



# REACH OUT

Booklet 4

How to facilitate engagement of youth  
in participatory processes at local level

# Imprint

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# INTRODUCTION

We are the Competence Group Methods, a team of professionals working in the field of international youth work and part of the Generation Europe – The Academy (GenE-A) network.

Our shared commitment revolves around non-formal education principles and common values such as democracy, equality, human rights, and respect. Our primary focus is on disadvantaged youth in various European countries, youth facing challenges stemming from physical and psychological needs, social, geographical, religious, gender and other specific backgrounds.

Do these young individuals require special educational environments, unique treatment, and specific pedagogical tools? Based on our network's experience, the answer is no.

Despite our diverse areas of expertise – ranging from sustainability and theatre, to art and humanitarian work with ethnic minorities, refugees and disabled people – we share one common goal: empowering young people

in European countries to become active citizens. What does that mean? Our network members from 14 countries will certainly give different answers to this question, either due to different national working conditions for youth workers, or because of their individual experiences in collaborating with local stakeholders. Active citizens engage in activities such as voting, protesting, advocating, protecting the rights of disadvantaged groups or raising awareness in their neighbourhoods such as for a local park. Ultimately, active citizens are those who wish to bring about positive change – a goal we pursue through our youth projects.

## Our Pedagogical Approach

Drawing on the long experience of our network partners, we have concluded that annual youth encounters, each time with new participants, enhance the intercultural competences of young people, but provide limited sustainability to youth work. Therefore, we have developed a pedagogical concept that enables young people from different countries to regularly exchange ideas with

their peers and continue project work both locally and internationally. During a five-year project phase, each partnership of three European organisations has three years to conduct one youth exchange per year.

This structure allows young people from that partnership to meet face-to-face three times. In between these encounters, participants engage in local project activities which they brainstorm and design themselves. Youth leaders play a supportive role, facilitating the young people's initiatives and activities. By the second or third youth encounter, the young people share their project experiences and their first attempts at advocacy and lobbying.

In this booklet we share our experiences of working with young people on a local level, particularly focusing on the local activities, integral to the Generation Europe – the Academy programme. Each organisation within the network organises a series of activities annually, working with their local groups.

One of the questions we get asked most frequently is: 'How do you sustain the engagement of young people over such a long period of time?'. We decided to shed light on our challenges and solutions, even though due to diversity it is hard to come up with a **magic formula**.



In the following parts, we present various proposals on maintaining engagement.

# 1. DEFINITION OF LOCAL YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Local youth activities take place in the area where the associations affiliated with the GenE-A network partners are active. As mentioned in the introduction, the network of Generation Europe – The Academy is quite diverse, ranging from small organisations without offices, to comprehensive youth centres run by city councils. Operating in various circumstances, from rural areas to bustling city centres, makes it challenging to offer a one-size-fits-all solution. In this booklet, we present several proposals to stimulate engagement. However, we encourage you, the reader, to tailor these methods to your reality, considering the needs of your group and the goals of your project.

## Local Activities

The local group comprises about ten young people aged 16–24 who work on activities in their communities or in the organisation’s neighbourhood. The group uses a

participatory process to decide what they want to work on and why. They are supported by youth leaders to implement this. The activities have different objectives:

- ▶ Fostering group cohesion;
- ▶ Learning by doing;
- ▶ Seeking positive impact in the community;
- ▶ Enhancing competences.

These activities focus on youth policy, addressing issues that concern young people such as climate change, racism, xenophobia, LGBTIAQ+, etc.

How important are local activities for international cooperation? While each organisation organises different activities, they share a common objective: creating a voice for young people. Within the network, participants can share their experiences and inspire one another to improve their skills.

## Multiplier Effect

Our efforts aim to achieve a multiplier effect through our work, operating in two directions:

- ▶ **Within the network:** Sharing the outcomes and processes of local activities organised by partnerships, making the results visible at international level. This allows young people and organisations direct access to best practices and insights from other institutions. Positive results can be adapted and applied across different locations in Europe.
- ▶ **In the local community:** When the local community sees its young people actively seeking positive change and working side by side, it motivates others to take action, be it in small or big steps. This helps to promote citizenship education.

While these may seem like small steps, engaging in local activities simultaneously with more than 40 organisations throughout the year signifies a collective ascent up the ladder.

## 2. THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

It is crucial to highlight that this participatory process is different for each organisation and participant. Everyone works at different scales, with different group sizes, different rhythms, different goals and objectives. That is why in this chapter we introduce the model created by Roger Hart, known as the “Ladder of Participation” (Hart, 1992). We include it in this booklet as a valuable tool to understand the stages in a participatory process. Before starting to implement an activity or develop a new method, it is important to understand the needs and motivations in order to realise set goals.

### Ladder of Participation

Roger Hart describes participation as a metaphorical ‘ladder’ representing different levels of participation. It helps to understand how to move from non-participation to different levels of participation.

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1 Models of youth participation – MYD: Description of the different levels of participation according to Hart (Hart, 1992). Adapted from the “Ladder of Participation” by the Ministry of Development New Zealand. ([www.myd.govt.nz/documents/engagement/harts-ladder.pdf](http://www.myd.govt.nz/documents/engagement/harts-ladder.pdf))



## LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

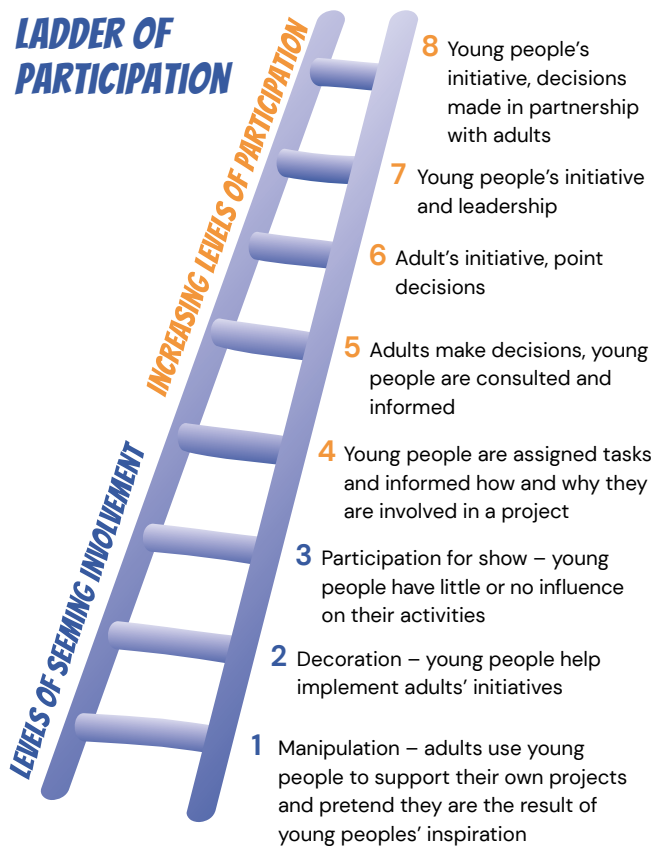


Figure 1: The different steps of participation according to Hart’s theory

Hart notes rare examples of such participation: *“The reason, I believe, is not the absence of a desire to be useful on the part of teenagers. It is rather the absence of caring adults attuned to the particular interests of young people. We need people who are able to respond to the subtle indicators of energy and compassion in teenagers.”* (Hart, 1992, p. 14)

Hart talks about young people initiated or directed at levels 7 and 8 (Figure 1). In the field of non-formal learning, the term “peer to peer” is frequently used, signifying that young people have a lot to share with each other. When motivated to do so and take responsibility, they can showcase their competences, leading to an increase in self-esteem. This is helpful during a participatory process, as young individuals can manage responsibility and take credit for their achievements.

For more information on peer to peer education, you can refer to the Method Box (link provided in the Useful Links).

*“Participatory process means for me that young participants are actively taking part in a long-term process. So if it’s just one short event and everyone is coming, I would not call that participatory process. That’s just participation. Participatory process is the capability also to be actively present in a long-term strategy.”*– Simone Dell’Armi, META Società Cooperativa Sociale Onlus

### 3. REACHING YOUNGSTERS

In the GenE-A network, we have employed diverse tactics to engage young people at the local level. Several partners have found it beneficial to collaborate with NGOs to facilitate access to young people, particularly those facing disadvantages. However, in some cases, such interaction was unnecessary, as direct communication with young people had already been established. When communicating with young people, great importance is placed on their active participation, ensuring they are neither left behind nor overwhelmed.

The second step in engaging young people involves gradually introducing them to the participatory structures of the organisations, allowing them to empathise. As participation progresses, additional responsibilities and tasks are assigned to young participants. Young people can choose their own topics and priorities, getting guidance to focus on achievable personal goals instead of trying to change the world. Youth leaders just oversee the meetings, simplifying the process for young individuals in their daily lives.

However, COVID-19 restrictions and the war in Ukraine have posed challenges. For instance, reaching out to young people has been more challenging due to physical meeting restrictions. Additionally, parents and young people declined youth encounters close to the Russian border, as expressed by a Polish youth leader:

*"...[the most important thing] to keep the motivation [...] is the youth encounter. The possibility to travel abroad and meet new people. What happened to that? If the war is here [...] [knocking] on the door of Poland..."*

Maintaining contact with young people was challenging, highlighting the difficulty of staying connected, making progress, and meeting solely through online platforms, especially without the chance to participate in youth encounters.

To overcome this challenge, participants must feel in control of the process, giving them ownership of the initiatives to make reaching young people more accessible.

**Local activities involving young people have a multiplying effect.** They take on tasks in organisations that make them multipliers within their social context.

Connecting youth work with the community also influences this effect, as outlined in Booklet 5 (BeLonging – How to connect young people with their local community). By engaging with the local community and involving those interested, groups can establish valuable local connections.

This can have a multiplying impact, especially in projects with youth involvement. Through the young people's network, participants often become multipliers by introducing their friends to the projects. This dynamic helps boost the motivation of young people.

## 4. MOTIVATION

The GenE-A programme requires a long-term commitment and active participation from the participants (we work with local groups for at least 3 years). Throughout this period, many changes may happen, including conflicts within the group, personal changes of both the youth leaders and the ambassadors, and the possibility of participants leaving or new members joining. Challenges affecting local groups were previously explored in Booklet 1 (GroupUp – How to create and motivate a youth group for Active Citizenship).

**The change in motivation is natural:**

*“Don't expect that motivation will be high through the whole project, but try to reflect and also let it go somehow and don't make some decisions that have final points... But keep moving!” – Viktoriia Chetverikova, DUGA e.V.*

As part of our research for this booklet, we surveyed youth leaders within our network to gather their experiences and insights on sustaining engagement and motivation among young people over the long term. Booklet 1 discusses the theory of motivation and how to motivate the group. In this chapter, we compile ideas and suggestions from the existing experiences in the network on what should be considered to help our participants stay engaged.

### **Local meetings:**

The frequency of local group meetups varies across the network. While some groups meet weekly, most gather biweekly or monthly. Additionally, some groups convene every second or third month, dedicating entire weekends to bonding and working together. Meetings prioritise both teamwork and connection, allocating dedicated time and attention to foster personal relationships within the group.

*“What we actually do [to foster engagement and participation]: We usually eat together after we meet. In the team we discussed it, and we decided to create a ritual. When we eat together, it’s kind of team building and also to value the work the youngsters are doing. I also know this motivates them to participate in the next meeting. They look forward to having a moment to eat together as a group – a moment when they have the feeling, they are taken seriously and they can share their opinion [in a safe space].” – Kristin Langer, Werkstatt-Berufskolleg Unna*

Kristin Langer highlights a ritual where participants eat together after meetings. There’s consideration about its necessity due to time and budget concerns, but it’s seen as a valuable team-building activity. The ritual not only signifies the importance of the work done by the youngsters but also serves as a moment for them to feel valued, taken seriously, and is an opportunity to share their opinions.

## Team-building Exercises and Rituals: Fostering Trust and Connection

Team-building exercises and rituals play an important role in creating a trustful relationship among participants, ambassadors, and youth leaders. They provide a space where individuals can openly reflect, share opinions, and talk about their feelings. These activities help to build trust when the group creates a shared framework and structure within which individual needs and desires can be expressed. Rituals, offering dedicated time and space for participants to talk about themselves, the challenges they face, and their feelings, create a safe atmosphere and a sense of community for open sharing. For instance, starting a meeting with a “How are you?” circle, or sharing a meal together during or after a meeting can serve as such rituals. The members of the group create these rituals together, although it is good for the youth leader to introduce certain frameworks and rituals at the beginning of the process. Later, the members can decide whether to keep or modify these rituals.

*“They tell us all the time that they feel that the space for them is a safe space. Because they feel respected and they feel that we treat them horizontally, we respect their ideas.” – Laura del Valle, Càlam*

## Leisure Time:

*“We do, for example, informal meetings with all the groups involved: the pizza nights. We open up informal spaces where there are usually more personal conversations that help us to understand each other better. It’s a space where the group members feel more comfortable to talk about their concerns. This is also a good way to keep the group together.” – Laura del Valle, Càlam*

It is also important to plan meetings that are just about leisure and fun. Youth leaders can also take part in these events, or just the ambassadors. Leisure time spent together strengthens the relationship between group members and helps to maintain motivation.

*“Our good practice is that we spend a lot of time every weekend, at least half a day, on group-building methods. We try to keep the motivation up by doing very fun things, for example climbing activities. So they are highly motivated to come together and be present at the next meeting.” – Dominik Ahlers, Jugendakademie Walberberg*

At the beginning and throughout the group process, some groups include individual discussions where young people reflect on their engagement in the group. These discussions revolve around topics such as goals, motivation and individual needs, aiming to actively contribute to the participatory process. Periodically discussing individual motivations within the group is highly beneficial and gives an opportunity to revive and reformulate the group's overall motivation.

*"I think the participatory process needs to be accessible for the participant to take part actively. Mainly I try to assess at the beginning each individual's competences and skills, but also goals, dreams to make [the learning process] accessible by fitting, trying to define a fit role for each participant, which is based on the individual, also characteristic.*

*We are monitoring the participants' process, because in the first interview, we ask the participant to self-assess their skills, their dreams, and what they want to do. Dreams and reality don't always match, and this is how we motivate them, trying to fulfil the space between them. We support participants in recognising their own capacity and potential."* – Simone Dell'Armi, META Società Cooperativa Sociale Onlus

The quote emphasises the importance of assessing individuals' competences, skills, goals, and dreams at the beginning of the participatory process. The aim is to make the process accessible for active participation by defining suitable roles based on individual characteristics. The process involves initial interviews and continuous monitoring to align participants' self-assessments with the reality they encounter. Ongoing assessment and support are seen as crucial for facilitating participants' self-awareness and helping them achieve their best.

### **Shared Responsibilities:**

*"Our participants said, what would help them is a clear structure of responsibilities. For them it would be much more helpful if there was a structure inside the team, making clear who was responsible for what. And so maybe this responsible person would discuss the question, but then it's up to this person to make the decision."* – Viktoriia Chetverikova, DUGA e.V.

Establishing clear frameworks, transparency and shared responsibilities are important for fostering effective work and cultivating a safe group atmosphere.

Throughout the participatory process, participants make their own decisions and take on tasks and responsibilities. This individual responsibility strengthens the sense of belonging to the group, while at the same time supporting the commitment of the participants.

*“I tried a very concrete method: in every local meeting, the moderator and the person who would keep the minutes would alternate. So, in one meeting, you were the person who planned the meeting and also ran it. There was a second person who was part of the preparation process and documented everything during the meeting. The one who was supporting and documenting the meeting was then the moderator of the next meeting.”* – Kuldar Lilleõis, MTÜ Noored Toredate Mõtetega

### **Work in Small Groups:**

*“At a certain point, we understood that in order to keep the group cohesion, we shouldn’t ask them to be always together, always present together. We want them to be together in the long term process, not in each single event. So they organise themselves in small groups, having small initiatives, even in different places, different times, but always connected to the main goal. So we also foster some kind of digital connection and social*

*media, even like an informal network between participants. We ask for a responsible person that makes some kind of simple record or is in charge of reporting the initiative in the group. From time to time, a plenary session is organised with the group to make the check. Surprisingly, this also helped us to keep them motivated and has helped them to make proposals. According to monitoring result this strategy has been very appreciated by the group.”* – Simone Dell’Armi, META Società Cooperativa Sociale Onlus

Simone Dell’Armi discusses a strategy to maintain cohesion among participants in the long-term process without obligating them to always be physically present together. The emphasis is on allowing flexibility in organising small group initiatives, even in different locations and times, while still fostering digital connections through social media. The approach includes occasional plenary sessions for overall checks, but the flexibility helps accommodate individual time constraints. Surprisingly, this strategy not only maintains motivation but also enhances group dynamics, allowing participants with varying time commitments to contribute effectively. The process involves prior monitoring, interviewing, and assessing individual skills, competencies, and goals to tailor the approach to each participant’s needs.

## Big Dreams, Small Steps:

*“First, I tell them they should think big, very big. But it’s also important in the process that they find smaller milestones which they would be already really proud of, which would act as the motivation to become active and to work on the big idea further. I did this with my group, hoping it would motivate them to build more on it and not lose motivation in the long run.” – Kuldar Lilleõis, MTÜ Noored Toredate Mõtetega*

## Youth Encounter:

*“Well, the biggest motivation is the international youth encounter. And in the beginning, we had some conditions set for them that they have to participate in at least 50 to 60 percent of the local events in order to be able to participate in the international camp, which helped prevent drop-out.” – Borbála Takács, Kacsakő*

# 5. METHODS

*“Show me and I’ll remember. Let me do and I’ll understand!” (Confucius)*

Active participation, coupled with maintaining high levels of commitment and motivation, are vital to addressing the diverse challenges faced by young people. Feedback received ranges from expressions like “I am already overwhelmed with tasks” to a straightforward admission of disinterest. These kinds of comments often conceal an underlying need for support and indicate a sense of detachment.

In numerous instances, the existence of a sense of belonging leads to greater and more sustainable motivation and commitment. Feeling any sense of belonging often comes from living in a place for a while and doing things that feel personal or directly contribute to it.

Practices and processes that promote the personalisation of activities and spaces are instrumental in cultivating a sense of belonging among young people.



Efficient self-management practices can assist individuals in dealing with commitments and fostering self-organisational abilities.

An array of management tools are readily available for adapting and using in team management and project planning. The same management tools can be further modified for the youngsters' use and structured into methods to ensure a more engaging impact on the youths and facilitate their accessible acquisition of the tool.

It is worthwhile to utilise time and resource management tools, as well as project design tools. Clear and concise visualisation techniques aid the learning process, while simulation and storytelling elements can enhance participation.

The following methods are suggested:

- ▶ "Year Calendar"
- ▶ "Fear The Walking Deadlines"
- ▶ "Map To The Stars"
- ▶ "Building Plans"

The proposed methods have been successfully implemented in the network's local activities and youth encounters. The process of creating a personalised structure, starting from the self-management and activity planning stages, has proven effective in increasing group motivation, encouraging the setting of personal and intermediate goals, and operating in a dual capacity.

Thus the set of methods serves two purposes:

- ▶ For the group: Building a common base to set up a long-term participatory process.
- ▶ For each individual: Assessing and managing personal commitments ("Fear the Walking Deadlines" and "Year Calendar"), locating and assessing resources and stakeholders related to the topics they are working on ("Map to the Stars"), and structuring and planning activities according to available resources and competences ("Building Plans").

Note: While the initial three methods may be interchangeable in terms of flow, the last one, “Building Plan”, should be carried out last, as the first three serve as preparation for such a planning activity.

Additionally, finding a suitable meeting space and coordinating schedules is a common obstacle when starting a local activity. Therefore, the proposed approach can be applied online or in person to identify feasible solutions.

## YEAR CALENDAR

<b>Type of method</b>	Time management, visualisation
<b>Source/Author</b>	Adapted by Simone Dell’Armi, from an idea by Susanne Lögfren
<b>Number of participants</b>	Ideal number would be around 6–8 participants. If more, consider to split them into smaller groups.
<b>Related competences</b>	Organisational competence, time management
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support the local group in the scheduling of the activities throughout the year.</li> <li>• To foster self-time management among participants.</li> </ul>
<b>Time / Duration</b>	1 hour or more
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drawn/digital premade calendar wheel</li> <li>• Drawn/digital calendar wheel template or blank sheet (one per participant)</li> <li>• Drawn/digital local activities calendar wheel template or flipchart</li> <li>• Markers</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitator requirements</b>	Facilitator may need to prepare a custom calendar wheel template in advance.
<b>Room requirements</b>	Any indoor or outdoor space where participants can work on a flipchart

### Description of the activity

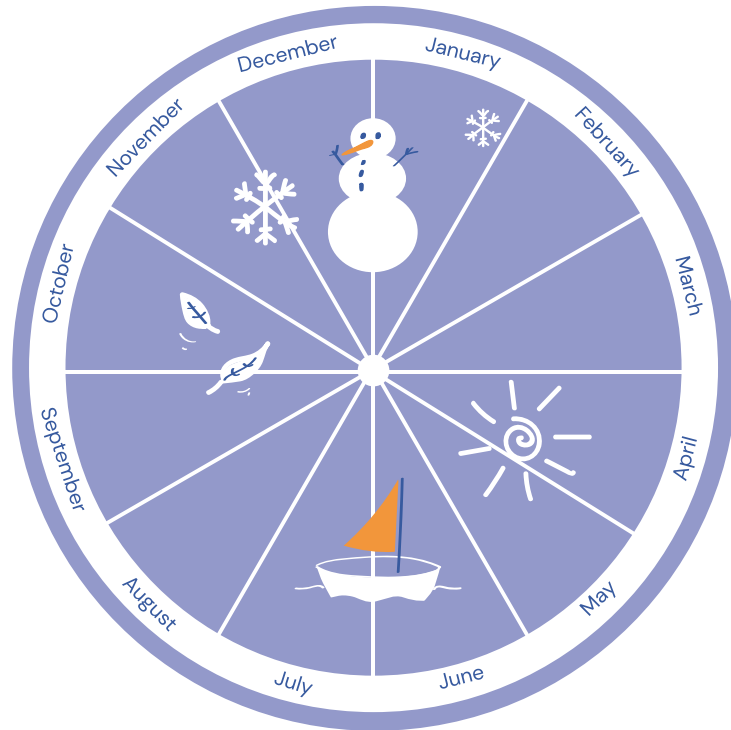
The method provides a structure that the participants can follow in order to plan when and what kind of action they can/want to implement, keeping always an eye on deadlines and event occurrences.

### Debriefing

- What was the method about?
- Why do you think it is important?
- Can you imagine any situation in which such a process could be useful?
- Would you improve this method? If yes, how?

### Remarks/Technical settings

#### Calendar wheel template



# FEAR THE WALKING DEADLINES

<b>Type of method</b>	Time management, visualisation
<b>Source / Author</b>	Simone Dell'Armi. The method was created and implemented during the activities of the local group in Rome (Italy).
<b>Number of participants</b>	Ideal number would be around 6–8 participants. If more, consider to split them into smaller groups.
<b>Related competences</b>	Organisational Competence, time management
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To support the local group in the scheduling of the activities.</li><li>• To foster self-time management among the participants.</li></ul>
<b>Time / Duration</b>	1 hour
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drawn/digital premade project timeline</li><li>• Drawn/digital timeline template or blank sheet (one per participant)</li><li>• Drawn/digital local activities timeline template or flipchart</li><li>• Markers</li></ul>
<b>Facilitator requirements</b>	Facilitator may want to have a personal timeline to show and explain to the participants.

**Room requirements** Any indoor or outdoor space where participants can work on a flipchart

## Description of the activity

- Facilitators present a personal or generic timeline template to the participants, ensuring that everyone understands how it works.
- Provide a timeline template to each participant (they can later draw a customised one, if they want to).
- Each participant has to draw and fill out a personal timeline, which shows time slots dedicated to formation/education, work or any other commitment, highlighting time segments in which they are not busy and available for project's activities.
- Remind the whole group that the personal timeline is for private use only!
- Each group now has the task of sharing the individual availability and to create a joint group project timeline (a timeline which shows the availability of each group member).
- Each group sticks the joint timeline on a wall or board.

## Debriefing

- What was the method about?
- Why do you think it is important?
- Can you imagine any situation in which such a process could be useful?
- Would you improve this method? If yes, how?

## Remarks/technical settings

While the explanation and a debriefing session should be held in plenary, the part of the activity about making personal timelines could

be carried out individually, even at home, since participants might need to check long term private engagements.

# TIMELINE

## MONTH

- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

## DAY

Morning

Afternoon

## KEY POINTS

- Available time
- Free Time
- Work Formation Available
- Self Care / Wellbeing

### WEEK 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

### WEEK 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

### WEEK 3

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

### WEEK 4

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

# MAP TO THE STARS

<b>Type of method</b>	Map/Echomap building, collective drawing/writing
<b>Source / Author</b>	Simone Dell'Armi. The method was created and implemented during the activities of the local group in Rome (Italy).
<b>Number of participants</b>	Ideal number would be around 5–8 participants. If more, consider to split them into smaller groups.
<b>Related competences</b>	Collaboration Competence, resources management, mapping
<b>Objectives</b>	To provide tools/structures to support the group in the identification of materials, expertise, spaces useful for implementing the activities.
<b>Time / Duration</b>	1 hour
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sticky notes</li><li>• Flipchart sheets (one per group)</li><li>• Pen, markers</li><li>• Printed echomap template</li></ul>
<b>Facilitator requirements</b>	The facilitators should be aware of the area which the local activities might affect, its extension, services, stakeholders, and other elements of interest.

<b>Room requirements</b>	Any indoor or outdoor space where participants can work in group drawing and writing on a flipchart sheet
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## Description of the activity

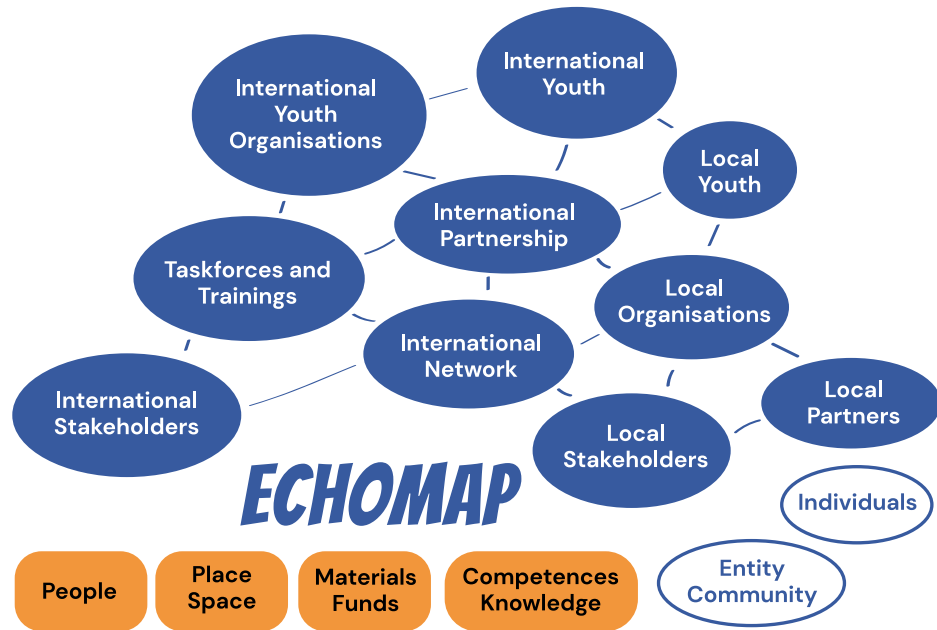
- If the group is bigger than 6 individuals, form smaller working groups.
- Explain the flow of the activity.
- Each group has to draw on a flipchart an echomap, customised according to the group topic or the project/action they are working on.
- The echomap should show stakeholders, private/public entities, may they be human or physical/abstract objects, along with the connections to the project or action frame, related to the group's topic.
- Facilitators may show a personal or premade echomap as a guiding example.
- Each group pins the custom echomap on a wall or board.
- When different groups are working on the same topic, they may try to merge their respective echomaps.
- The echomaps can be further expanded with further information about individuals, materials, spaces, places, competences and so on, in order to make the echomaps more complete.

## Debriefing

- What challenges did you encounter during the process?
- What was the highlight?
- Do you find such tools useful?
  - In which situation?
  - In which part of the project?
- Do you know any similar tools?
- How to adapt such tools to different contexts?

## Remarks/technical settings

A device with internet access should be available, in case the participants need to do some research.



# BUILDING PLANS

<b>Type of method</b>	Teamwork, project designing
<b>Source / Author</b>	Simone Dell'Armi. The method was created and implemented during the activities of the local group in Rome (Italy).
<b>Number of participants</b>	Any number of participants/subgroups
<b>Related competences</b>	Organisational competence, creative writing, teamwork
<b>Objectives</b>	To support the participants in the process of imagination of activities, visualising all the elements involved (target, objectives, requirements, and so on).
<b>Time / Duration</b>	1,5 hours
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building plan template (one per participant/subgroup)</li><li>• Pen/Markers</li></ul>
<b>Facilitator requirements</b>	Since the method requires the facilitators to check the working groups and give hints and suggestions about what they can effectively do, it is fundamental to know the competences and needs of the individuals taking part.

**Room requirements** Any indoor or outdoor space where participants can sit at a table in small groups.

## Description of the activity

The method provides a structure the participants can follow in order to plan in detail what kind of action they can/want to implement. It should be a simplified and more visual list.

- In plenary, provide the group with general instructions about activity flow.
- The building plan can be elaborated by individuals or by a small working group.
- Provide the building plan template to the groups, and explain each field, giving examples
- The Title should be related to the content of the activity, it can be a key word , a funny name or a very serious one.
- The Aim should contain what they want to achieve with such action.
- In the Description, participants can fill the flow of the activity, how it develops, if it matches their expectations.
- In the Space & Material section all spatial and physical resources needed to implement the action are entered.
- The Time-field should contain estimated duration of the action itself, as well as the time needed for preparation. It is also the right section to note deadlines.

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- Ensure that the instructions are clear and everyone knows what to do.
- Give the working groups 1 hour to brainstorm and formulate their ideas. Facilitators may check if any form of support is needed.
- When everyone is done, each group should present their building plans to the rest of the plenary. After each presentation, give room for feedback and questions. This is useful for the groups to refine their plans.

### Debriefing

- What was the method about?
- Why do you think it is important?
- Can you imagine any situation in which such a process could be useful?
- Would you improve this method? If yes, how?

### Remarks/Technical settings

#### The Building Plan template



#### Description

#### Space & Material

#### Time

## CONCLUSION

We hope that this booklet has provided insights into encouraging the active participation of young people in local processes. We understand that it's challenging, but through peer education, young people will be motivated to take action, share their knowledge, and learn from one another.

The methods and theories presented in this booklet are intended for adaptation and further development. Even though it's a finished product, it's still work in progress. During the preparation stage, you might need to adjust to your group's needs, make it more inclusive, or align with the current stage of development.

Our methodology is designed to address the goal of planning and constructing a structure based on ongoing negotiation, compromise, personal contributions, and requirements. We wanted to create a framework that empowers young people to move, plan, act and reflect, creating a sense of ownership.

## REFERENCES

**Hart, R. (1992)**, Children's Participation. From Tokenism to Citizenship, Florence: UNICEF

**Organizing Engagement (n.d.)**, Ladder of Children's Participation, from <https://organizingengagement.org/models/ladder-of-childrens-participation/>

## USEFUL LINKS

We have collected links to useful resources. Go to <https://generationeurope.org/booklets> or scan the following QR code:



# ***ABOUT GENERATION EUROPE – THE ACADEMY***

Generation Europe – The Academy is an international network of youth work organisations and a funding programme for European cooperation. We want social participation for all. Young people raise their voices and take action: in their local communities and across all boundaries. Together, we are contributing to an active and inclusive European citizenship.

The young people of our network form local groups and connect at international youth encounters. Together, we create opportunities for participation on local and European level, regardless of origin, parents' income and previous success in the formal education system. In each of our project partnerships, youth from three countries work together. They identify local problems and support each other to address them.

## **Abbreviations**

### **IBB e.V.**

Internationales Bildungs- und Begegnungswerk e.V. / International Association for Education and Exchange. IBB e.V. is the coordinating association of Generation Europe – The Academy.

### **GenE-A**

Generation Europe – The Academy

# GLOSSARY

**Local Group:** A group of young people organised at a local partner organisation in the network of Generation Europe – The Academy.

**Partnership:** International group consisting of three local partner organisations, that signed a partnership agreement, and their local groups.

**Project manager:** A person who is responsible for the general management of the matters concerning Generation Europe – The Academy at the local partner organisation: planning, implementation, accounting and reporting. He\*she has decision making competences in his\*her organisation.

**Youth leader:** A professional working in the field of non-formal education, that takes responsibility for the local group and/or the youth encounter.

**Ambassadors:** Former participants of international youth encounters, that are very active and interested. They are trained to take responsibilities on all levels of Generation Europe – The Academy. They become

mentors in their local groups, a link between the youth leaders and the local youth, and also important advocates for the needs of young people in Europe.

**Participants:** Young people who are taking part in the local group and/or in the youth encounter. (In some cases the local group is really big and only parts of the local group will also join the youth encounter.)

**Activity:** Umbrella term for workshops, excursions, games, informal moments, free time activities and so on.

**Method:** Pedagogical concept of an activity, that also defines its aim. It also has different parts like introduction, implementation, reflection.

**Method Sheet:** The form where all the information needed for carrying out an activity is explained

**Facilitator:** A person that has different roles/tasks at an event or activity, like moderating, presenting, visualising. A facilitator can also be a project manager, youth leader, ambassador, participant or an invited expert.

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