



CAN?DO!

CAN DO CARDS

Democracy learning
and its transferability
– a toolkit

CONTENT

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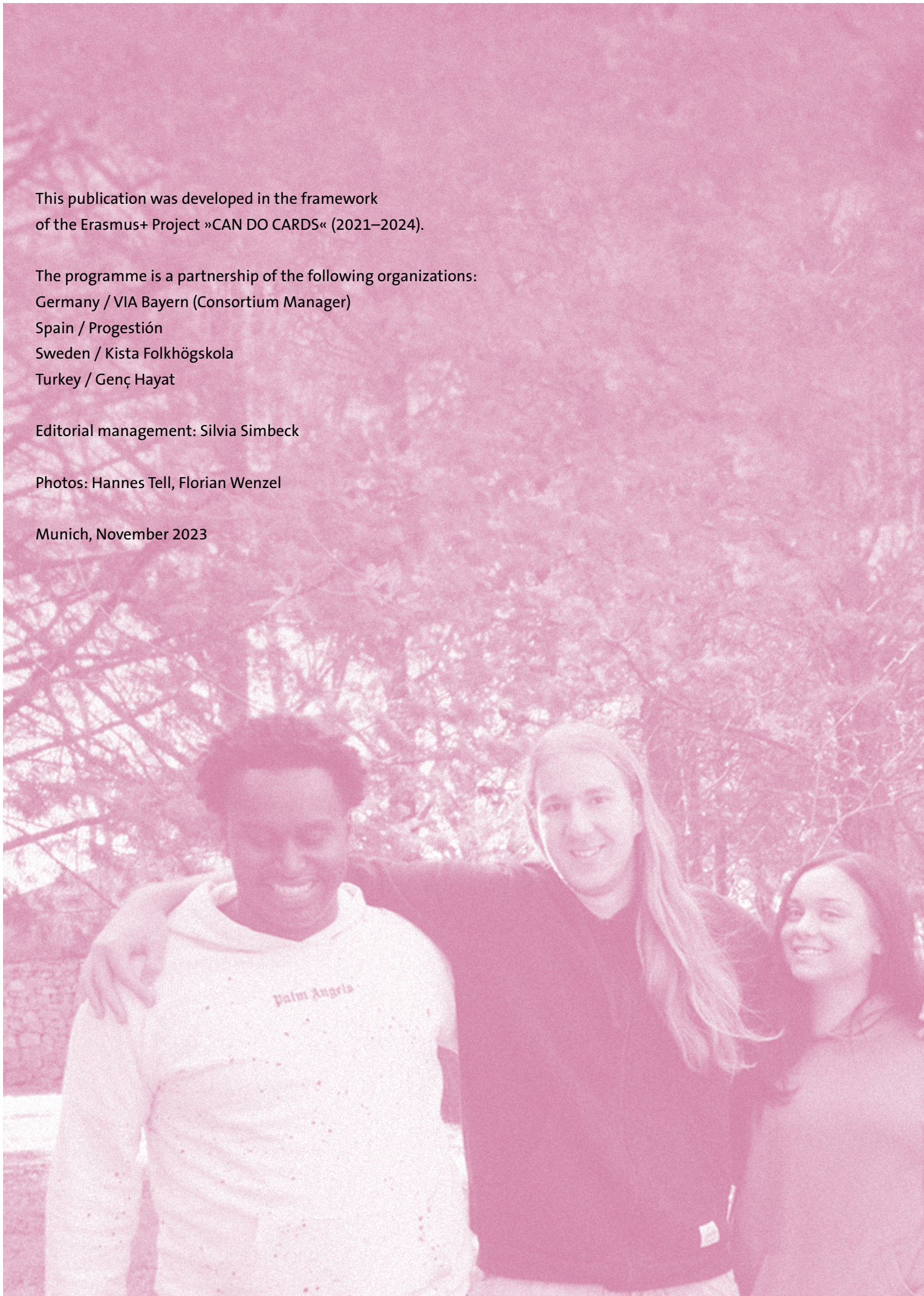
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A.

INTRO DUCTIONS

CAN?DO! – A TRULY INNOVATIVE APPROACH

PRINCIPLES AND PRECONDITIONS

Katrin Kuhla, VIA Bayern

So as to understand the effect of our “CAN DO” approach, one must experience it. The potential of our approach becomes clear once you have taken part in our international “CAN DO” encounters, workshops and projects. Nevertheless, in this compilation we will do our best to convey our approach in writing. This compilation is mainly intended for people who already know us and want to understand our work in depth. On the other hand, it provides an initial understanding for those of you for whom the approach is completely new and who, hopefully, will want to have a “CAN DO” experience with us in our encounters, workshops and projects. Our intention is to clarify the theoretical concept behind our approach and make it actionable for others.

CAN DO in a nutshell

„CAN DO“ is the name for a specific series of empowerment projects funded by Erasmus+ in Germany as a strategic partnership of the national agency. The first „CAN DO“ project („CAN DO Empowerment“) took place from 2014 to 2017 and the second one (“CAN DO Refugees“) from 2018 to 2021. At the time, the approach was developed by the „founding mothers“ Katrin Kuhla and Iman Moutaouakil and they have led it since. Katrin Kuhla has been the consortium leader at VIA Bayern since the very beginning. In 2022, the continuation project was approved: “CAN DO CARDS”. “CAN DO CARDS” is hosted by a consortium with Progestión (Spain), Kista Folkhögskola (Sweden) and Genç Hayat (Turkey).

In the „CAN DO“ projects, we host five-day encounters, with 2 – 4 participants from each consortium partner, making a total of about 15 – 25 participants. In our “CAN DO” encounters we professionalize and empower people in the social and civic education sectors. The encounters always have a core theme, in the CAN DO CARDS project the core themes were: Learning democracy, intercultural communication and participation.

CAN DO Principles

We believe there are already many interesting and helpful methods, approaches and projects tackling social issues. Despite this, the participants of our “CAN DO” encounters reported the huge impact of these encounters. Some even described a “life changing experience”. This deep social and personal impact derives from our core foundation as well as three principles which we will describe here.

Our foundation: Trustful Relationships

The basis of our cooperation are relationships of trust. In our view, relationships of trust are characterised by recognition, appreciation, respect, affection, joy and humour. For many people, these are self-evident prerequisites of cooperation, which often enough receive little attention. For our CAN DO approach, these are the essential ingredients. As a result of this realisation, we always first focus on people in our CAN DO project. For our project this means that we cannot achieve the project goal „empowerment for the people who work with us“ if we cannot build trusting relationships.

In our view, relationships of trust are characterised by recognition, appreciation, respect, affection, joy and humour.

Excursion on the relevance of relationships from a scientific perspective

The topic of relationships has long been a subject of human reflection. In research, there are different theories and concepts that approach the topic of „relationships“. These approaches are explored in a wide variety of disciplines (psychology, sociology, philosophy, neuroscience, quantum physics, etc.), and the object of research is then called, for example, connectedness, the WE factor, bonding and possibly also love. Because these concepts are fundamental to the CAN DO approach, we briefly introduce them here.

1. Quantum physics: Everything is interrelated

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Hans-Peter Dürr, the famous quantum physicist of the Max Planck Institute, emphasises the importance of relationship in his article „Participating in an indivisible world“ in the book „Connectedness“ (2012). After all, from the point of view of quantum physics, there is no matter, only vibrations. „For a long time, science believed that the observer existed independently of the observed. This, however, was a momentous error. For with the separation of subject and object, science lost sight of the essential – the living. (...) Reality is no longer understood as reality, but rather as potentiality, and thus the processualism of everything that exists is recognised. Everything is in relation to each other“, p. 17.

With this research, quantum physics radically challenges the classical world view of research (the world can be analysed) and brings the fundamental importance of relationships into focus.

2. Neurobiology and brain research: Human motivational systems and the brain are made for social relationships

Prof. Dr. Joachim Bauer, physician and neuroscientist, states in his book „Principle of Humanity“ (2008) that the human physiological motivational systems (dopamine, oxytocin, endogenous opioids, etc.) direct human behaviour towards relationships. „The natural goal of the motivational systems is social community and successful relationships with other individuals, whereby this concerns not only personal relationships, including tenderness and love, but all forms of social interaction. For us humans, this means: The core of all motivation is to find and give interpersonal recognition, appreciation, attention or affection. From a neurobiological point of view, we are beings designed for social resonance and cooperation“, p. 36.

Dr. rer. nat. Dr. Med. Habil. Gerald Hüther, neurobiologist, draws on the results of brain research in his article „The significance of love for the humanisation of the ape“ in the book „Love is the only revolution“ (2017): „Our brain is not shaped by others, rather it constructs itself on the basis of experiences made with other people, and always on the basis of the wiring patterns that have developed so far and been structured by previous experience“, p. 25. 25: „We are therefore, to a much greater extent than previously assumed, social beings who owe our uniqueness to the experiences we have had in our respective social relationships“, p. 23. „Without love, the human brain remains a caretaker version of what it could have become“, S. 44.

In this way, neurobiologists and brain researchers emphasise that the human body's control systems guide people into relationships and that humans seem to be physiologically made to live in relationships.

3. Psychology: Safe relationships make us more resilient

Klaus E. Grossmann, a pioneer of attachment research in Germany, summarises studies on resilience research in his standard work „Attachment – the structure of psychological security“. Resilience is „when a person, despite disadvantageous life circumstances or starting conditions, develops well in the course of his or her life or succeeds in making a positive adjustment“, p. 500.

In Emmy Werner's research, resilience means: „good developmental outcomes in children despite high social and health risks and traumatic experiences in the family. Competence to act under great stress – for example, by being able to keep a „clear head“ despite conflicts. Successful recovery from severe traumatic experiences“, p. 502.

Werner and Schmith cite the following as the most powerful influence for building resilience: „During the first year, the child was able to form at least one secure attachment to a caring, consistent person, who was sometimes not a parent, but a grandmother or grandfather, a sibling several years older than the child, or a nanny“, p. 502. It is known from attachment research that the experience of a secure attachment usually enables the child to form secure attachments again later in life.

Attachment theory thus shows that the ability to form and maintain successful relationships, i.e. secure attachments, offers powerful protective factors for stresses in life.

In order to establish trusting relationships in the CAN DO meetings with the participants, trusting relationships must first be established in the steering group – from a systemic view point, the relationships in the steering group have a direct effect on the group that it leads.

Trusting relationships in management

CAN DO projects always have a steering group for management with coordinators from all partner countries. In order to achieve empowerment in the CAN DO meetings, the steering group must work together in a spirit of trust.

This essential prerequisite focusses on the following aspects:

1) The steering group relationships are cultivated to a degree that goes beyond the professional role of the participants. When people meet and get to know each other on a personal level, they can better support

each other in mutual empowerment. These deeper relationships are relatively solid foundations for possible conflict work. The following is required from steering group participants: the willingness to connect with each other at a personal level and not just in the role of coordinator.

2) The participants in the steering group work together as equals. The leadership style is participative and cooperative. This means that the participants must take responsibility for sub-processes of their contributions to the overall process. They must be psychologically and emotionally able to engage in participatory, process-oriented procedures, which are often unstructured and uncertain at times and sometimes require very differentiated and individual approaches. In the best case, those involved enjoy a „leap into the unknown“, or at least have an openness to open processes.

3) Conflicts in the steering group should be dealt with in an appreciative and respectful manner. Unresolved conflicts have, also from a systemic point of view, a

direct influence on groups led by the steering group – there is a German saying „der Fisch stinkt vom Kopf“ (“the fish smells from the head”). From our point of view, the steering group, as a commitment to the group, has the responsibility to constructively address and clarify conflicts among themselves.

With this willingness, openness and responsibility, the downside is the danger of instrumentalization and manipulation by exploiting the participatory approach and supposed personal ‚weaknesses‘. Since trust cannot be forced or guaranteed, this is where we reach the limit of the approach. So, if people cannot or will not engage with these conditions, the approach does not work. With the potential in mind, we nevertheless dare to take the leap into the unknown again and again, and have been rewarded many times already.

Trusting relationships for our meetings

At the centre of our CAN DO encounters is again trust. Only when trust is present in the group can we shift our focus to content and issues. With trust in the group, difficult issues such as discrimination, racism, trauma therapy, etc. can be approached in a fundamentally different way and at a much deeper emotional level.

Should you notice during the encounters, that you don't have the participants trust, then you need to return to the building trust phase. That is why, trust building methods are always used during a “CAN DO” encounter. Many of these exercises are described here. They often originate from pedagogical approaches involving art, theatre, music, dance.

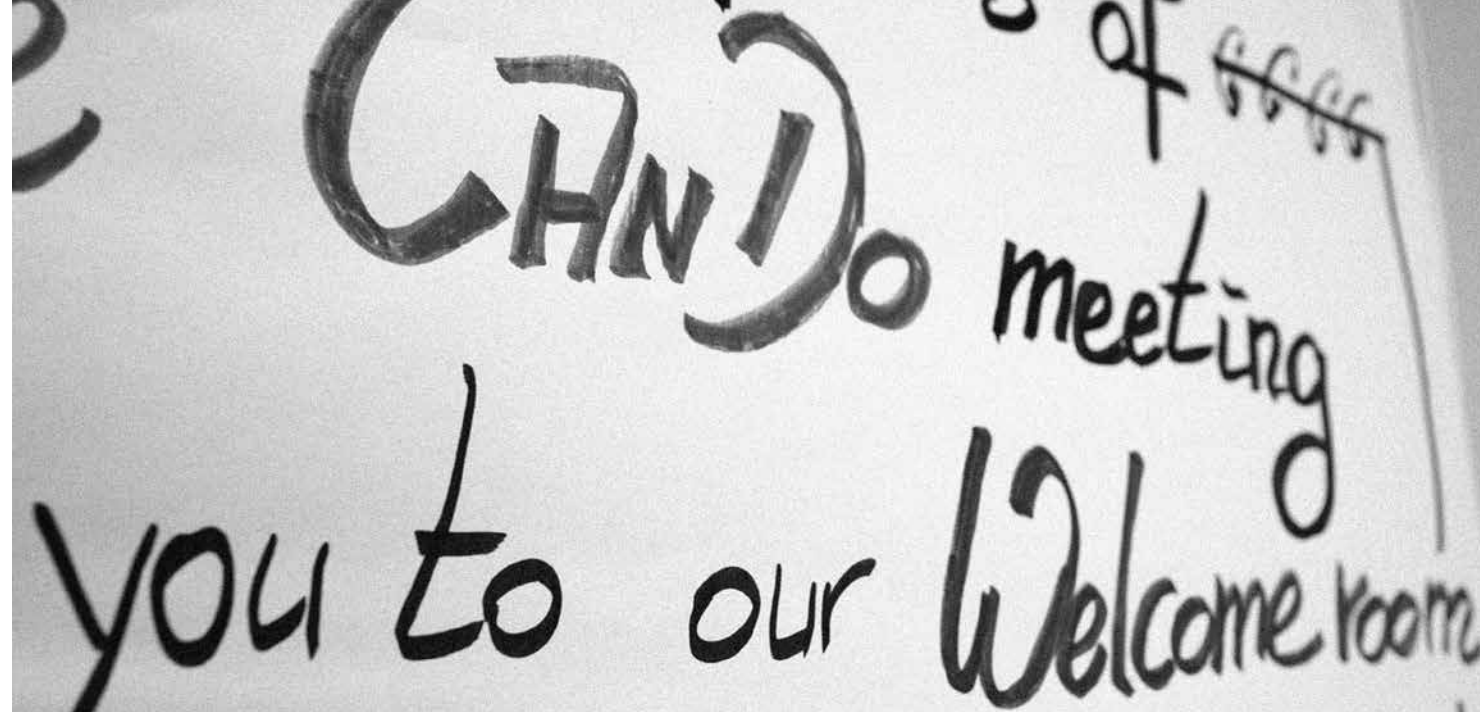
The three principles: Participatory, resource- and process-oriented approaches

The three principles are of course fundamental to our steering group work. Only if they can be successfully applied here, can they be carried forward in the CAN DO group meetings. Here we describe what the three approaches mean for the cooperation with the meeting participants.

1 Participatory approach – inviting people to contribute.

We work in a participatory way. The participants decide which topics we work on. The “CAN DO” encounters have a pre-arranged daily and weekly schedule. There is a common thread – but it is up to the participants to decide how this process is shaped. Nothing happens without the involvement of the participants. On the contrary. They are invited to get involved. They contribute the topics that are important to them and with the skills and resources they bring to the encounter. In this way, the participants can become identified with the learning process and what is happening in the encounter space. This approach removes resistance to the learning journey – or, if there is resistance, it can be resolved more easily.

The „CAN DO“ encounters bring together international people with different perspectives (academic, practical, voluntary, professional, long-term, short-term, etc.). From our experience, the feeling of „I am not alone!“ and „In other countries, they do the same work we do!“ can be highly empowering. It gives the feeling of belonging to a larger community that cares for the well-being of refugees, migrants and marginalized people. This is an effect of participatory work.



2 Resource-oriented approach – Making people aware of their strengths and inviting them to use them more.

People learn easier and faster, and the effect lasts longer, when you work with their strengths instead of their deficits. We don't analyse the deficits. We focus on the strengths. People often are more aware of their weaknesses than their strengths. By focusing on strengths, we increase confidence, which then makes it possible to work on difficult issues (e.g., exclusion, discrimination etc.). The participants are empowered to use their competences to improve their everyday life. The resource-oriented approach increases motivation and enthusiasm for the entire learning journey.

The resource-based approach of the “CAN DO” encounters, continuously invites the participants to take on the role of trainer and pass on their knowledge to others. Ideally, a “CAN DO” encounter will allow everyone to be both teacher and trainer.

3 Process-oriented approach – ensuring that our work is relevant to the professional or private life of the participants and can be transferred to their lives after encounter.

Our “CAN DO” encounters are neither goal- nor result-oriented. Instead, we are consistently process-oriented. We believe that this is the way to achieve results that are tailor-made for the participants and therefore have a deep and long-lasting impact. Following the basic assumption, that „Disruptions have priority!“ we prioritize participants' impulses over the seminar agenda. Our experience shows that this process-oriented approach usually covers the essential points on the agenda. Perhaps in a different order and with other emphases as well as detours via topics that were not planned. This approach reduces the number of topics and issues that can be covered in a more structured and goal-oriented approach. However, we can capture and work on the topics that really concern the participants and in which they are interested. This content is often more relevant to the participants everyday life.

Methods

There are some methods and frameworks that are fundamental to “CAN DO” encounters and their approach:

Peaceful, rural surroundings and good food

Maybe it sounds simplistic, but a quiet, rural environment and good food are crucial for creating a relaxed, happy, attentive, centred group atmosphere. Experienced group leaders say that the location and food account for 80% of the success of a seminar – we agree with this, even if it may sound sobering. It is important that everybody can eat together. The finances should be planned accordingly. Our experience tells us that eating together has a unifying and harmonising effect on the group.

Only in an atmosphere framed by these conditions can true encounters occur between participants. This is essential in order to realise each other's personal resources. Once these resources are visible and actionable, the work becomes much more participatory. Such an environment has a harmonising and focussing influence on the entire group process.



Living agenda

The “CAN DO” project is led by a Steering Group with a representative from each partner country. In “CAN DO” encounters, there is one person from each participating country. This person is also in the project Steering Group and takes a leading role for the participants from that country. This person knows the other people from their country and has already encouraged them to contribute their competences to the overall theme of the encounter (in lectures, workshops, films, shows, etc.). Before the encounters, the possible contributions of the participants are collected and a first proposal for a Living Agenda for the five seminar days was worked out in the Steering Group.

This Living Agenda is displayed in the seminar room – ideally with flexible cards (sticky wall or sticky facilitation cards, etc.). The agenda is a suggestion by the Steering Group. The first day is implemented as planned. The subsequent days may vary depending on the impulses from the group.



Evening buzz groups

Every evening, people from the same country come together in buzz groups and reflect on the day: What went well? What do we wish for tomorrow? Where would someone like to contribute? One person from each country presents the ideas and concerns to the rest of the group. Based on these evening rounds, the Living Agenda is changed every evening.

Encourage premieres

Due to the appreciative, resource-oriented work, it happens again and again that participants' competences emerge during the encounter, which are then also integrated into the Living Agenda. Here, the members of the steering group sometimes act as midwives, enabling participants to discover these competences. Mealtimes and evenings are particularly suitable for this. The “CAN DO” encounters have often been the host to such premieres: Many have applied their methods in English for the first time, we had a hip hop dancer who taught his dance to adults for the first time and some traumatic situations or experiences of discrimination have been recounted for the first time in the “CAN DO” encounters.

Leisure Time

When people are having fun, they relax and get into a state where they can really absorb new ideas. That's why part of the “CAN DO” encounters is to plan for fun: On the third day we always have a Look & See afternoon where we get to know the local area. Maybe we find something that can even be linked to the overall theme of the encounter. What is suitable has to be discussed with the local partner. On some evenings we offer joint activities. Suggestions often come from the participants. On the last evening, it is obligatory to party all night. Accordingly, it makes no sense to plan particularly demanding things on the last day.



PARTNER PERSPECTIVE 1 ON CAN DO

from Genç Hayat (“Young Lives Foundation”), Turkey

Knowing about other cultures and learning about the customs of people from all over the world broadens the horizons of all social groups, but especially the young. This multiculturalism also shapes employment structures, food culture, perspectives developed in response to encountered events, and numerous daily practices.

In terms of giving this cultural diversity, the opportunities made possible by technology are a huge convenience to us. Using online tools, a young person in Istanbul can experience the streets of Tokyo, the cuisine of Brazil, or the way of life of people in a country they may never get to see in person. Furthermore, a person with the necessary infrastructure can sell digitally produced content to a company on the other side of the globe without leaving his house. This situation has completely changed many things, from social life to means of finding work, and this change is still going on.

... fostering communication on these topics not only helps us grow as individuals but also exposes us to new ideas and approaches from around the world.

However, understanding the principles and different shapes of democracy as well as cultural diversity requires far more interaction. Despite the many difficulties we face every day, fostering communication on these topics not only helps us grow as individuals but also exposes us to new ideas and approaches from around the world. In addition, we can learn how many things that appear simple to us actually cause problems in other societies, allowing us to develop our own solutions despite these obstacles.

Through its participatory approach, the CAN DO Cards project opens this vast world to individuals who directly or indirectly benefit from it. Young Lives Foundation conducts numerous projects and activities in Turkey that support the development and social participation of 11 to 18-year-olds. In the center of all these initiatives, we seek to strengthen young people by raising their awareness and capacities, and help them to grow as individuals who can integrate with the developed world, as well as being able to compete with it. In this way, CAN DO Cards, with its approach that goes beyond being a project, offers new perspectives to everyone who works with youth as well as youth themselves. In this regard, the lessons learned from implementing the CAN DO Cards methodology are continuously applied to our work across all of Turkey.

PARTNER PERSPECTIVE 2 ON CAN DO

from Kista folkhögskola, Sweden

CAN DOS' approach is largely about managing freedom with responsibility. It is a trust-based working method where everyone's participation is decisive for the result. It is about being able to take on new challenges in a community with others, being able to seek solutions in community.

When you have participated in the “Learning Training Teaching Activities” with CAN DO, you experience that the result is greater than the sum of the individual parts. The qualities that are brought out in the participants are of the kind that a society that wants to be democratic while being pluralistic depends on. Where decisions and agreements must be respected by groups between which there are permanent and genuine value conflicts.

For Kista Folkhögskola, there are several reasons for participating in a project like CAN DO Cards. The young adults who study at Kista Folkhögskolan live in the suburban area (the Järva area with approximately 80.000 inhabitants) in which the school is located. Many of them rarely leave there, even if they are involved in association life and social activities. They have few opportunities to see their life, their context and their living circumstances in a bird's eye view or in concrete comparison with young adults from other parts of Europe.

The value of getting out and working together with people from other European countries is great. Even if they are involved in networks and associations that work with issues related to equality, democracy, countering discrimination, it means a lot to meet people from other contexts who are active in the same or similar areas. It also helps them, gives them the courage to step forward and take responsibility and/or partial responsibility for processes, workshops and other activities. It also gives them confidence and courage to put forward constructive and perhaps critical points of view in a way that leads forward and is of benefit to others as well.

Because the participants are both co-creators and responsible both towards themselves and the other participants, the relationship between the participants is strengthened and the strong relationships in turn strengthen sustainability. Value words such as “openness”, “participation” and “trust” are used both often and by many, but are mostly an empty banner without being able to give people the experience of either deep meaning or genuine values. CAN DO is based on those words and the way CAN DO works gives both a personal anchoring and a meaning to them as values.

CAN DO IS a living process that taps into everyone's capacities, ideas and abilities in a way that makes it adaptable to new and perhaps surprising situations.

It gives confidence and courage to put forward constructive and perhaps critical points of view ...

CONTEXT OF THIS COMPILATION

Needs Assessment with the partners

In order to get an overview of the different circumstances, perspectives and needs of the partners in the context of civic education / democracy learning, all partners were asked to give their input on the following questions.

1) Please describe in your own words the state of the democratic system in your country – politics, society and structures.

Progestión (Spain)

It's a system that apparently offers diversity on choices. However, there is a severe problem which is corruption established as a systemic damage. Society is aware of lack of social infrastructures, they are concerned about pensions and employment.

Kista Folkshögskola (Sweden)

The system, i.e. the right to vote, the electoral process, monitoring of the implementation of the election, vote counting, the work of the electoral authority, appeals (the possibility to appeal the authority's decision, etc.) works well. What I call the quality of democracy is worse. i.e. the conditions for a deliberative conversation where the will and visions of different groups of interest can be discussed and negotiated. This could not be developed in a long text.

Genç Hayat (Turkey)

The presidential system in Turkey has made the democratic system vulnerable to misuse. The use of political instruments has resulted in societal divisions. Turkey is believed to have an imbalanced structural recovery. Because Turkey's internal and foreign policy balances lack continuity.

VIA Bayern (Germany)

In Germany we are having a rather stable democracy. We have threats from the right wing extremists. And structures need to be changed in order to give people more of a feeling that their participation makes a difference. Within the democratic system some groups suffer discrimination on all levels. But in general the constitutional state and within the welfare state is working in Germany. From my point of view, and I think we are very privileged in this point.

2) Please describe in your own words the way young people in your country look at democracy. How close do they feel to democratic values and principles?

Progestión (Spain)

More and more youngsters are engaged and aware about what's going on in this field. Social media offer more news from different parties. There is also a crisis of faith about changes that could be made by political parties.

Kista Folkshögskola (Sweden)

It largely depends on which stratum of society and where geographically you look. A deeper understanding of, or knowledge of, democracy is probably quite rare. On the other hand, my impression is that it is quite easy to arouse the interest and get involved with young people if given the time and opportunity to bring up the subject in an exciting and interesting way. However, trust in the democratic system is still quite high in general. However, a little lower in so-called vulnerable suburbs and depopulated rural areas.

Genç Hayat (Turkey)

The establishment of democratic values in Turkey has not yet reached its completion. Political decision makers and politicians routinely exploit the existing democratic system. However, it is well-known that the voting knowledge of younger generations in the United States is greater than in other nations. It is anticipated that a youth closer to democratic values will emerge as a result of this circumstance.

VIA Bayern (Germany)

I think we are having a wide range of opinions. Some are very fond of democratic principles and values and even fighting for them – there are youth cultures linked to it; others reject them, and a lot of young people do not really care...

3) What approaches of civic education can you find in your country which specifically tackle the issue of democracy and democratic principles?

Progestión (Spain)

There are some commissions that gathers public stakeholders and civic organizations. I'm familiar with this approach when it's managed by Civic organizations. In our organization, Progestión, we make sure to gather with other Civic Society associations to prepare advocacy work.

Kista Folkshögskola (Sweden)

In the first place, I would say that it is the country's 156 volkshochschulen that take on that task, which is possible because the volkshochschulen do not have to follow the formal education central curricula. Study associations and a fairly large number of NGOs also work with such issues.

Genç Hayat (Turkey)

The principles of Atatürk and the history of the revolution are taught in the Turkish school system. In addition to civic education, there is no additional educational content in this course. All individuals receiving education are taught about the establishment of the republic and democratic principles in the course material.

VIA Bayern (Germany)

There are participatory approaches, approaches like learning democracy/ Betzavta; there is intercultural learning, there is civic education, fighting racism, antidiscrimination methods – tackling the issue of "Gruppenbezogene Menschenfeindlichkeit" etc.

4) How are young people being encouraged and empowered to participate and shape their future in your country?

Progestión (Spain)

Social campaigns made by political parties that invites youngsters to interact virtually. I can't find real actions aimed to encourage active citizenship. There are some meetings funded by Erasmus Plus where we encourage people to be active actors and change agents.

Kista Folkshögskola (Sweden)

Through participation in volkshochschulen courses and through other initiatives in civil society organizations.

Genç Hayat (Turkey)

Young people are encouraged to participate and shape their future via ministries. For example, the Ministry of Family and Social Services started a programme for the children's participation with UNICEF. This programme covered all provinces in Türkiye. In addition, many projects and programmes (Erasmus+, ESC etc.) were supported to win Turkish young people for participation.



VIA Bayern (Germany)

A lot of concepts and approaches exist in schools, non formal education and political processes. For example there are child/youth parliaments in communities, community projects led by pupils and participatory approaches implemented in workshops, school classes etc. I think in Germany we have a lot of experience, but these experiences are not spread for the wider audience of multipliers.

5) On the basis of question 3 and 4, what would be a useful addition (in terms of approaches, material, experiences etc) for democracy learning in your country?

Progestión (Spain)

Handful material that enables trainers (social field, non formal education) to encourage youngsters to participate and to arise awareness about how important their voice is and how to make it heard. Also what is needed, is a debate on what is part of democracy and what is not.

Kista Folkshögskola (Sweden)

First of all, a change in formal education in Sweden. As it is now, no time is given at all to work on the issues you are asking us to review here. Everything that can give people time to talk to each other about important things, about what it means to be human, time to read good literature (literature gives us the opportunity to face what we have not yet seen or experienced. To never be faced with the hitherto unexperienced makes us more and more only see ourselves as the only criterion of validity), time to be shaped as a person alongside consumption and stress at school or work. Second of all, and this is one of the reasons for participating in this project, are innovative methods on democracy learning.

Genç Hayat (Turkey)

During the phase of implementation, it is detrimental to young people if democratic values are compromised. The actions of previous generations have harmed democratic values in Turkey. This can be made up for with content that focuses on parents as opposed to adolescents. For capacity building in Turkey, municipalities or provincial centers affiliated with the Ministry should employ rights-based activities more aggressively. Every city should have a children's and youth council because it is a beneficial practice.

VIA Bayern (Germany)

Existing approaches and concepts need to be collected, professionalized and spread into the communities of practice.

Democracy learning as part of Civic Education

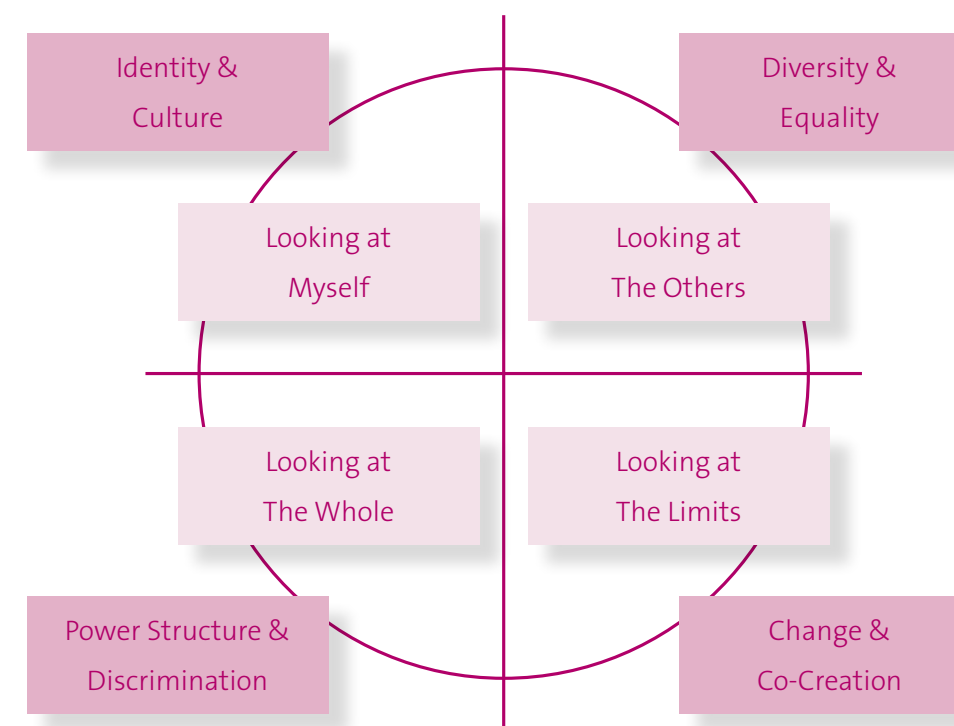
The term “Civic Education” originates in the anglo-saxon region, especially the U.S., Canada and Great Britain. It’s aim is to foster democratic competencies amongst members of society, in order to ensure that the democratic system can be realized.

In this context, civic education can be split into different categories:

One category of civic education is aiming at learning about democratic institutions and processes and doing that through input, memorizing and talking. Knowing and understanding how the system works is the basis for participating in it.

The other category of civic education is aiming at learning about democratic values and principles, and doing that through activities and reflection. Incorporating a democratic mindset and taking on responsibility for one’s own behavior is crucial for preventing democracy from becoming a mere technical process to be mastered, but creating quality and sustainability of action.

In 2016, the Centre for applied policy research in Munich/Germany published a concept for democracy competence developed in the context of a XENOS project. This concept refers to the EU commission’s definition of competence as “adopting responsibility and ownership” and distinguishes 4 perspectives to be taken on:



Didactical approach and structure for this toolkit: Theme Centered Interaction (TCI)

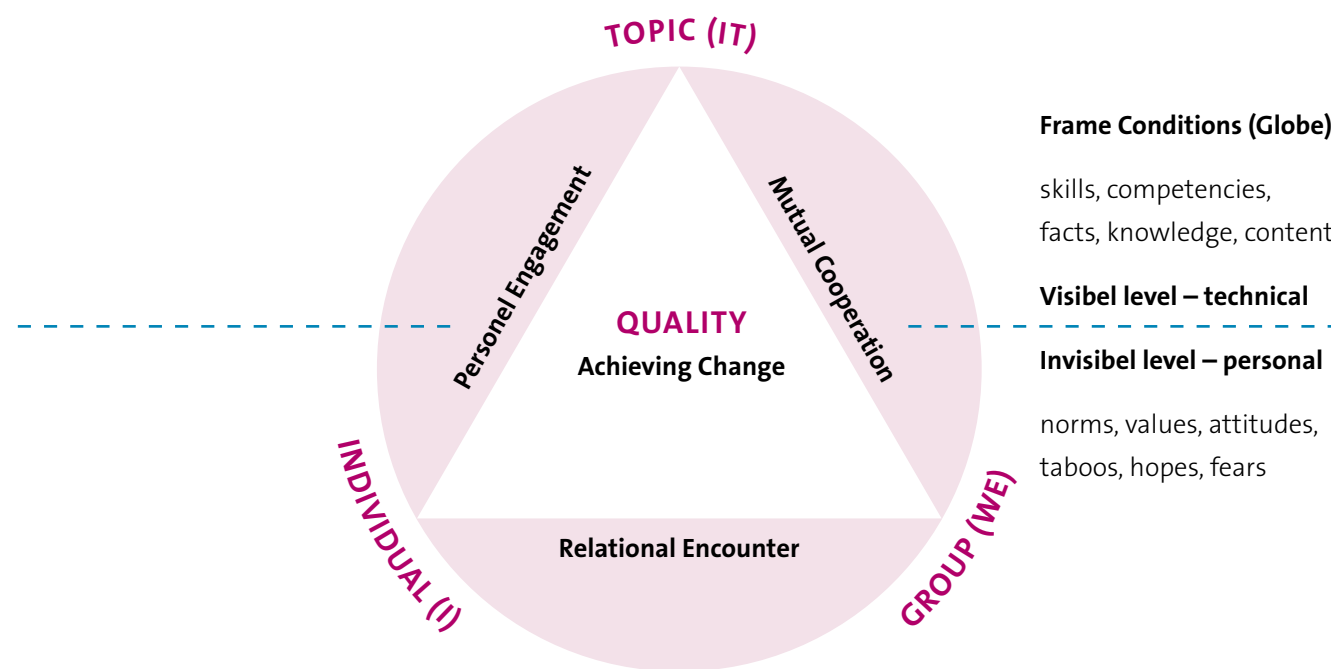
In order to achieve holistic, deep, and sustainable change beyond the mere transportation of knowledge around civic education, the way in which workshops or change processes are being run and reflected are crucial. For this purpose, the Theme Centered Interaction (TCI) is an important orientation, model and “spirit” for working in the resource-oriented, participatory and process-oriented way of CAN DO projects.

What is Theme Centered Interaction (TCI)?

Short description on Wikipedia: Theme-centered interaction (TCI) is a concept and a method for working in groups. Its aim is social learning and development of the person. (...) TCI has been developed in the United States by the psychoanalyst and psychologist Ruth Cohn, by the therapists Norman Liberman, Isaac Ziemann and by other representatives of humanistic psychology. Under the deep impression of the Nazi regime from which Cohn had to flee as a Jew, her overall aim was to assist in creating humane environments which enable personal growth and living learning as a key to improving society. Later, TCI was developed further in Europe and in India. (...) Ruth Cohn’s original purpose was to “enable a healthy person to remain healthy”. Here “health” not only refers to individual well-being, but also to political responsibility in the world.

General Scheme – and how it is applied to learning contexts

The following is an own visualization containing the four factors described in TCI: Topic, Individual, Group and Globe as well as a variation of the “Iceberg-Model” (visible/invisible part of the world).



Why do we suggest using TCI in civic education?

In many traditional learning environments like school or university, but also in many interactive trainings working with role play or simulations, the upper level of the topic is the single focus. In order to transport the facts, skills, competencies concerning the topic, different methodological ways are being chosen; but the result of what should be understood, learned and be done is always being derived from the “top”.

This compilation suggest a more comprehensive and in a way more radical way of equally integrating the “hidden” levels of how learning and change can happen.

When doing a workshop or change process with civic education, there is of course an official topic, in our case: learning democracy. This topic is on top, as the “visible” level of the workshop.

On the bottom if the TCI model, we find the individuals and the group as the basis from which the learning happens – individual persons and personalities who have a certain experience, attitude and point of view regarding the topic, as well as the group in which and through which we learn. The group is the micro-cosmos of society and thus an ideal setting to learn democratic skills, by listening to the experiences of others, changing perspectives, trying out new behaviors, get reflection and bringing our vision to life.

The forth factor of the model is the globe, meaning the conditions that are enabling and at the same time limiting what can be achieved in a pedagogical setting: Starting from the room and conditions in which the learning takes place (time, room, temperature) up to the social and political context (political events, pressure by authorities) in which it happens.

Especially in today’s societies with big rifts in the population and very different views on how to tackle crucial situations (like Covid 19), there are a lot of unreflected personal values, which guide one’s life, attitudes towards other people, personal hopes and fears and taboos that sometimes are not addressed at all. There is no clear-cut direction simply to be followed. Comparing the model with an iceberg, only a small part of the reality and the topics of the community are visible while most of it is hidden under water. Often its dimension and force is much bigger than that of the official topic.

But all of this can be understood as the invisible level of a workshop – the bottom part of the TCI model. Therefore we suggest taking the TCI model very seriously into account when dealing with topics such as democracy, tolerance or social cohesion.

How do we work with TCI in civic education?

In the light of TCI, the main task of the workshop is to provide individual and collective links between the topic and the participants. Especially when dealing with abstract concepts like society, democracy, tolerance, it is crucial to start with the foundational value system of each participant, trying to make it explicit, before “imposing” abstract ideas and delivering definitions to be followed. The role of the trainer is to provide activities which personally involve the participants via biographical reflection and building upon the social and economic reality within the community. Doing this in a resource-oriented way, the participants find engagement and strength within themselves to tackle the issues ahead.

In this compilation, examples of such kind of activities are:

→ *Appreciative Inquiry, Speed Dating on Democracy, My personal hero*

In later stages of the workshop the mutual support of the participants helps to transform the personal engagement with the topics into collective action. In dealing with difference and conflict, prejudices, building consensus and democratically taking decisions will be experienced. The role of the facilitators is to guide this process and provide input and methods as impulses for the group to give attention to specific aspects of the topic and bring it to the level of immediate impact: this learning group.

In this compilation, examples of such inputs and methods are:

→ *Dividing resources fairly, Be the change, The Robot*

Furthermore, the factors of the wider globe can be reflected in order to realistically estimate the possible dimension of change that can be achieved. Outside deficits like the functioning of the juridical system or the executive will not be directly influenced by a pedagogical approach – they are supporting or hindering factors. Within the workshop, we can raise awareness for the structures and ideologies that surround and influence us (or others), and reflect within the group where and how societal change can take place via civic engagement by activists and where other approaches (laws, anti-corruption measures, security etc.) are being needed.

In this compilation, examples of inputs and methods are:

→ *Tackling an issue, Discuss not to hate – and to change hate, The art of being human*



Beyond the topic-related inputs and methods, we also need to take into account the “smaller globe” of the learning setting – the preconditions of working together. In order to provide a setting in which individuals feel comfortable opening up on personal values, norms, but also prejudices and fears, it is crucial to create an atmosphere of openness, participation and appreciation at the beginning of and throughout of the workshop. As a facilitator, the task is to foster such an atmosphere by providing methods to get to know each other as well as creating spaces and occasions for informal encounters as a necessary basis for building trust and thus making a deeper level of learning possible.

In this compilation, examples of explicit activities are:

→ *I am and I feel, Sounds familiar, Three levels of check-in, The circle of emotions*

As for the informal spaces, there is the factor of free time to be considered, but also the very proximate aspects of the globe such as having a nice learning room, good food and free time to explore the surroundings or just “hang” with other participants. In order to digest the activities, inputs and experiences – which then again influences the learning atmosphere and pace of the group, the facilitator(s) should regularly offer space for mutual feedback and reflection on content and process and quality of interaction within the workshop.

Examples for digestive activities presented in this compilation are:

→ *Rounds of reflection, Circle of associations, Carthusian walk, Buzz groups*



B. INPUTS & METHODS

LINKING THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE TOPIC

These first methods aim at discovering the personal link of the individual participants to the topic of interest – in this context: civic education and democracy.

Appreciative Interview

Short summary

The Appreciative Interview is one of the steps of the Appreciate Inquiry (AI), a process for engaging people, increasing their capacity for collaboration and change. The interview pulls out motivation, potential, resources and aspirations of people, in a personal one-on-one setting.

Scope / aspired learning outcomes

Fostering appreciation and a positive focus.
Getting to know each other (in a new way)

Frame conditions

Group size: 4 – 40 people

Time frame: 90 – 100 Min

Space required: Possibility to sit in pairs of two, with some acoustic distance

Material required: The interview outline as a handout for each participant (see attachment)

Activity description

1. The facilitator explains the scope and procedure of the interview and hands out the interview questions in a handout.
2. The participants sit in pairs. One person is interviewer and the other one answers the questions.
3. After 30 Min the pairs take 5 min to put down 1 – 2 key words per question on post-its. This phase is important so that the interviewer can be fully present listening, without having to take notes during the interview.
4. The pairs switch roles and have another 30 Min + 5 Min taking notes for the other person.
5. After they are finished, the pairs come back to the circle. Depending on the size of the group and the time available the notes in post-its can either be just stuck on the wall for everyone to read, or be personally presented in front of the group (the latter is of course more personal and expresses further appreciation).

Comments from the partners

"Resource-oriented, empowering, positive = gives energy to change agents and people engaged on projects, who sometimes overly focus on what is wrong and problematic."

Appreciative Interview is one of the steps of the Appreciate Inquiry (AI), a process for engaging people, increasing their capacity for collaboration and change.

Hint: The results (resources & aspirations) need to be collectively reflected on and further used, otherwise the activity fails to reach its full potential

Example of an Appreciative Interview – Handout

(fill in the project name or another type of suited title)

The context

You are all engaged in civic education and/or active citizenship. We are now coming together to share these experiences. We want to collect motivations, moments of success, capacities and aspirations in order to know where to acknowledge what is already there and what is possible. We want to strengthen our strengths and look for fresh ideas. Gathering information and stories about what is working well, and what potential there is to see.

The interview

Please ask your partner about motivations and positive experiences he or she has made in this field so far. Do not ask like an analyst collecting „facts“ – you want to know the best stories! Watch out for the moments your interview partner feels passionate and shining. Let your partner reflect to tell his / her own story and support him / her by open questioning. Do not allow your partner to focus on deficiencies, but first and foremost on resources, strengths and potentials.

The questions

Motivation

Please tell me a bit about what you like about working in the field of civic education and/or active citizenship:

→ What is your motivation to be active in this field?

Potential

Please share with me a situation from your life where you felt you had an impact of the kind that is important to you – within your organisation, or generally in your life.

→ When was it that you thought: “Yes, this is what I want to see in the world!”?

→ How did you personally contribute to that moment?

Resources

Let’s not be modest and instead talk about the resources – meaning personal qualities, skills, character traits or talents – that you bring to this work or engagement:

→ What are you good at?

→ What do people appreciate you for?

Aspirations / visions for the future

This training/project/initiative aims at ... through ...

→ What is your vision for it? Where would you like to see us in 1/2/3 years?

→ What are your personal aspirations in this context?

Speed Dating on Democracy

Short summary

Through a set of personal questions participants are quickly exchanging on the topic at hand (in this case: Democracy). This activity suits best at the beginning of a workshop.

Scope / aspired learning outcomes

- Exploring one’s own background regarding the topic
- Getting an impression of other people’s experiences and perspectives on it
- Finding positive and problematic aspects of the topic

Frame Conditions

Group size: 8 – 30 people

Time frame: 20 – 30 minutes

Space required: Enough room for people to sit or stand in front of each other

Material required: none (questions for the facilitator)

Activity description

1. Half of the group is forming an inner circle, facing to the outside, the other half of the group is forming an outer circle facing to the inner circle so that everyone has a direct partner. The circles can be formed standing, or sitting on chairs. It can even be done outside, to change setting.
2. The trainers announce that several questions will be asked. Then one partner of each pair starts repeating the question, the other partner will give answers for exactly one minute. After that the first partner answers for one minute. Signals are given for the turns. In terms of who begins, the trainers can creatively think of things like the following: the one with longer hair, with more siblings, who has spent more time abroad, with the darker clothing etc.

3. After the pairs have exchanged their views on one question, the participants from the inner circle move one person further, then the next question is being asked.

4. At the end of the exercise, a reflection can take up different aspects of the activity: participants can share interesting or surprising statements they heard – or found in their own answers; also the effects of this type of communication (listening / talking for one minute) can be focused upon.

In terms of the questions, here is a list of questions that might be adapted depending on the workshop topic. There should be 4-5 questions to be chosen for the exercise.

- When was the first time you recall hearing the word democracy?
- Was or is there democracy in your family?
- How democratic was decision making in your family?
- What does it mean to you to be ‘active’?
- What is it that you like / appreciate the most about democracy?
- If there was a magic moment: which law would you install in society?
- What is one thing you would change about democracy as you have come to know it?

Comments of the partners

"Speed dating is useful as a technique that we as change agents can apply in a lot of situations."

"A good method to discuss democracy on a personal level, learning about each other."

"To bring the topic to a personal level creates a sense of personal importance."

My personal hero / Square of values

Short summary

The participants reflect on the characteristics and values of their personal role model (“hero”) and come up with values that are relevant to them and for democracy.

Scope / aspired learning outcomes

- Creating a link from personal values to common values
- Getting familiar with the values square model and how it can be applied to democratic values
- Learning to apply values to everyday situations and the group itself
- Understand and appreciate one’s own resources and capacities

Frame Conditions

Group size: 5 – 25

Time frame: 90 min

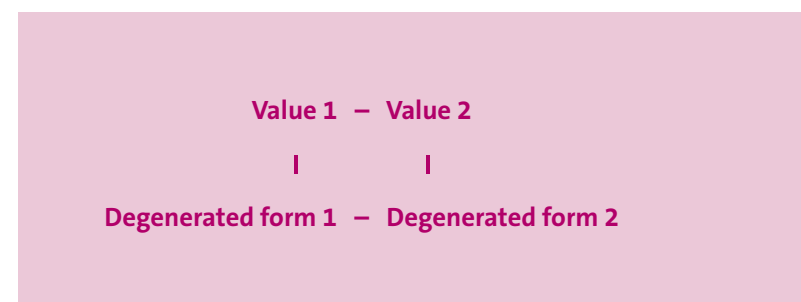
Space required: enough space to form subgroups

Material required: Pen and paper for each participant; post-it sheets for the values found

Activity description

1. The participants are handed pen and paper and get invited to think of a person who is an important role model for them. This can be someone dead or alive, a fictional character from a book or film, a famous person or a person from their family or circle of friends. They then try to ‘draw’ this person in a simple sketch or symbol.
2. In the next step everybody is asked to write down 3-4 values this person represents to them. They will then be asked to circle the most important one.

3. Next, the participants come together in subgroups of 3 – 4 people and tell each other about their “heroes” and the associated values. After the sharing, each group chooses two of the values presented that they think are relevant to democracy in our context and writes them on a post-it sheet.
4. Back in the plenary, the groups present their values. In this second part of the exercise, it is the facilitator’s task to introduce the *value square model*³, putting the values chosen into balance with other values: The basic idea of the value square model is that each value needs another value to be balanced with, otherwise the value in its unilateral focus can turn into an exaggerated form, becoming a degenerated value. In the model, the two actual values are presented in the upper part with their respective degenerated forms underneath:



5. Further reflection. Using the three perspectives of the Theme centered interaction model the further discussion can take three different ways:
 - Regarding the topic of democracy in general: Are there important Values which are missing for a comprehensive democracy?
 - Creating a link between the topic and the group: How are these values incorporated/lived within our group? Is there a lack of balance at some point?
 - Coming back to the individual level, one further step of this exercise can be to look back at their hero’s values and let them find at least one example how they apply to themselves / in how far they themselves live each of these values, in some way or other. Now the group splits into pairs and will take a look at the qualities that have been circled. For each of these qualities they need to tell their partner three genuine examples how it is true that this quality does also apply to themselves. (20 Minutes)

There can also be an additional final round where everybody shares a sentence: *“I am (value), because I ...”* – how this values applies to her personal life. This third option has an empowering effect which can be very important when the topic gets a very depressing turn or people find themselves quite powerless.

Comments of the partners

“This activity helps to understand something universal starting from something personal.”

“The square value makes us connect our personal values to democracy and discover new values on the way.”



³ Originating from Aristotle’s ethics of virtue, this model has been developed by Nicolai Hartmann/Paul Helwig and then further developed and made more popular by Friedemann Schulz von Thun.

THE GROUP TAKING OWNERSHIP OF THE TOPIC

The next three methods create an experience for the group to discover how democratic principles apply to everyday interactions, have the participants decide how they want to deal with issues at hand and reflect upon the choices they have made.

Dividing resources fairly

Short summary

By finding a way to divide existing resources within the group, the participants are dealing with different notions of justice, as well as with private and public property.

Aspired learning outcomes

- Experiencing the diversity of 'justice'
- Explore the relation between the private and the public in terms of resources and chances
- Getting to know important dilemmas regarding justice
- Exploring democratic decisions for a society integrating the diversity of people

Frame Conditions

Group size: 10 – 15

Time frame: 90 – 120 min

Space required: enough space to form subgroups

Material required: If possible, use real resources at hand, like things that can be found outside, or training material in the room, or bottles of water.

Activity description

- 1) Divide the participants into three groups (they can, but they do not have to equal size – different size adds the interesting question of how many participate how much in a society). Each of the small groups gets this task: "Collect three resources you can find outside, that you think are of interest for everybody. Then decide how these resources should be divided amongst you. Also decide, how much of it should be reserved for all of us in this room. You have 20 min." Let the groups work, do not give further advice, if they take up communication with the other groups, let it happen.
- 2) Back in the plenary ask the groups to present their resources and to put in the middle of the room what is for everyone.
- 3) Ask them as the second task: "Now establish justice for all of us in this room. You have 15 min". This part can trigger very different approaches – actively changing the division of the resources, or theoretical discussion about what justice would look like.



4) After 15 minutes, start the reflection:

The reflection can start with looking at the different phases of the activity. What was easy, what was difficult? Where there contradictions in the way you thought about justice and the way you acted? Which notions of justice could you observe?

At an appropriate moment systematize the different notions of justice that could be existing:

→ Justice can mean having equal opportunities and chances to start with. This notion focusses on individual freedom of people to take their lives into their own hand. The state will guarantee equal access to opportunities independent of existing groups, structure, cultures, privileges or discrimination

→ Justice can mean having equal results in the end. This notion focusses on equality as an important value. It wants that individuals and also groups achieve the same results. Therefore it intervenes into existing power and privilege structures and deliberately limits individual freedom.

→ Justice can mean fulfilling individual and collective needs. The state will provide special services and support to groups to make sure they can equally participate in society and are really enabled to use their (often only theoretical) chances for this participation. This might be seen as an intermediate way between the two other notions of justice.

5) After this systematization you might ask the participants to reflect in groups again which ways they favored in the activity and why.

6) Ask participants to share their most important insights in a final round.

Hints for the facilitation

Make sure participants do not start a role play which gets them into a distance from who they are right here and now in the group. Ask them to take the issue seriously and always work with the actual needs and interests of the participants in their group.

Of course they can exaggerate, play out etc., but the activity should always stay linked to the actual dynamics within the group.

Comments from the partners

"The exercise helped us to question ourselves and our way of doing things."

"When talking about division of resources, scarcity needs to be an element."

"Talking about resources, privileges and justice within the group is a sensitive topic!"

The robot

Short summary

This exercise uses a game setup – people sitting on chairs, one chair empty and one person trying to sit on that empty seat. The exercise aims at showing exclusion mechanisms in groups.

Scope / aspired learning outcomes

- Experiencing and understanding mechanisms of exclusion and group pressure
- Reflecting on instructions being interpreted in a non-inclusive way
- Raising awareness for situations of exclusion
- Reflecting on ways to break such mechanisms

Frame Conditions

- Group size:** 6 – 18
Time frame: 20 – 30 min
Space required: a room where participants can move easily
Material required: flip chart, chairs

Activity description

- 1) The participants sit on chairs which are spread out in the room, with one chair staying empty. One person playing “the Robot” stands in front of the group. The facilitator gives the instruction that the chairs cannot be moved/ physical contact cannot be made amongst the people sitting. Then (s)he writes on the flip chart: “The aim of the Robot is to get a seat”



- 2) The Robot will walk slowly towards the group and try to sit on the empty chair. Automatically, the group will discuss what strategy and try to avoid the Robot to get a chair – probably by changing their seats. After several trials or when the Robot will make it to have a seat, the play part of the exercise ends and the reflection starts.
- 3) The reflection should focus on the process within the group of people sitting, and on the consequences of that behaviour for the individual as well as the group altogether.

Questions for reflection

- Who was the lead person designing a strategy?
- Were all of you involved in this strategy?
- Was there someone who didn't intervene in the discussion about the strategy?
- How did everyone in the sitting group feel during the exercise? How did “the robot” feel?

The facilitator can come back to the flipchart of the initial instruction and raise the question, if applicable: “Why did the group decide to design a strategy to avoid the Robot to have a sit while the only instruction given for this exercise was that the Alien wants to have a seat?”

Be the change

Short summary

During this activity participants reflect on dilemmas of democracy, the duality of values and their own position regarding what they want to change for the better. The title of this exercise refers to the saying “Be the change that you want to see in the world”

Scope / aspired learning outcomes

- Understanding the duality of values
- Raising awareness for one's own blind spots
- Finding ways to build bridges to other people
- Getting an idea of how to find solutions that take into account different point of views

Frame Conditions

- Group size:** Groups up to 20 people
Time frame: one part 60 min, both parts 90 min
Space required: just enough for the people to sit in a circle
Material required: pen and paper, flipchart to visualize the square of values

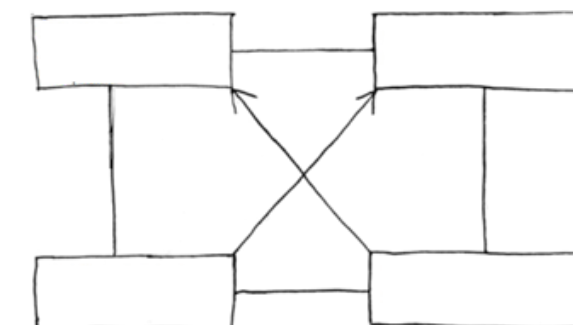


Activity description

PART ONE

1. Ask the participants are being asked to start with a personal example and write down a problematic character trait of a person they know (e.g. not reliable; messy; too talkative...). Make them write down this word on the bottom right of a paper. Then they should think about the positive counter-value to this problematic character trait and write it down on the top left of their paper (e.g. reliable; tidy; listening...). That is probably also a value which they like themselves. Even graphically you see: I feel superior while the other seems to be below me.
2. Then they reflect what it would mean if this positive value would be exaggerated to be taken absolute. In the case of reliability this could be inflexibility/ dogmatism, in the case of tidiness it could be obsession, in the case of listening it could be lack of own position. They write down this value on the left side below the positive one. Finally one value is missing: the positive counter-value on the top right of the paper (e.g. flexible; process-oriented; outspoken...). Have the participants find the “missing pieces” – either on their own, or in couples of two.

Each person should have the following “square of values” written down on their paper:



- Food for thought that the facilitator can bring into the reflection of this first part of the exercise – unless it doesn't come from the participants themselves:
- Each positive value needs a counterpart not to be exaggerated into a negative extreme.
- The negative character trait of the other person might contain some positive core which is to be appreciated.
- Understanding the duality of values does not mean that there is no conflict anymore – you probably still do not like the trait of the other. But you recognize that he or she also has a perspective which is part of a value-based dilemma. At the same time you recognize that you might be perceived as exaggerating your personal values.
- Being an active citizen means wanting to change things for the better. One danger is that this change is externalized to others while many activists do not question their own position. Especially 'left-wing' activists have been criticized for playing with moral standards like tolerance, inclusion and plurality, while not accepting other positions not fitting their idea of what that means.
- Confronting the other therefore always means confronting oneself. In this way it is not so easy anymore to disapprove of a person as such – you enter into a dialogue, trying to find common solutions which can be more creative than just winning or losing.

PART TWO

3. Participants now convert this idea to populist statements. Let them collect populist statements and ask them to complete a scheme accordingly which is trying to find a democratic dilemma. Here is one example. Populist statement: "Politicians are all corrupt". The positive counter-value might be "Politicians are independent". Now, if you exaggerate this positive value, you might end up with "Politicians take uninformed decisions". As a positive counter-value you might say "Politicians have good networks". On the top level a democratic dilemma between Independence and Networking becomes visible. This dilemma should be embraced, it cannot be dissolved and democracy as a process means to decide in different situations whether now independence is more important or if networking is crucial at this point.



4. Ask participants to form small groups and let two of them visualize one of the democratic dilemmas they have found with their bodies. In plenary for each visualization the two participants share one sentence from their position. The others are observing and make small changes to possibly find a 'solution' in the dilemma.
 To prepare this, individual participants can stand behind each of the two representing the dilemma in order to physically experience both sides. Finally the two participants representing the values are sharing a sentence of how they feel and if they experienced a good decision taken in the dilemma.

The reflection focuses on the question of how inner and outer change go together; what 'right' do we have as active citizens to push for change in society? How far can participation of others go? Are we facilitators of change which others define? Do we define an agenda for ourselves? What does it mean to go one step ahead with others following? When do we go, when does active citizenship mean stepping back?

Here are some other examples of value squares showing the tension between important democratic values and their exaggerations:

Diversity Fragmentation	Identity Segmentation	Transparency Endangered Security	Confidentiality Secret Regime
Freedom of speech Insult	Protection of dignity Suppression	Education Elitism	Grassroots activism Blind democracy
Involve minorities Long processes	Going ahead Exclusion	Security Total control	Laissez faire Anarchy

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT “THE WIDER GLOBE”

The following chapter contains three approaches to bring the bigger contexts of our world into the room: thinking about action steps to take regarding a particular socio-political issue, understanding and acting against hate speech, and thinking about what qualities humans need in order to further develop the “project of democracy”.

Tackling an issue

Short summary

The participants take a specific social/political issue that is close to them personally and start to think about ways to tackle this issue in a short, mid and long term way.

Aspired learning outcomes

- To bring the immediate social/political context into the room
- To approach an issue in a personal (not too abstract) way
- To reach a common understanding of a problem and possible solutions
- Learning to think and plan strategically, realistically assessing the time and resources at hand

Frame Conditions

- Group size:** Groups up to 30 people
Time frame: 90 – 120 min, depending on the complexity of the issue
Space required: enough space for the people to sit in subgroups
Material required: pen and paper or flipchart to visualize the answers found

This method helps to understand a reality that we are not always aware of.



Hints and adaptations

It may be necessary to break down even more the answers found, as the tendency usually is to describe solutions with many preconditions. A way to do that is to ask: WHO CAN DO that? And what does this person need in order to do that? This way, we really have to think about the steps that lead to solutions.

Another way to structure the solutions would be to distinguish two levels:

- what kind of solutions are needed?
- what can WE (the persons sitting in this room and thinking about the problem) do?

Activity description

First, the participants can suggest a social issue that is close to them (emotionally and/or physically, as they encounter it in every day life and work). They then present this issue to the whole group, in an overview of how this issue presents itself, the impact it has and possibly how they think it started. The other participants can ask questions about this issue.

Secondly, the group splits into subgroups of 3 – 4 people and start to think about the following questions:

- What do you think is the root cause of the problem, that needs to be tackled?
- What can we do to tackle the issue? Think about three time-frames:
 - what can we do TOMORROW?
 - what can we do IN THE NEXT MONTH?
 - what can we do WITHIN THE NEXT 3 YEARS?

The sub-groups write down their answers on different papers.

- The groups present their answers and put the papers up in the room, according the time-frames. As all groups have presented their answers, the solutions can be clustered and further discussed. The activity can be closed by a short reflection round on how the participants that feel now that they have come up with suggestions and solutions.

Comments of the partners

“This method helps to understand a reality that we are not always aware of.”

“It was useful to see how the three time frames open up a variety of solutions.”

“We can adapt this approach for many different topics and contexts.”

“To put a question like this into the group is useful because it helps people to find answers and make suggestions for change. This brings a sense of responsibility and empowerment.”

The exercise helps to realize the complexity and individual understandings of hate speech.

Discuss not to hate/Discuss to change hate

Short summary

Participants learn about hate speech and how to use counter-speech as a way to deal with hate speech. The exercise consists of two parts: in the first they learn about the components of hate speech – taking into account each member of the group and their background, analyzing concrete examples from the media and finding a common definition. In the second part, people will learn to change the dynamic of words in order to avoid hate speech. Group discussion teaches about counter narratives as alternative discourses to hate speech.

Aspired learning outcomes

- Participants learn how to recognize hate speech and counter-speech.
- Learning about the complexities of categorizing hate speech
- Recognizing a component that can transition from hate speech to counter-speech or more neutral speech.
- Transforming hate speech into counter-speech through hands-on activities.

Frame Conditions

Group size: 10 – 15

Time frame: 3 hours

Space required: A big space participants can sit and discuss together

Material required: Papers for participants to write their definition; laptop/projector to show examples of hate speech and outline

Activity description

PART ONE: DISCUSS NOT TO HATE

1. Initially, facilitators should explain why discussing hate speech is necessary. People are more likely to commit if they believe it is vital. Examples of why it is important: Human experience has taught us that we should oppose hate speech for the sake of public welfare and harmony.
2. At the second level, the facilitator initiates a conversation about what constitutes hate speech: Because people from various national and cultural backgrounds have varied perceptions about what constitutes hate speech. They also perceive various restrictions regarding what constitutes hate speech and the punishment for those who engage in it. At this activity level, people should be divided into equal groups and asked to define one statement and identify hate speech.
3. In the third step, the groups present their group definition and discuss it to identify areas of disagreement.
4. In the fourth step, examples of hate speech should be examined, and the group should apply their definition. In this step, the facilitator highlights any discrepancies between definitions and examples in the group discussion.

Hate speech is complex in terms of definition: Since there is a big dispute over the definition of hate speech, it is hard to find one that suits every pattern. Accepting this, we should

PART TWO: DISCUSS TO CHANGE HATE

5. Facilitators should let participants discuss and underline why counter speech is necessary (as people are more likely to learn if they believe it is significant). Examples of why it is important: Punishing and banning hate speech is proved that it is not effective methods against hate speech.
6. At the second level, the facilitator should group participants and then start a conversation about what should be the component of counter speech based on their definition in participants' heads. People who come from various national and cultural backgrounds have faced different kinds of hate speech. At this activity level, people should be divided into equal groups and asked to define one statement and identify counter speech.
7. In the third step, groups should present their group definition and discuss it to identify areas of disagreement.
8. In the fourth step, examples of hate speech should be examined, and the group should apply their counter hate speech definition. In this step, the facilitator should highlight any discrepancies between definitions and examples in the group discussion. Overall, participants will understand how counter speech is used, what it is, and how to transform a hate speech into counterspeech.



Hints for the facilitator

Hate speech examples: Because there are specific regulations and attitudes about hate speech, hate speech should be diverse in terms of target group. It helps in the transformation of broad hate speech into counter speech.

Background information

The facilitator should be aware of people's trauma and other problems. To be aware of such factors, a pre-test should be used. Also, when preparing and presenting the outline, the facilitator may warn participants and provide a free space for them to leave.

Counter speech is complex in terms of definition: Since there is a big dispute over the definition of hate speech, it is hard to find one that suits every pattern. Due to its origins in hate speech, counter-speech is more complex than its antagonistic counterpart.

Comments of the partners

"The exercise helps to realize the complexity and individual understandings of hate speech."

"Hate speech is a problem against freedom of speech and expression, therefore against a basic democratic value and human right. It's a deep, complex topic that requires time & participation."

"Great idea to let participants find a definition first. I would add the impact hate speech has to the recipient, on an emotional level, in order to help us empathize. It's crucial to talk about the influence of media!"

“To bear the burden of the common complexity” (quote from Peter Sloterdijk) or The art of being human

thoughts by Åke Larsson

The phrase “community and disagreement”, something that is probably a prerequisite for every modern democratic society, leads my thoughts to what it means to be a “free” and living person in a democracy of our kind, i.e. a democracy that needs to be deliberated, negotiated and also to work between elections and at all administrative levels – national, regional and municipal.

To begin with, my thoughts land quite far away – to The Truth Tribunal in South Africa and the concept of UBUNTU (compassion – I am who I am through the other is). Being human, according to a definition that connects to Desmond Tutu’s idea of the truth tribunal, could be: not to hate or condemn people, but to condemn some of what people do and say. Much of the criticism that the tribunal has received in the aftermath and with the unrest that has hit the country even after apartheid is rooted in the notion that the truth tribunal was a “solution” to the problems facing the country. I mean, it’s a fatal misconception

The Truth Tribunal did not remove or resolve conflicts. Probably no one in South Africa thought it would. What it did was remove some of the vengeance that might otherwise have taken violent forms and dragged people into it. This is something absolutely necessary if the people in a society are to be able, in the words of Peter Sloterdijk, to “bear the burden of the common complexity”

In our part of the world, about 30 years after the truth tribunal, we live in a widespread notion that what we do, we do for our own gain and that our own gain therefore works as well as a driving force to take care of our old ones as for to manufacture mobile phones or cars etc. A notion that leads us to easily forget that man is not only free but also dependent, that he is not only an individual but also a social being. So I think that what was valid there and then, Desmond Tutu knew is valid everywhere, namely, that a human being is not created by being enlightened about the principles of human behavior. She is created by becoming part of the emotional foundation of these principles.

Democracy as a modern state became possible when “demos” (people) could be delimited territorially and cultural and existing conflicts could be fenced into an overall community. When a warm circle of historical loyalties and ties could be extended to include millions of people. When a homogeneous community that did not exist could be created.

A process that to a large extent characterizes the 19th century and which contains more or less extensive exclusion mechanisms against parts of the population that were supposed not to be able to become part of the homogeneous “people’s body”.

Mechanisms that were considered necessary and even good for e.g. the growth of the folk home.

The sense of belonging was important and has always been a prerequisite for the will to do justice. Where the sense of belonging diminishes – at the border with the not-belonging, the will to justice is constantly put to the test. The strengthening of belonging has thus served as an argument for defining of and excluding not-belongers.

This, I mean, is clear in our time. I think we have reached a point where such societies have become impossible to maintain by peaceful means. Permanent and genuine conflicts of value have become the very condition of existence for every society in which we are democratic. Therefore, the ability and willingness to deal peacefully with these conflicts of value becomes a necessary part of becoming human.

There is a helpless divide that has characterized modern democracies regardless of ideological basis. On the one hand, democracy as a social condition for harmony and conflict resolution, on the other hand, democracy as a social condition for dissonance and diversity. On the one hand democracy as a means, on the other hand democracy as a goal and way of life.

My conclusion is that the choices we have today are not between diversity or unity but between diversity with democracy or diversity without democracy.

The hot circle that the fate myths of nationalism could once evoke as nationally functioning putty is no longer possible.

The task we are facing is to shift the foundations of national democracies from equality to inequality, from unity to diversity, is new and historically untested. A new construction for democracy must be negotiated, formulated, debated and enforced if democracy and peaceful conflict management are not to crumble. Perhaps democracy must go from seeing itself as a development project to seeing itself as a coexistence project.

And we who are to populate these societies – who do we need to be? What civic virtues should we possess? The art of being human is, among other things, about developing a sense for what is a possible freedom and what is at the same time an inevitable dependence.

- To have a strong ability to be both ourselves and with others at the same time.
- To be free from others in such a way that I do not always feel compelled to make everyone around me happy – and yet be clearly aware of my connection to them.
- Not having the need to constantly assert my opinion – but also not opportunistically bowing to something I, deep inside myself feel, is wrong.
- To as much as possible do what is important to myself – and yet always know and take into consideration what is important to others.
- To see the possibilities of life even if it is a big uphill path to get there – and still not close your eyes to its inevitable limitations.
- To have the ability to imagine something good in the future – even if, at present it seems as if there are no logical reasons to do so.

Using this input as a method

This text was presented as a live input to the audience. At the end, the suggested virtues were presented, commented and discussed within the group.

Learnings, expressed by the partners

- Being aware of the idea that each process needs an appropriate time
- Great example of how storytelling can help us connect history & present. It helped explain the evolution of practices, attitudes, norms
- It was helping us to think from a historical perspective. And it was educational to learn things we had not heard before
- To realize there is always a tradition and context in which concepts & practices are born, and that we need to adapt to new realities
- The democratic journey helps us to understand and get deeper on the subject of how it started and how it can be in the future
- Essential to have in mind the questions on what we need for the future in any situation builds our awareness
- Crucial to go deeper with this! Starting from the proposed statements

Further suggestions for using this input as a method

- Since every country has a different development period, we might need to put this into perspective
- In order to connect the intellectual input to the participants in the room, we could ask: where do you experience this aspect in your everyday life?
- It would be great to have concrete practical activities that build tolerance for uncertainty & resilience in the face of challenges



TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE “SMALLER GLOBE”: ENERGY & ATMOSPHERE

Throughout the encounter, it is crucial to take care of the “smaller globe”, meaning all the aspects that contribute to a good energy and atmosphere, as this is a precondition for sustainable learning. The following short exercises help participants getting to know each other, show up in the group and be seen, as well as creating a new focus before starting a new topic. The last exercise gives people the chance to express themselves when the atmosphere has become tense.

Warmup: “I am, and I feel”

Short summary

To be done at the beginning or at the end of a day or session, this short warmup gives the opportunity for the participants to check-in with themselves, show where they are at, and see where others are at

Scope / aspired learning

- To connect with ourselves and with the group
- To get the focus on the present moment / the “here and now”

Frame Conditions

Group size: Up to 20
Time frame: 15 min
Space required: a space big enough to make a circle where participants can move freely
Material required: none

Possible adaptations

- Going outside!

Activity description

1. In a circle, one by one, each participant takes a step to the center and says, “my name is ... and I feel...” And add a sound, gesture, movement, etc. that describes how they feel here and now.
2. The rest of the group repeats what each one does.

Comments from the partners

"This form of introduction raises the awareness for each person in the group! The repetition also creates an immediate group feeling"

"Can be stressful for people who feel put on the spot."



Sounds familiar?

Short summary

Subgroups of 3 – 5 people try to find things they have in common

Scope / aspired learning

- Starting to speak to each other
- Creating links between each other
- Getting a first sense of familiarity within a smaller group of people

Frame Conditions

Group size: Up to 20
Time frame: 15 – 30 min
Space required: a space big enough so that people can form subgroup-circles
Material required: can be done with none (short version) or flipchart paper (long version)



Activity description

1. The group is divided into subgroups of 3-5 people who get the tasks to find at least 3 things they have in common. Very obvious commonalities (such as the language of the activity, or being participant in this setting) are excluded. Inspirations: places you have been, hobbies, family status, pets, favourite food etc.
2. The groups then share what they have found, and questions can be asked by the other groups, to find out more.

Longer version: the subgroups bring the names and commonalities of their subgroup on a flipchart paper to then present to the group and be hung up in the room.

Comments from the partners

"To find things you share with others makes a tighter/stronger group and a stronger sense of safety. A strong sense of security makes the group functioning in a good, independent way."

"Very useful exercise for the work with a group of people who don't know each other ."

"Commonalities are a good bonding tool."

Possible adaptations

In addition to the things in common the subgroups can be asked to add at least one thing that is unique to each group member, in order to appreciate diversity

Check-In on three levels

Short summary

A general check-in of our bodies on the physical, mental and emotional levels.

Scope/ aspired learning

- Break the ice within the group
- Help settle into the space and be present, physically and mentally
- Prepare the body to move and start getting familiar with the work

Frame Conditions

Group size: Up to 40

Time frame: 15 min

Space required: a space big enough to make a circle where participants can move freely

Material required: none

Activity description

1. We put ourselves in a circle, with our feet open and the hip width apart, rooted to the ground. We become aware of our body, we allow it to be as relaxed as possible, we breathe deeply. Image of the reed – let's inhabit the reed and not the rod, flexible. We adapt to what is here and now.
2. We shake the parts of the body with the idea of getting rid of everything we do not need to be here and now. We sigh sonically allowing the voice to vibrate freely.
3. We perform a guided check of the physical, mental and emotional levels, using sounds to release.

Comments of the partners

"Helps to relax and remember the body as part of the person!"

"Helps a lot after discussion serious or tiring matters, helping to come back to the body and being able to focus in the next session."

"Brings back awareness to oneself. Very important in the context of social work!"

"Relaxing for people who like energizers, can be stressful for those not used to such exercises."

Helps to relax and remember the body as part of the person!



Counting together

Short summary

The group gathers in a circle and counts up to a specific number, without having more than one person saying something at a time.

Scope / aspired learning

- To warm up for a session, or close down at the end of it
- To settle into the space, forget the outside and concentrate on the here and now
- To connect with the group and get aware of each other

Frame Conditions

Group size: from 8 – 10 to infinite

Time frame: 15min

Space required: a space big enough to make a big circle with space between each other.

Material required: none

Activity description

1. Standing in a circle, one by one we have to count together from 1 to the number of members in the group.
2. We listen to the group energy and, one by one, a person takes a step forward, gives one clap and says the next number.
3. If two or more people go to the middle of the circle at the same time saying the same number, we have to start over from the beginning.
4. The activity ends when we arrive at the last number.

The Circle of Emotions

Short summary

When things within a group get heated in a way that doesn't allow for us to focus on the topic any more, we can have a "circle of emotions" which is a talking round under specific rules. This method helps slowing down and reconnect on a personal level.

Scope / aspired learning outcomes

- Giving space for emotional issues going on beyond the official topic of the meeting
- Giving everyone the chance to bring their voice into the room
- Stopping the atmosphere from becoming hostile
- Fostering understanding and reconciliation

Frame Conditions

Group size: 5 – 15 people

Time frame: at least 30 min, maximum 90

Space required: a circle where everyone can see everyone

Material required: the rules of the circle on a poster or flipchart

Activity description

The facilitator explains the procedure and rules of the circle of emotions: We will put a talking stick in the middle of the circle. Whoever wants to start talking, picks it up and starts the round. From there on, the talking stick will go around the circle. Whoever wants to speak, can speak when having the talking stick. If the talking stick comes to you and you don't want to say anything, you just pass it on to the next person. There is no other occasion to speak, no cross-talk or interference outside of this order. The talking stick will go around the circle multiple times. The circle of emotions ends in one of two ways: either if for one round no one wanted to speak anymore, or after a specific time established at the beginning.

Rules

1. Only the person with the talking stick is speaking. Others listen.
2. Confidentiality: what is said in this room, will stay in this room.
3. It's every person's decision whether they want to speak or pass.
4. Talk about yourself and your experience, not about the others.
5. Choose to say the most important thing first.

The facilitator(s) are part of the circle and can equally speak from their personal experience.

The only additional task is to make sure the rules are respected and call out if this isn't the case.

Questions to start the round can be

- How do I feel regarding this group right now?
- What is going on for me right now?
- What have I been wanting to say for some time now?

Digesting the experience

When dealing with a lot of input, interactions and new experiences, the following exercises help digest, harvest and share the learnings achieved. The buzz groups also help adjust the agenda and rhythm to the group's necessities.

Rounds of Reflection

Short summary

At the end of an exercise or training/meeting day, the participants have time to "harvest" and share their learnings as well as general thoughts and questions that have come up for them.

Scope / aspired learning outcomes

- Becoming aware of one's own learnings
- Learn through the learnings of others in the group
- Digesting experiences of the day
- Making sure „left-over-thoughts“ and open questions are being addressed

Frame Conditions

Group size: Any size. When more than 20 people, there need to be subgroups formed

Time frame: 15 – 30 minutes, depending on the group size

Space required: nothing specific

Material required: pen and paper for everyone

Activity description

This exercise can be placed at the end of an exercise, the end of a day, the end of the whole training/meeting, or in the morning of a second or third day. It can be a regular thing, but should also not happen too often to become exhausting.

When doing a round of reflection, each participants should be given time, pen and paper to write down some bullet points on one to three questions like:

- what are you taking with you from today / from this exercise?
- what got you thinking?
- what did surprise you?
- what do you want to keep as a reminder for yourself?
- what is still on your mind from what we have experienced yesterday?
- what question(s) are running your mind?

After some time, the sharing starts: Every participant is asked to share at least one thing they have written down – so that others can learn from them as well. If there is an open question, facilitators should come back to that at the end of the round, writing it down to be answered at a given point. Other than that, the contributions are not being commented.



Circle of Associations

Short summary

In this improvisational exercise the participants speak out the first word that comes to their mind when hearing another word.

Scope / aspired learning outcomes

- Using body and brain in order to digest input and free up the mind
- Group building and opportunity to have fun together
- Giving participants a better feeling for the group and their place within it
- Raising awareness for “insider language” (see variation)

Frame Conditions

Group size: Up to 20 people

Time frame: 10 min

Space required: Place enough to form a standing circle

Material required: none

Activity description

The participants form a circle. A person says a word and passes it on to any person. Words can only be passed on, if eye contact is established with the person who is to accept them. It might be helpful to clap hands as you pass words on. The person who receives the word associates it with a new word. The next receiver again associates with a new word, and so on.

Variation – “Hä?”s leading to our communalities

If one person does not understand a word or the association to a word, the facilitator can introduce the “Hä?” expression. “Hä?” is a very colloquial German expression for “I do not understand, please explain”. A “Hä?” can be said by every group member when they don’t understand a word or the association of words. When a “Hä?” is expressed, the person who said the word has to give an explanation. After some time, the facilitator can explain that the “Hä?”s makes clear where we do not have a common understanding of a context. In order to be as inclusive as possible, the group should thrive to be more simple and to avoid “Hä?”s. Being simple and therefore understandable for everyone in the group is one step for more integration of all group members.



Carthusian Walk

Short summary

The group takes a walk together, splitting up into smaller groups and answering questions along the way.

Scope / aspired learning outcomes

- Connect with the surroundings of a venue, with the people and with the subject at hand
- Deepening relationships and building trust
- Digesting and deepening the content of the training
- Using nature and movement to extend the perspective on a topic

Frame Conditions

Group size: Up to 20 people

Time frame: 30 – 90 min

Space required: a path everyone in the group is able to walk or follow. This path should be known by some of the group members in order not to get lost. It should follow peaceful and quiet surroundings in nature – it is not possible to do this exercise in crowded streets

Material required: A bell, sound bowl or similar (glass and spoon etc.)

Activity description

- 1) The group is asked to put good walking shoes on and, if necessary, coats
- 2) The group is asked to separate into small groups of two or three persons
- 3) The group is given an overall question, like for example “what is your motivation in your work?”, “how do you overcome XY obstacles?” or “what democratic value do you personally relate to the most?” etc.
- 4) The group starts to walk in these pairs or trios
- 5) Every 5 – 10 minutes, the facilitator rings a bell or gives a sign and the pairs or trios separate and get into new pairs or trios, talking about the same subject.

Hints for the facilitator

It is useful to provide a variety of questions, depending on the situation and group.

The exercise might need to be adapted for people with physical restrictions.

Count in enough time for this exercise, usually more time is needed than planned

Comments of the partners

“Good way to get to know the group better.”

“Interesting way to discuss a topic and meet people on a personal level.”

“Walking and talking at the same time creates smooth conversations.”

“Very adaptable activity – one might use different topics/questions.”

“Helpful exercise to deepen relationships and to tackle conflicts in a group.”

“Astonishing idea to use the nature as a “third trainer”.”

Story behind the name

This exercise might be known under different names. It has been introduced to Katrin by Carthusian monks; it has been used by them since centuries to deepen their monastery life. Therefore, we also call it by this name here.

Buzz groups

Short summary

After a long day where a lot of content - both personal and professional – is shared, the participants meet in subgroups and get to talk about their day. They then select a delegate to deliver this feedback to the group of delegates who create the (adapted) agenda for the next day.

Scope

- Having a place where feelings, messages and ideas developed during the day can be expressed
- Gathering feedback about how the day of the training (or meeting) went.
- Analyzing the obstacles encountered within the group during the learning and assimilation process.
- Ensuring that the content and speed of the training/meeting suits the energy of the group, the group remains safe and the learning process stays uninterrupted.

Frame Conditions

Group size: Subgroups of 3 – 9 people

Time frame: Time for the subgroups 20 – 30 minutes. Time for the groups of delegates shouldn't last longer than 1 hour

Space required: "Corners" for the different subgroups; a quiet space with privacy for the group of delegates

Material required: It's good to have the agenda at hand, for adjustments

Activity description

At the end of each working day, the group is divided into subgroups (if it's an international training the subgroups should be formed according to the different countries/ languages in the group so that they can speak as free as possible). For 20 – 30 minutes, the participants talk about the day: the high and low points of the day, where they struggled, what they feel like now, etc. (this doesn't only refer to contents and methods, but also to general atmosphere, energy level, surroundings and circumstances, see "globe"). Also, they can talk about ideas or wishes for the next day.

Then, they send a delegate to the group of delegates which meets for another 30 – 60 minutes (while the rest are free for the evening). The delegates pool all the feedback gathered in the buzz groups and also during lunch and coffee breaks. From this feedback, the group of delegates can decide whether changed / adaptations to the next day's agenda are necessary or not, or on other actions needed in order to resolve obstacles before they become confusing.

What is brought from our cultural and personal experience makes us see and value "reality" in a certain way.

Comment from the writer

One of the objectives of the Buzz Group is to analyze the obstacles encountered within the group during the learning and assimilation process. It is crucial for the group to be able to determine whether the obstacles are epistemological or epistemophilic and to find solutions according to the need of the group.

The first epistemological obstacle is what we already know about the world (the phenomena and processes of the social). What is brought from our cultural and personal experience makes us see and value "reality" in a certain way. This presents itself as an obstacle for those who intend to contribute new perspectives on the issues/problems to be investigated, given that there is a risk of biasing or limiting the possibility of delving deeper into the spaces of "reality" in which research is being carried out.

The epistemophilic barrier refers to difficulties of a motivational or affective nature. "The epistemophilic obstacle is a personal impediment linked to the subject's affectivity. It prevents them from understanding, from comprehending intellectually, but the origin of the cognitive difficulty is emotional. One's own history, beliefs, previous knowledge, values and even prejudices have an impact on the appropriation of something new, generating stereotyped behaviour or reactive attitudes.





C. TRANS-FERABILITY OF THE APPROACH

TRANSFERABILITY OF THE APPROACH

PERSPECTIVE 1, BY THE PROJECT PARTNER PROGESTIÓN

Tackling democracy following the CAN DO approach is a whole experience that allows the participants to reconnect with the grassroots of what democracy is and our scope as individuals as part of communities. CAN DO gatherings facilitate the connection from the deepest participants' emotions to the collective level, in which the self-reflections are shared with others and start to build up common ideas in an intercultural, international exchange context. Nevertheless, we need to make ourselves a basic question before proceeding to the transferability of contents of the past training "Learning Democracy" to our respective organizations, and hence, our communities.

What is the link between the CAN DO approach and Democracy?

The "CAN DO Cards" approach creates a meaningful relationship with democracy through its core theme of "Learning Democracy" and its distinctive approach to organizing gatherings, as they aim to empower individuals in the social and civic education areas – known within the project as Change Makers – with a particular focus on promoting democratic values and principles within society. The project's activities and objectives align with the concept of democracy in various aspects, namely:

Social Change and Social Justice

The CAN DO Cards project aims to bring about deep changes in society by promoting social justice and inclusion. Democracy is founded on principles of equality, justice, and the protection of individual rights. By empowering professionals who work towards these goals, the project contributes to the promotion and implementation of democratic values, from the individual participants to their communities, through the partner organizations that carry out the project.

Social Inclusion and Interculturality

Democracy encourages the inclusion and participation of diverse individuals and groups in decision-making processes. The project focuses on intercultural communication, which is essential for fostering understanding, respect, and cooperation among people from different origins and cultural backgrounds. By enhancing participants' intercultural competencies and democratic values in each of its gatherings, the project CAN DO supports the principles of democratic participation and inclusivity.

Civic Education and Participation

Democracy relies on an informed and engaged citizenry. Through CAN DO Cards, professionals working in social and educational fields receive training and resources to strengthen their skills in civic education. This includes promoting active citizenship, democratic values, and providing tools for individuals to participate effectively in democratic processes at local, national, and international levels.

The "CAN DO Cards" approach creates a meaningful relationship with democracy through its core theme of "Learning Democracy".

Why is then important to transfer the knowledge acquired during the “Learning Democracy” training to our daily life as individuals and/or professionals in social, educational organizations?

The transferability of the CAN DO Cards approach to organizations working in social inclusion, civic education, and non-formal methodologies is crucial in order to transfer the impact of the gatherings to the core of the organizations, and therefore, be able to transfer to communities thorough the organizations’ scope. Some key aspects susceptible to transfer from the first LTTA of CAN DO Cards, based on the topic “Learning Democracy” are the following:

Enhancing Effectiveness

Transferring the contributions about Democracy under the CAN DO approach allows organizations to incorporate effective strategies and methodologies into their existing practices. The project’s emphasis on social inclusion, active participation, and empowerment aligns with the goals of organizations working with vulnerable populations, migrants and refugees, children and youngsters and minorities. By adopting these approaches, organizations can enhance their effectiveness in addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by their target groups.

Holistic Support

The multidisciplinary approach of CAN DO ensures that professionals from various fields come together and share their expertise. Transferring this approach to organizations allows for a comprehensive and holistic support system for the respective target groups and final users of the partner organizations. By combining civic education and non-formal methodologies with legal advice, psychosocial accompaniment, job counselling, and other relevant services, organizations can provide integrated support that addresses the complex needs of their beneficiaries.

Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education methodologies, as promoted by CAN DO Cards, offer innovative and engaging approaches to learning. Transferring these methodologies to organizations working with vulnerable populations, migrants, refugees, and minorities can help create inclusive and empowering learning environments. Non-formal education techniques, such as interactive activities, energizers, and other participatory exercises, can foster active engagement, boost confidence, and promote the acquisition of practical skills among beneficiaries.

Promoting Social Inclusion

The CAN DO approach emphasizes social inclusion and intercultural understanding. By transferring this approach to organizations, they can create inclusive spaces where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel welcomed and valued. This promotes social cohesion, breaks down barriers, and encourages mutual respect among participants. The approach also helps organizations develop strategies to address discrimination, biases, and prejudices, as we explain in the next point.

Enhancing Intercultural Understanding

The intercultural approach of CAN DO emphasizes the importance of intercultural communication, respect, and understanding. Professionals who have participated in the gatherings can transfer these values to their work with migrants, refugees and vulnerable groups by promoting intercultural dialogue, breaking down stereotypes, and fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. By facilitating interactions and exchanges among diverse individuals, professionals can help create a sense of belonging and social cohesion, enabling refugees and immigrants to navigate and thrive in their new cultural context.

Empowering Individuals

The CAN DO Cards approach focuses on empowering individuals and promoting their active participation. Transferring this approach to organizations enables them to empower vulnerable populations by providing opportunities for self-expression, decision-making, and skill development. By fostering a sense of agency and ownership, organizations can help individuals regain control over their lives, build resilience, and work towards their personal and professional goals.

Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

Transferring the CAN DO Cards approach encourages collaboration and knowledge sharing among organizations working in similar fields. By adopting common methodologies and approaches, organizations can learn from each other’s experiences, exchange best practices, and collectively contribute to the advancement of social inclusion and adult education. This collaborative effort maximizes resources, expands networks, and promotes a collective impact on vulnerable populations.

Transferability of “Learning Democracy” to the core of Progestión, as an organization that works with immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees

The core theme of “Learning Democracy” in the “CAN DO Cards” project, coupled with its intercultural, non-formal approach, offers significant transferrable benefits to an organization such as Progestión. Progestión is a Spanish non-profit organization located in different regions of Spain that works with refugees and immigrants from an interdisciplinary perspective, providing attention to its beneficiaries through a multidisciplinary perspective, including legal support, psychosocial attention, shelter for different groups of people, education and awareness activities, employment support, etc. Those professionals from Progestión who have participated in the “CAN DO Cards” gatherings can leverage their acquired values to empower and support the refugees and immigrants they work with in the following ways:

Promoting Democratic Participation

The “Learning Democracy” theme in the “CAN DO Cards” project equips professionals with knowledge and skills related to democratic values, active citizenship, and participatory decision-making processes. Professionals can transfer these values to the refugees and immigrants they work with by encouraging their active participation in decision-making within the organization and in their local communities. This can involve including them in shaping the organization’s programs, advocating for their rights, and engaging them in community initiatives, thus fostering a sense of empowerment. The professionals from the different areas of Progestión promote the Democratic Participation of the beneficiaries through different projects that the organization has, such as the project Allende, that focuses on awareness-raising of the vulnerability of Human Rights in many of the beneficiaries’ origin countries, as well as the impact of the migration process in the migrants’ and refugees’ rights.

Enhancing Intercultural Understanding

The “CAN DO Cards” project’s intercultural approach emphasizes the importance of intercultural communication, respect, and understanding. Professionals who have participated in the gatherings can transfer these values to their work with refugees and immigrants by promoting intercultural dialogue, breaking down stereotypes, and fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. By facilitating interactions and exchanges among diverse individuals, professionals can help create a sense of belonging and social cohesion, enabling refugees and immigrants to discover their new cultural context, as well as working with the hosting citizenship through awareness-raising campaigns that facilitate the migrants’ inclusion. This is done in Progestión through the multiple sessions and gatherings that involve local population with the participation of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Strengthening Civic Education

The “CAN DO Cards” project’s focus on civic education aligns with the needs of refugees and immigrants, who often face challenges related to integration and access to rights and services. Professionals can utilize the knowledge and resources gained from the project to provide civic education to the individuals they support. This aspect is already actively going on in the legal area of Progestión, by providing information about democratic processes, legal rights, and responsibilities, and empowering refugees and immigrants to engage with local institutions and advocate for their needs. Accompanying migrants and refugees in their legal processes, also involves equipping them with civic knowledge and skills, contributing to their active participation in society and their ability to exercise their rights.

Applying Non-Formal Methodologies

The non-formal approach of the “CAN DO Cards” project offers the different professionals in Progestión alternative methods to engage with refugees and immigrants in their work. Non-formal education techniques, such as interactive exercises, games, and group activities, can be applied to facilitate learning, promote dialogue, and enhance the participation of individuals with diverse backgrounds. These methods can contribute to the different areas of the Association creating inclusive spaces, encouraging active engagement, and addressing the psychosocial needs of refugees and immigrants in a supportive and empowering manner. Some projects in Progestión align already with non-formal methodologies, such as the project “Peacemakers” that focuses on the awareness-raising of minors and adolescents to prevent situations of violence and foster the culture of peace. To know about more projects in Progestión that involve non-formal methodologies, you can access to this link (in Spanish).

By transferring the values and approaches acquired from the “CAN DO Cards” gatherings, professionals from Progestión and similar organizations can effectively contribute to the social inclusion, empowerment, and integration of refugees and immigrants. The focus on learning democracy, intercultural understanding, and non-formal methodologies enables professionals to create an environment that respects diversity, promotes active citizenship, and supports the overall well-being and successful integration of the individuals they work with.

In summary, the transferability of the CAN DO Cards approach to the partner organizations – as well as those organizations working in civic education, social inclusion, non-formal methodologies with minors, minorities and vulnerable populations – is important as it reinforces key organizational aspects, providing specific tools for the participant individuals to transfer to their daily life and relationship with other people, either at the professional or personal sphere. By incorporating the principles, the methodologies and the contributions in the framework of CAN DO Cards, both the participants and the organizations they belong to can better address the needs of their final beneficiaries and contribute to a positive social change.



The non-formal approach of the “CAN DO Cards” project offers the different professionals in Progestión alternative methods to engage with refugees and immigrants in their work.

PERSPECTIVE 2, BY THE PROJECT PARTNER GENÇ HAYAT (YOUNG LIVES FOUNDATION)

Since its founding in 2008, the Young Lives Foundation has been carrying out its programs in order to assist the holistic development of children, adolescents, and young people between the ages of 11 and 18. To achieve this, YLF works to boost youth social participation, strengthen their basic and social skills, and advocate for equal access to education. One of the stages in life when people experience the most profound mental and physical change is adolescence. Therefore, regardless of their circumstances, every person in this age range already confronts a high risk of vulnerability. Some people, however, require more support than others, whether for social, economic, or a variety of other reasons. Children and adolescents from more vulnerable populations, such as immigrants and refugees, those at danger of child labor and addiction, as well as those who have been excluded from or are at risk of remaining excluded from education, stand out among YLF's primary target groups. Earthquake victims have been added to this category as of 2023.

"Participation" in activities involving various vulnerable groups varies based on a number of factors. The activities conducted to encourage children's participation rely on their educational levels, developmental disparities in fundamental skills, readiness, and level of cultural awareness. As one of the key components of the CAN DO approach, the "Living Agenda" now offers us a significant opportunity. Rather than providing specific training modules, CAN DO is an approach that can be adapted to changing conditions and circumstances.

In general, participation refers to the active involvement and engagement of individuals in social, political, and developmental processes. It goes beyond mere consultation and involves young people in all stages of project implementation, from planning to evaluation. Meaningful participation ensures that young people's voices are heard, their perspectives are considered, and their contributions are valued. When young people participate in projects, they develop essential skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. They also gain a sense of ownership and responsibility, which enhances their personal development and strengthens their commitment to the project's success. From this perspective, if we analyze the transferability of the "Learning Democracy" approach of CAN DO to Young Lives Foundation's projects, we can talk about three main aspects:

Meaningful Youth Engagement

The term "meaningful youth engagement" refers to young people's intentional and inclusive participation in processes, initiatives, and activities that have an impact on their lives. It aims to give young people actual chances to contribute, interact, and impact outcomes, going beyond token actions or cursory input. Meaningful youth engagement values young people's distinctive viewpoints and life experiences while recognizing their rights, perspectives, and strengths. It entails establishing secure and encouraging environments where young people can express their views, take part in planning and implementation, and have their voices heard by decision-makers. It also means giving young people the support, tools, and mentorship they need to assume leadership roles, advance their careers, and have a significant influence.

Social Inclusion

The necessity of giving children and teenagers equitable opportunity to succeed in a variety of spheres of life, including as education, employment, healthcare, and civic engagement, is emphasized by social inclusion. It entails removing obstacles that can prevent their full involvement and integration into society, such as prejudice, discrimination, and systematic inequality. It is crucial to ensure that children, adolescents, and young people have access to resources in order to maintain their social inclusion. When kids lack frequent access to toilets and clean water, teaching them about hygiene is ineffective, to provide an example. Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate components in the activities to ensure that they have access to resources, especially when working with more vulnerable groups. Furthermore, establishing an inclusive culture that values diversity, respects individuals' rights, and acknowledges and accepts young people and adolescents as valuable members of society is another crucial factor. Additionally, providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and support to take on leadership roles and advocate for their rights is one of the important pre-requirements for social inclusion. Therefore, for a successful transferability of CAN DO approach to activities with young people and adolescents, empowerment of the target groups is key factor for them to effectively internalize the aspect of the Learning Democracy Training.

Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural dialogue plays a role in conflict resolution and preventing violence. Adolescents often encounter conflicts arising from cultural misunderstandings or clashes. Through dialogue, they can learn effective communication, negotiation, and problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts peacefully and find common ground. In an increasingly interconnected world, intercultural dialogue equips adolescents with the skills and mindset necessary for active global citizenship. It fosters critical thinking, open-mindedness, and the ability to engage with diverse perspectives. These skills are vital for navigating a globalized society, promoting social cohesion, and working towards peaceful coexistence.

When all of these viewpoints are taken into account, intercultural dialogue gives teenagers and adolescents the fundamental abilities and mindset necessary to become engaged global citizens. It fosters the growth of critical thinking, open-mindedness, and the ability to interact with many points of view. These abilities are essential for navigating a globalized society's complexity, fostering social cohesiveness, and pursuing peaceful coexistence. In this context, CAN DO's holistic approach empowers both young people, who are the last beneficiaries, and educators, who are responsible for conveying this approach to them, to acquire a democratic perspective with a broad vision.



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