidance and special education. The topics relate to various aspects of observation, communication, relational competence, basic guidance knowledge and clarification of the different roles in the guidance. The crash courses in the project require 15 -20 minutes of the meeting time, and are concluded with a round of questions and clarifications.

## **The furnishing**

Then, the "furnishing" starts, which is the placing of the participants in the room. The arranging of the participants is vital for a good guidance. In particular, we want the supervisee to be placed so that she catches the attention of the supervisor. The reflecting team is placed in a position that prevents eye contact with the supervisee, often with

the supervisee sitting with the back to the team and facing the supervisor. In addition, the observer finds a suitable place in the room. In this project, the students from our university college had the roles as supervisor and observer.

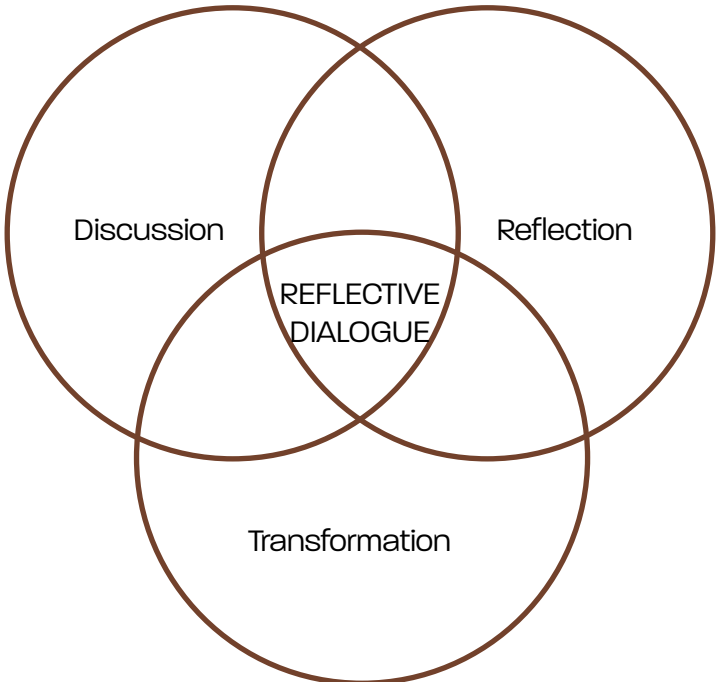
The supervisee is chosen by the participants. Through the various sessions, the participants take turns being both supervisee and part of the reflecting team. The guidance is based on the topic “The difficult conversation”. Beyond this, there are no other references to what this may implicate, but the purpose is to work on the topic in order for the participants to feel better prepared to face these conversations. The supervisor opens the conversation by a simple and open question, for instance: - “What is your experience with this topic”?

### **The conversation**

Then the conversation starts, where the supervisee tells a little about her own experiences and what she finds difficult. There may be various approaches the topic, but it usually builds on personal experiences or issues. After the first part of the conversation, the supervisor pauses the conversation by saying: - We will now stop and open for comments or questions from the reflecting team. He/she then draw aside the invisible curtain between us and let the team speak.

The supervisor addresses the team and asks for any immediate reactions or comments on the initial conversation. In this round, the team speaks among themselves. They can of course skip the round if they have no comments so far. The participants in the team turn to each other, summarize what they have heard, maybe comment on matters that emerged from the conversation or that they find particularly interesting. This might very well be body language tone of voice, or other observations on feelings, empathy or indifference.

The team members have the opportunity to talk to the supervisor, but not to the supervisee. The team is only allowed to spend a few minutes talking, before the supervisor stops their reflection by saying: - We stop here, and draws the “invisible curtain”



The supervisee is then asked to comment on what has been said. If she has no comments, the supervisor suggests that the conversation continues until the next time he/she pauses the dialogue to let the team speak. While the team is talking, the supervisee is given the opportunity to listen to their perception of her, and the pause from the conversation gives her a chance to reflect and think about what might be sensible to talk more about. It continues like this until the supervisee has finished with her input and perceptions.

The supervisor then seeks to direct the guidance towards the topic of the difficult conversation, in order to challenge the supervisee to find a strategy and plan for next such conversations, whether it is a scheduled one or occurs in a situation at the school. Since the participants also live in the school district, they must be prepared to meet both parents, teachers and the children in other contexts, where various issues may be brought up.

## **Roles in the guidance session**

In the reflective process there is no actual limit for the number of participants. Andersen (2007) writes that he has used this type of reflection even in large assemblies where one group was commissioned to listen, reflect and comment, while another group was discussing a topic. Nevertheless, in our context, it seems more expedient to limit the participation in the guidance process, both in consideration of the time resources and because the contents of these conversations should not leave the room. This means that the person in charge of the guidance/ the supervisor, instructs the participants that what is talked about in the meeting room, must not be repeated in other contexts. In this project, as well as other similar projects, we have engaged relatively small groups.

## **Roles in the “Reflecting Team”**

In this round, we assign four roles for the process, although there are usually only three active roles. The *supervisee* is the one who is offered to be subjected to the guidance. The supervisee sits down with a *supervisor*, who asks questions and act as a conversation partner. In addition, 2 or 3 people participate as a *reflecting team*. This team is chosen by the supervisee, and the members are more or less familiar with each other.

The reflecting team is present in the room where the guidance takes place, but has no opportunity to take part in the conversations between the supervisee and the supervisor. They must first and foremost listen. Now and then, the supervisor turns to the reflecting team to ask them about their thoughts on the conversation they are listening to. They then talk among themselves or with the supervisor, but not to the supervisee.

The feedback can be on how they experience the conversation, what they notice along the way, or how the supervisee does or does not answer questions. They can also react with puzzlement to some of the issues that are brought up, and question terms that they do not understand. They should not in any way criticize, give advices or express how they would solve the issue themselves. We often find that this can be very hard to accomplish.

The reflecting team is conducted by the supervisor, who both initiates and ends the conversation. This is often done by the supervisor drawing down an “invisible curtain” between the supervisee and the reflecting team, as if they are sitting in separate rooms. During this process, the supervisee is listening to the team.

Once the “curtain” is drawn aside again, the supervisee is given the opportunity to comment on what the team has been talking about. This can often bring about a change in the guidance, because the team may have detected issues that need to be clarified. In this kind of guidance, it is vital that the supervisor understands the importance of making himself as invisible as possible, and let the supervisee speak. If the supervisee is not able to see how she/he should work further with a topic, the supervisor can give the reflecting team the opportunity to propose some possible solutions that the supervisee is then asked to consider and comment on. If the supervisee finds some of these suggestions interesting, he or she must explain the reasons why this might be interesting to try out.

The fourth role included in this project, has been that of the observer. The observer does not participate in the guidance, but merely observes the progress and content of the conversation, and the proceedings of the guidance session. The observer works at a metalevel and will eventually present his observations on the verbal and non-verbal communication, to what extent the supervisee has tried to find a solution, and how the reflecting team has contributed to this.

## **Communication cannot be avoided**

According to Bateson (1972) we also communicate when we do not seem to speak with each other. Even silence is communication. The same applies the use of body language. Through mimicry and gestures, we communicate emotions and opinions without using words. Lack of correlation between body language and verbal language, can be perceived as disturbing and confusing.

Bateson believes that for children this can be so confusing that it may, in worst case, contribute to schizophrenia. A child will not understand a message if it is followed by a contradictory statement or body language that signals the opposite. For a child, this will create confusion, compromise the sense of security and understanding of the message and, last but not least, the relationship with the adult. The awareness of this is imperative in the contact between people (Bateson 1972).

In a guidance situation, it is essential how the different issues are met with different types of communication. An example can be a situation where the supervisee laughs while telling something tragic, without telling why the tragic statement is linked to laughter. It might be a way of processing the story, distance himself from it, or an attempt to mitigate criticism? The same applies to other reactions, such as anger and tears that can express different emotional outbursts. Anger might actually be directed towards the content of the conversation, against other people mentioned in the conversation, against other people present, or against the supervisor.

On the other hand, anger can also be an expression of commitment. Either way, it is an important part of the guidance to clarify such connections and look for wise strategies for the further work. Similarly, crying can mean more than pain and sorrow. Tears can also be an expression of dedication, of being believed or of being given the

opportunity to talk about an issue that he/she is struggling with. In these situations, it becomes equally important for the supervisor to try to clarify the situation based on Bateson and Andersen's concept of "hard / loose" or "just enough" pressure in the conversation (Andersen 2007).

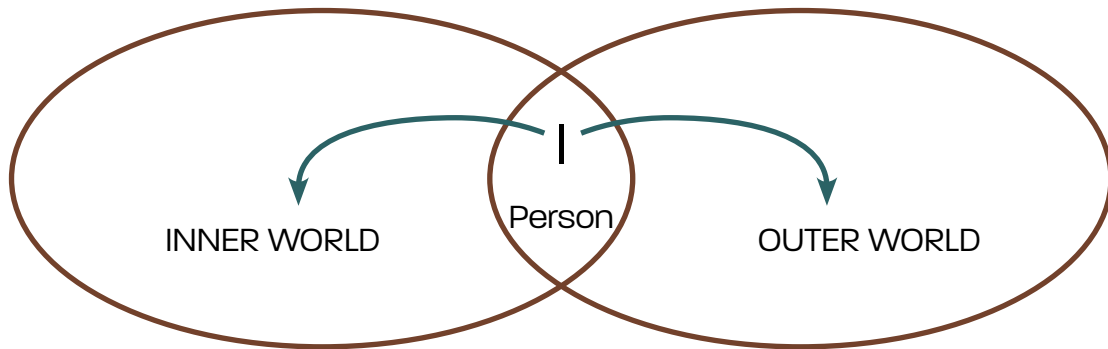
In a reflecting team guidance, two people are sitting and talking together, while someone else is listening, understanding, and trying to confirm the statements. The various observations they make during the communication, helps to create understanding or to dissociate from what is being communicated.

According to Andersen (2007), communication often consists of three parallel conversations. The first conversation is the sender's inner dialogue. The one who speaks and is about to make a statement, needs to search for the right words and expressions to convey his/her message. The language is of vital importance, because the words are put together into meaningful sentences before they are pronounced and sent to the recipient. The one who receives the words must interpret every word based on his/her own knowledge of the semantic content of these words, and then reflect on, and establish an opinion about the sender's message.

It is essential for the message, that the sender and recipient have the same understanding of what is said. Meanwhile, the analogue body language helps to reinforce or emphasize the meaning of the statement (Andersen 2007). The presence of obstructive filters in the conversation is always a possibility. This can be physical filters related to external noise, other sound sources or hearing difficulties, but also filters in form of the receiver's preconceptions, perception and knowledge. If understanding is not achieved, the recipient will try to get confirmation from the sender by asking questions. The body language will also contribute to understanding or affirmation of the statement, or reinforce the experience that the statement is not understood. According to Andersen, this is the *second dialog*.

## **The third dialogue**

The *third dialogue* is the outer dialogue, the actual conversation between the parties, which can also be heard and observed by others. Other people can now get access to the communication, and will try to understand it, based on their own interpretation. In guidance with reflecting team, the team's perception or interpretation of the conversation, along with their reflection on the communication, helps to understand and clarify the message. When the reflecting team expresses what they perceive, the sender (the supervisee) gets the opportunity to listen and hear how his/her message or statement is understood by others. This will give the sender the opportunity to correct or confirm what others hear.



Person stands in continuous inner and outer dialogue.

However, this makes it possible to pick up on certain statements, analyse these and reflect on what significance they may have. Small and apparently insignificant utterings, can prove to be important details that might change the direction of the conversation, or emphasize other perspectives that have been imperceptible during the conversation.

The reflecting team can through the listening process, pick up signals that may be sensible to discuss further, but that could just as well be set aside to give room for reinforcement or support in the further conversation. This alternation between supervisee and supervisor, and between supervisor and the reflecting team, as well as the dialogue within the team, helps to identify areas or topics that the guidance should explore further. At the same time, it makes it possible to clear away the more insignificant issues.

## The open questions

Crucial for progress in communication, both in conversations and guidance in general, is that the dialogue is not closed so to obstruct opportunities for nuances. The supervisor's task is to get the supervisee to talk as much as possible, not to create a debate between himself and the supervisee. The supervisor's capability to distinguish between closed and open questions is imperative, and he/she needs also be able to follow up on ambiguities and grasp the nuances that make a difference.

Closed questions often start with a verb and give little room for other than short and imprecise answers, usually "yes" and "no". Such questions only help to create a reality or understanding directed by the supervisor's questions, rather than the supervisee's reflection. Good questions pave the way for to nuanced answers.

Closed questions can easily become a guessing game where the questioner controls the meaning of the conversation through his/her perceptions and assertions. Sometimes short closed questions may be useful to illuminate some issues, as long as they are followed up to clarify the perceptions. Open questions often start with interrogative words that give the supervisee the occasion to search his mind for, and construct, his/her own statement.



## **A written guide for guidance?**

Through guidance, you should be able to uncover and help with many issues and needs in life. As life itself can be complicated for some, the majority of the guidance methods will focus on one issue at a time that is appropriate for guidance. It will normally be important to prioritize and systematize the topics to be addressed, in order for the solutions and further work to be considered in relation to the particular topic that has been treated.

To prevent the conversation from bouncing between various topics, the supervisor usually wants the supervisee to isolate one topic and to write down an issue or a statement that the conversation should focus on.

This will constitute the framework for the conversation and in many ways also the “tunnel” that the supervisee will have pass through towards a “solution” to the issue he or she wrote down. In a summary, the supervisee and supervisor can see if they have found a solution or an answer to the issue / statement that it is possible to continue working on. Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that the guidance will solve the actual problem, because this can be kept away from the guidance by the supervisee’s choice of topic for the guidance session.

In guidance with reflecting teams, there is no pre-written issue or a formulated problem statement. Those who hand in a written account, have normally thought carefully about what the guidance should be about, and thus be in reasonable control of the topic. In this manner, the supervisee can also prevent undesired topics from being included in the guidance, because the guidance is limited to concentrate on this one particular topic, even though other and perhaps more important issues become visible along the way. In guidance with reflecting teams, the task is to listen to the supervisee and find out what he or she most likely needs of support and help.

Through summaries, reflections, curiosity and questions, the supervisee can identify the topics that are necessary to continue working with. The situation can also lead to new solutions or confirm the answers the supervisee has already got. Of course, this can be somewhat outside the personal comfort zone, but the supervisor and the reflecting team’s responsibility is to support the supervisee in facing the challenge.

The concept of empowerment has great significance in such guidance. This can be about releasing the supervisee’s own resources and ideas and help to provide him or her with some room for manoeuvre. The reflecting team’s task is not to come up with solutions, but helping to identify the supervisee’s possibilities to find his/her own solutions and assets and develop justifications and understandings of their own actions related to his/her professional practice.

The guidance method is based on a systemic perspective, where actions and attitudes are in many ways interrelated and affect each other. Thus, one cannot ignore all the factors that have impact on both the teaching and the professional function, or other aspects important in one’s personal life, which may influence the teaching strategy, both emotionally and rationally.

## **Observing the communication**

An important part of the guidance with reflecting teams, is observing the communication. Here too, there are different tasks according to the roles. Observation is something far more than seeing. Bandura (Imsen 2008) claims that observation is also about selecting what to observe in order to learn from the observation, e.g. to copy something that is being observed. The reflecting team will assist both the supervisor and the supervisee in searching for answers, but also trigger their curiosity and help both parts to reflect on their statements and observe how the conversation develops in terms of both language, intonation, body language and other signs (Andersen 2007).

In the first order observation, the observation is about the actual seeing of something. The observer is observing without thinking about anything other than being present. This is the primary task in the first order observation (Bjørndal, 2011). It can be described as linear, that is, an observation of cause and effect. This is a rather objective observation, merely describing what is happening. In reflecting guidance, this implies that the observer is listening and noticing what is happening during the guidance session. In the meeting between people, this is often the first thing that occurs. To the reflecting team, this means that they are making an objective observation of the conversation, noticing how the interlocutors are sitting, the distance between them, the tone of voice, the temperature in the room or whether the room is illuminated or dark.

If the intention of the observation is to learn something about what is observed, the observer must try to understand what is being said, the relational connections in the conversation, which cognitive structures are being used, how the supervisor and the supervisee seem to understand each other, and what significance the conversation could have for the guidance session. What is being said is interpreted into a context based on the observers own experiences or knowledge.

This is the second order observation, which is well suited for use in a reflecting team, where you give feedback on what you hear and what you see. Unease in the conversation is seen as more than just physical unrest, and may be connected to unpleasant or uncomfortable questions. This is not only a cause - effect, but also an interpretation of what is observed based on own experience, knowledge about the topic discussed, or familiarity with the supervisee. The observer creates and utilizes systems to understand what is observed, and put it into a comprehensible context (Burian & Burian, 2006).

In guidance with reflecting teams, the participants step in and out of these roles. This becomes apparent through the dialogue among the team members.

This was an exciting conversation. It was fun to see the development that NN has gone through, from chaos to getting an overview of her frustrations, see the things she has done right and see that her entire body language is different. (Log from session 3)

## **Promoting active citizenship**

This chapter has referred to selected activities that promote active citizenship and personal development with pedagogical means in a school context. A common understanding of reflection is that it happens more or less automatically. A reflection on the surface of water may seem to mirror an image identical to the reality that it reflects. But our experience from this and other similar projects tell us that this is not

the only case. A minor disturbance in the water-mirror will change the reflection and prevent a perception of similarity between reality and reflection. We have to rely on our experiences within the world we are familiar with, though we sometimes seem to fail to distinguish one reality from another (Bateson, 1972; Biggs, 1999). It is often difficult to distinguish our own perceptions from other peoples' experienced realities. Bateson says that we form an image of something, and that this "something" is what stands out from the background. It is what distinguishes itself from the surroundings, although we see both the surroundings and the object at the same time.

## **Collaboration between parents and teachers**

Schools' activities are often focused on problems in daily work and looking for useful strategies to solve them. Before a certain plan is turned into action it will pass through a process of development. For the process to be fertile, it may be necessary to employ various catalysts. In a guidance context we can use the reflecting team as a catalyst in the process of finding new ways to solve old problems.

In the school system in general there are discussions as to whether it is possible or not to make real changes for children, not least for children with special needs. It ought to be obvious that children in need of customization and special pedagogical programmes should be supported by initiatives that may contribute to positive changes in their learning situation and daily life. If the need for remedial measures in school does not decrease, there is a reason to ask whether the school has found the right measures.

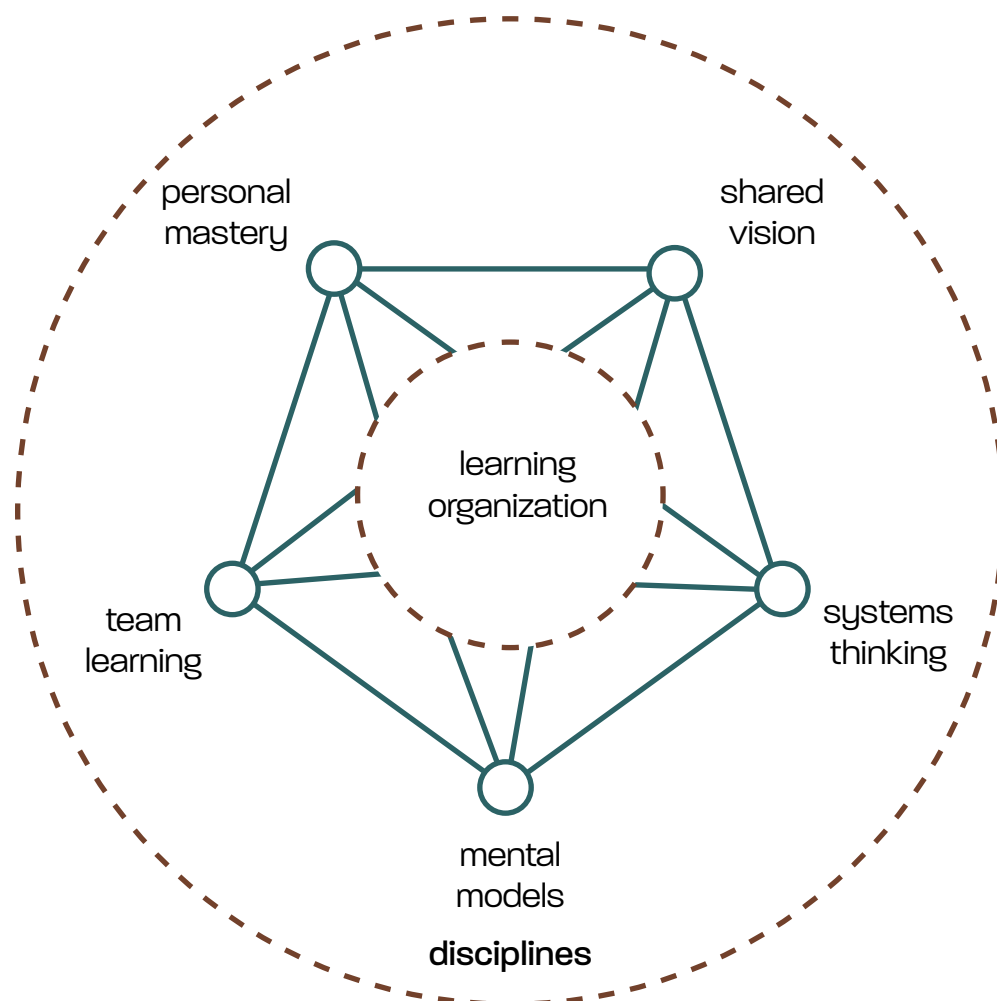
The description of the reflecting team is originally based on the therapeutic conversation (Andersen, 2007). However schools are not engaged in therapy. Nor does a certain school choose its pupils. Every school has a social mandate to accept everyone who meets the requirements for school entry. In the Norwegian school there are few requirements to meet. Children must turn six the year they start compulsory school, and it is their right and obligation to attend the school where they belong geographically. The school as an institution is required to deal with both the children and their families. This puts the school in a different situation from other social institutions. Though their children, the parents establish a connection with the school system, and a close contact and good communication with the school is expected for many years. A good, functional collaboration between parents and teachers is crucial for the outcome of the schooling and for school development to the best of the children.

## **Learning organization**

Scherp (2002) emphasizes the role of the learning organization in school development in handling the increasing pace of change. Action-based learning from everyday activities can help improve the quality of work. The school's actors convey intelligible connections between organizational models and administrative practices, and the pedagogical work of teaching can facilitate school improvement (Blossing, 2003).

If we recognize schools as sites for learning, rather than institutions with the core business of teaching, implementing the learning organization cannot be an individual matter for individual teachers but a joint responsibility of both teachers and parents. A key to successful school improvement may be to extend the collective learning from teachers and their pupils to more actively including also the parents. Developing

schools might be a concern for everyone, but how this is done in practice is a matter for each school unit, and cannot be answered in advance.



Although researchers and practitioners have gathered knowledge about school and its activities for a long time, there is no panacea for how school can best be developed to fulfil its mandate given by society. A common experience for all is the need for detailed knowledge of the complexity in the school's daily work. Having this knowledge will increase the chances of successfully develop the school into a learning organization (Senge, 1990).

## Final comments

Guidance can take many forms and follow many methods. This article argues that using Tom Anderson's therapeutic model as a starting point for developing new skills in teachers' contacts with parents. A series of reflective team conversations can strengthen the teacher's beliefs in his or her own skills and substantiate the choices made.

The starting point for the project was explorative, and we had no preconceptions about the outcome. However, based on logs and observations it can be concluded that using reflecting team as a method makes a difference in guidance, which in turn makes a

difference for the outcome of the project. A main reason for the positive outcome is that the participating teachers were willing to give so much of themselves in the process. As the school administrators have stated afterwards, the teacher's experience is an asset to the whole school organization.

## **Variations on Reflective Teams**

The Danish action researcher and consultant Carsten Hornstrup has for long time focused on helping organizations to increased cohesiveness. About the reflective team as a method transferred from one context to another he emphasizes the importance of "renegotiate" the original meaning of the reflective team concept and its practical application. We have chosen to end our article with some of his variations on reflective teams (Hornstrup, 2008).

### **Team members' reflection**

The Purpose of this exercise is for the reflective team members to express thoughts, feelings and opinions about a shared experience, to build openness and trust in the team, and to draw out key learnings and insights to improve future application. The team members place themselves in a circle, or "U" shape. First they reflect individually on a given theme and then they will share their individual reflections with the other members of the group. Insights and learning emerge for future application and improvement. This practice may well be used continuously throughout a series of reflective team sessions.

### **The supporting team**

In this approach, the reflecting team focuses on the actions and behaviour of the supervisor. The supporting team will observe which questions that may help the supervisee's ability to reflect and find new insights.

This is also a way of helping the supervisor to find a stable platform for a constructive dialogue between the participants. The supporting team might also suggest other questions in order to deepen the conversation. Thus the supporting team can act as a more active part that increases confidence in the role of supervisor.

### **The solution-generating team**

An often asked question is if the reflective team should give direct advices to the supervisee. The members of the reflective team often have a number of more or less good ideas that they want to convey to the supervisor and the supervisee. It might be inappropriate for the reflecting team not to pass their ideas on.

On the other hand it is important that the solution-generating team really present their ideas as open and voluntary proposals instead of ready-made proposals. The different solution models can be tried out and tested verbally as questions like "Might it be worthwhile to ...?" or "What might happen if you were to...?"

## The concluding team

A variant of the solution-generating team is the concluding team that adopt a meta-position in evaluating or clarifying actions in relation to the question types. The team try to draw conclusions from central points in the dialogue and from various perspectives relating to the topic and the participators, seen from the participants' perspective.

## The creative team

The creative team is particularly suitable for generating new thoughts, ideas and options in RELATION to existing tasks. This kind of team will try to turn the basic assumptions and understanding of both the supervisor and the supervisee upside down in order to expose new possibilities. The creative team's assignment is to turn the situation around, and confront preconceived solutions with new possible thoughts and actions. Typical questions the creative team is characterized by hypothetical questions like "What would happen if the supervisee were to give up the notion that X is right, and Z is wrong – what would happen if it were the other way around?" or "What is the worst that could happen if ...?"





## **The metaphor-generating team**

The metaphor-generating team is a variation of the creative team with metaphors as valuable tools. The supervisor is free to use metaphors but he can also pass the task over to the team. The use of metaphors will often have a vitalising effect on the dialogue and can inspire to find alternative perspectives on the subject. When the reflective team work with metaphors they can stimulate the creativity of all participants, including themselves, functioning as a creative team, developing metaphors in an internal dialogue within the team.

## **Dialogue-oriented team**

The main task for the dialogue-oriented team is to observe the dialogue, focusing on dominant or absent topics and headlines. They also take a close look on the relation between the participants, all from a metaperspective.

# WHAT PERSON AM I?

## Objectives:

- Consciously acquaint participants with feelings and thoughts about personal topics
- Realize positive elements of themselves
- Think about admirable qualities of others

**Target / Age group:** School, university students, young people

**Group Size:** 8-30

**Time:** 30 min

**Materials needed:** Activity sheet „What person am I?“, pens

## Instructions:

- Have participants individually fill out Activity sheet „What person am I?“, finishing the statements honestly. Explain that they will be asked to share only one of the qualities of the people they most admire. Tell them that no one will look at what is written on their worksheets.
- After all the participants have completed the sheet, ask them to share one of the qualities they said they admire. Write these on the board. If there are duplications, add check marks next to those qualities to indicate how many students offered them.
- After the Discussion Questions are completed, tell the students that they are free to do whatever they wish with the worksheet.

## Discussion Questions:

- Were the questions on the worksheet difficult to answer? Why or why not?
- Did you feel embarrassed or find it difficult to write positive things about yourself, even though no one is going to read them? Why?
- How does it make you feel to spend time thinking about your positive qualities?

## Debriefing and reflection:

Have participants read the qualities on the board ask them to start discussion with the help of the questions:

- Does the list tell you anything about the types of people we admire? (This list usually includes positive qualities.)
- Do we admire negative traits in people? Why or why not?

## **Activity sheet: WHAT PERSON AM I?**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The people I care most in my life are.....

I feel proud of myself when I .....

I am a likable person because .....

The people I admire most in my life are .....

The qualities I admire most about them are .....

Two of my outstanding qualities that I .....

One of the kindest things I ever did was .....

# TREE OF LIFE

## Objectives:

- Look at one's own life and to learn to see yourself and life from different angles
- Find empathy towards oneself and understand that the past shapes us
- Develop creativity and imagination and also the ability to accept the different events in our lives

**Age/target group:** 13->, needs motoral skills

**Group Size:** No limit, share a big group into small groups max.10 participants

**Time:** 60- 90 min

**Materials needed:** A3 paper, colouring material (pens, watercolors, grayons..), tape, dc – player and music (optional)

## Instructions:

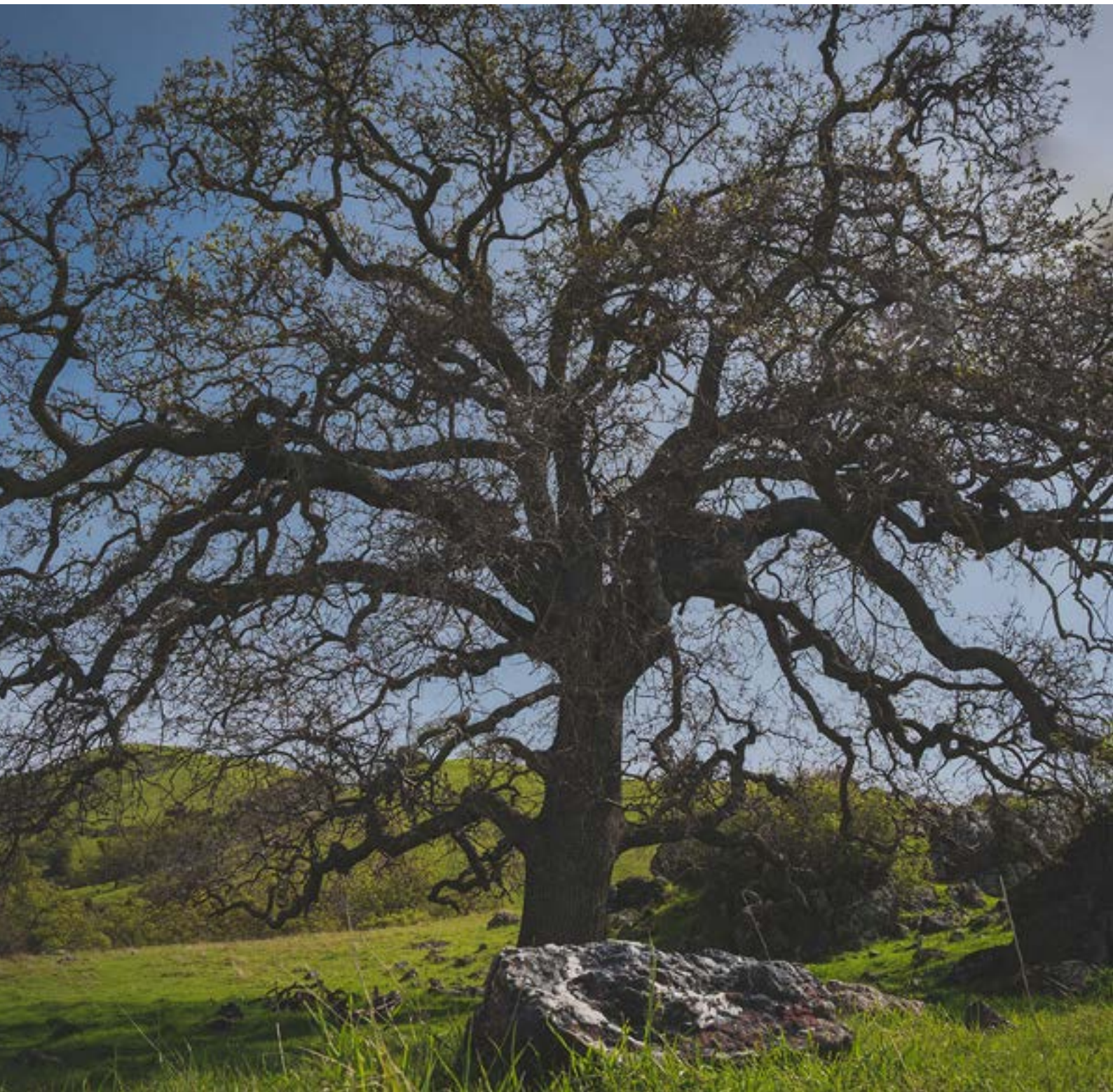
- The idea is that everyone makes their own Tree of Life by drawing, colouring and writing. Start the process by going through the aims of this exercise. Discuss and refine your goals with the group and remind that everyone is doing this exercise for themselves. The Tree of life isn't a family tree, but a tree of important events, people, learning, places and memories about your life. For example: people that have affected in your life and choices, an event in your childhood that you remember well, an important place in your life or a choice that made a difference for you. Strong memories, happy or sad...
- Place the materials so that everyone can pick their own choice of materials. They can make the tree just as they want: paint, colour or write. Give the group 30 minutes to work on this. If you think that music can help the participants to concentrate, you can put some relaxing music in the background. You can also give some helpful tips during the work: You can implement your feelings to the tree with different colours, Is there some place that has been specially important for you in your life, and so on.
- After 30 minutes of working it's time to stop. It doesn't matter if the tree is not ready! Participants take pairs, if possible someone that they don't know so well. They present the trees to each other, asking some questions about them. After this presentation you can set all the trees in the room as an art exhibition. But be careful, this may not be comfortable if the group is new for each other – then it is best to leave it for the pair discussion.
- If you decide to arrange an art exhibition place the trees around the room. Ask the participants to write a note next to their trees that tells the name of the work of art and the artist and the technique that was used. You as a director can be the gallerist and open the event presenting the exhibition, giving a short speech and rising an imaginary or real toast for the artists. Then everyone can walk quietly around the exhibition and enjoy the pictures.



## **Debriefing and reflection**

Discussion together with the group. Place the chairs in a circle so that everyone can see each other. Helpful questions to start the discussion:

- How did it feel to describe your life as a Tree of Life?
- What kind of things of your life did you pick to the Tree?
- How did the other trees feel like? What new did they tell about the people?
- How did the Tree describe you? Did you learn or understand something new about yourself through this task?
- Why is it important to know oneself?



# POSITIVE GOSSIPING

## Objectives:

- Make positive thoughts visible
- Give good feedback to others
- Listen and receive feedback
- Raise self-awareness

**Target / Age group :** 10->

**Group Size:** 8-20

**Time:** 15-30 min

**Materials needed:** No material needed

## Instructions:

- The aim is to give feedback to each other within the group. The group sits in a circle so that everyone can see each other. One turns around so that others see only his back. The group starts positive gossip, as if the person was not even present.
- The instructor can help the group in conversation and gossip with help questions: Where did he succeed today? In what is he particularly good at? What would you like to say to him? How was his presence important today for this group?
- It's good to give some time for the gossiping and not do it in a hurry. The one who is listening has the time to enjoy what others say. If the group is big, it may be good to give everyone the same amount of time to listen to gossip about themselves.

## Debriefing and reflection

This exercise is in itself a good reflection. But if necessary, you should ask the group at the end of the assignment what it felt like to listen to gossip about yourself. And also what it felt like to gossip about others.



# HOW MANY PEOPLE AM I?

## Objectives:

- Relate the term self-concept to themselves
- Describe the complexity of factors that influence our self-concepts
- Critically analyze how we view ourselves.
- Understand and increase one's positive self-concept.

**Target / Age group :** School, university students, young people

**Group Size:** 8-20

**Time:** 40 min.

**Materials needed:** Board and chalk

## Instructions:

- Write the following quotation on the board, explaining that a famous psychologist William James wrote it: '*Whenever two people meet there are really six people present- there is each man/woman as he/she sees himself/herself, each man/woman as the other sees him/her and each man/woman as he/she really is*' (William James, Principles of Psychology, New York:Holt,2 Vols)
- Write the word *self-concept* on the board and discuss its meaning with the participants. *Self-concept* is the way people view themselves. It consists of people's attitudes, perceptions, and ideas. Each person has a unique self-concept, and there for each person is unique. No two people see things exactly the same way. The self-concept helps a person maintain stability and consistency.
- Divide the participants into pairs and tell them taht they will have approximately ten minutes to decide what William James meant by the quite and how the quote relates to self-concept.
- Each group briefly explains what they think the quotation means and how it relates to our self-concept.
- Divide the students into groups of three and ask them to discuss: What does it mean to be a happy person? How do people's self-concept relate to contact with friends, teachers, siblings and parents? What are some different ways that people accept praise?
- Have everyone gather into one big circle. Each small group share answers to the questions.

## Debriefing and reflection

- Questions for reflection:
- What things influence your self-concept?
- How does self-concept relate to the quote on the board?
- How positive do you think your self-concept is/
- What are some ways that people can work to improve their self-concept?

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