



The CIVACT Curriculum:

Methods for promoting participation and civic engagement among hard-to-reach youths

Contents

About this curriculum	3
Introduction	3
Target groups & goals	5
Learning objectives	5
Learning modules	6
Observing	7
Perception Mapping	8
Instawalks	11
Go-Along	14
Sketching	17
Interacting	20
Peer Methodology	21
Role Play Using Personas	24
Feeling Cards	28
Person behind the Uniform	30
Proposing	33
Prototyping Solution Workshop	34
Youth Forum	37
Suggestions on how to use this curriculum	40
Further reading	42
Online	42
Offline	42

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About this curriculum

This curriculum was developed as part of the CIVACT project. It was tested during a train-the-trainer event in October 2019 and feedback (benefits and limitations of each method and suggestions for possible amendment/adjustment) from the eight participants at that event have been incorporated in the modules. This final draft of the CIVACT curriculum is organized in six chapters:

1. An **introduction**, which outlines the CIVACT project and the work which has led up to the development of this document
2. A short description of the **learning objectives** of this curriculum
3. A brief description of the curriculum's **target groups and goals**
4. The **learning modules**, which are organized in three categories and include the feedback of the participants in the CIVACT train-the-trainer event as described above
5. **Suggestions how to use this curriculum** based on both the feedback of the train-the-trainer participants and consultation among the project partners following that event, and
6. **Further reading.**

Introduction

Social exclusion has a major impact on young people, especially those in disadvantaged areas. Socially excluded young people do not have access to the same resources as others and lack the opportunities to enable them to contribute to society. As a result, they feel that they cannot influence their community and have little or no impact on the policy decisions directly affecting their life.

CIVACT, an ERASMUS+ Key Action 2 project which will run from October 2018 until September 2020, works to combat these issues and improve the social engagement of youth at risk of social exclusion across Europe. The project comprises a strong collective of partners that have previous experience working with hard-to-reach youths, district management, and social and educational projects aimed at local development: Lawaetz Stiftung (Hamburg, Germany; Lead partner), Bond of Union (Palermo, Italy), Mapping for Change (London, UK), Young East (Gothenburg, Sweden), and APDES (Porto, Portugal).

The intention of the project is to involve hard-to-reach youths in questions about the development of their own neighbourhoods, districts, and cities as an entry point for other forms of civic engagement. The methods listed in the CIVACT methods database therefore concentrate on strengthening democratic decision-making processes, cooperation and teamwork, active engagement, positive experiences with official structures such as policy-makers and uniformed personnel, and the independent development of creative solutions to self-identified problems. These experiences seek to give the youths involved the feeling that they are being genuinely heard, that their opinions and views are important and legitimate, and that they can influence the structures which affect their daily lives.

The CIVACT curriculum operationalizes ten of the methods collected in the CIVACT methods database for the further training of youth workers and district managers working with youth at risk of social exclusion. The methods have been selected from a collection of practices which have been

implemented successfully in the five partner cities to reach and empower young people within the context of urban development as described above.

The selection of methods was based on a needs analysis undertaken in the five partner cities which yielded a number of insights. The main target group of CIVACT, hard-to-reach youths, varies across the five partners. However, in all five local contexts, the youths in question face multiple challenges in their social environment including issues with family, drugs, criminal activity, school, training, employment and housing. The target group generally demonstrates low levels of education & literacy, high levels of unemployment, and a general disconnection from civil society. In addition, in all five contexts, the target group is characterized by a high percentage of migrants. This characteristic has two effects on the work in CIVACT: first, a large portion of the target group in each context has low competency levels of language skills in the respective local languages. Secondly, as mentioned by multiple partners, socialization in a different national and/or cultural context may mean that some individuals are not familiar with European democratic processes.

Age-specific and group-specific offerings in many of the partner contexts exclude many youths who need assistance. In addition, several partners report that there is a low offering of official involvement with the youth. Both of these circumstances place a higher focus on the role of the youth worker. Furthermore, youths from the target group lack positive role models and positive experiences with authorities in all of the contexts examined. Again, youth workers can provide such experiences, but they must be trained to be able to do so.

Youths in the partner cities are generally motivated when engaged. Unfortunately, youths in the target group feel ignored and excluded from official channels and are generally characterized by a lack of empowerment for a variety of reasons. Social media engagement can work for some groups, but can face hurdles addressing target groups with literacy or language barriers.

Finally, while general tools exist to work with youths, most partners report that there is a lack of tools to work with hard-to-reach youths in specific. In light of the shared challenges and needs above, the CIVACT methods have been chosen with the following consortium-specific needs in mind:

1. Youths from the target group are highly motivated when engaged directly, but need to see results to feel empowered and taken seriously. (*Accountability*)
2. The target group has low levels of experience with formal learning and training structures and traditional work culture. (*Low thresholds, Accessible formats*)
3. The youths may have significant language barriers, including non-local first languages and literacy problems. (*Engagement through other means*)
4. The youths have a lack of positive role models and positive experiences with authority figures. (*Affirmative approaches*)
5. The target group experiences multiple challenges; formats should therefore integrate engagement, leisure, and empowerment with traditional youth work to get as much benefit out of the method as possible. (*Synergistic effects*)

Target groups & goals

The CIVACT curriculum is intended primarily as a resource for autodidactic and peer learning among youth workers and district managers. This non-formal approach has been informed by the needs analysis; the target group (youth workers and district managers) exhibit high levels of motivation but also have very limited time.

The CIVACT curriculum can also be developed into a formalised course of training or workshop. We have listed a number of suggestions for both of these uses at the end of this document.

Learning objectives

In order to perform their daily work with young people, youth workers and district managers require a range of competencies.¹ In general, these competencies can be broken down into four basic types:

1. **Cognitive competence:** the correct application of theories and knowledge gained through frontal presentation, reading, or experience
2. **Functional competence:** skills that a person working in a particular field should know and be able to apply
3. **Personal competence:** knowing how to act or react in a particular situation
4. **Ethical competence:** personal and professional values

The CIVACT curriculum aims to train the youth workers and district managers in new methodologies for facilitating hard-to-reach youths' active observation of and interaction with their environment, the formulation of ideas, feelings, and concepts, and the engagement with authority figures in the proposal of their ideas. To reach this objective, youth workers and district managers require a wide range of competencies.

The CIVACT curriculum assumes that the youth workers and district managers which read it already possess a general baseline of social, civic, and digital ability, a professional (formal and/or informal) base of knowledge about work with youths, and a general understanding of the territory in which they work. Based on this assumption, the curriculum seeks to strengthen the following competencies among youth workers and district managers working with hard-to-reach youths:

1. Recognizing and responding to youths' diverse needs, including a heterogeneous mix of needs within groups
2. Communication and facilitation skills which are sensitive to the needs of hard-to-reach youths
3. Enabling access to information in a way that empowers the youths to further engagement
4. Facilitating access to spaces, situations, structures, and people which the youths would otherwise not encounter or which could otherwise be intimidating or challenging for the youths

¹ Adapted from CEDEFOP. 2009. *Professionalising career guidance. Practitioner competences and qualification routes in Europe*. Cedefop Panorama Series Number 164. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Pp. 74-87.

5. Active learning and experiential learning skills in order to facilitate the acquisition of civic competences

The methods in the CIVACT curriculum have been taken from a wide range of fields. We have included a further reading list at the end of this document for those interested in learning more.

Learning modules

This curriculum incorporates three types of methods which build off of each other with relation to their degree of activity and agency:

1. **Observing.** In these methods, youths observe a selected urban space, its main features, resources, and limits as a first step to building an awareness of the social and spatial community.
2. **Interacting.** In these methods, youths take a further step in the development of the engagement process by interacting with their environment. These methods can include focus groups, interviews, collection of memories – anything that allows actively listening to the community.
3. **Proposing.** Finally, in these methods, youths co-design new proposals and ideas for the community. In this phase, the participants start to build connections among the data observed and collected and think about new possibilities and solutions to local problems.

These three categories emerged while grouping the methods and describe a progressively more complex and interactive process of spatial exploration.

Observing

Perception Mapping

Observing

Learning objectives:

The participants learn how to use a map to collect and record qualitative local knowledge that is not about physical features in the area but rather aspects such as local history, memories, or feelings about places that are relevant to them (e.g. dangerous, unpleasant, favourite spot, etc.). At the end of the module, the participants will know how to represent their own view of the community or the area on a map that can be shared with others and/or used to identify points for action. This method builds both spatial literacy and map reading skills.

Contents:

Participatory mapping focuses on the collection of young participants' perceptions which are then collated in a collective map. This map can be used to:

- gather and share local information and knowledge
- create new/alternative maps
- educate and communicate with different stakeholders, service providers, and decision-makers
- identify key issues for action planning
- assist with data gathering for policy implementation

The module is organized as follows:

1. The module starts with an introduction of the mapping concepts, examples, and how maps can be used
2. After that, the mapping platform is introduced
3. In pairs, participants take an A3 map and walk around their community identifying:
 - a. things that they like (demonstrators of the strengths of the community),
 - b. things that they don't like (areas for potential improvements/things to be addressed) and
 - c. things they would like to see changed (areas to develop action planning)
4. The information collected is then uploaded to the community mapping platform (depending on the materials, the information can be added directly or later)
5. Each pair should present their material to the group and explain the relevance/importance of what was collected
6. The whole group reflects on the shared perceptions and collectively identifies the commonalities and ideas for further action.



Materials:

General:

- Presentation to introduce mapping concepts
- Projector
- Online community map of the area

Per pair:

- One A3 map of the area with information collection sheet
- Clipboard
- 3 different coloured pens
- Camera, phone, or tablet
- Access to a computer or device to upload their material

Methodology:

This is an in-person module. The exercises in this module include perception mapping outside, online digitization and reflection and synthesis.

Needs addressed:

The module is well suited for young participants, including those with low level of education and literacy. Participants need some basic technical know-how, e.g. using a phone to take pictures. The module is designed to enable young people to share their views and wishes for their local community from a youth-centred perspective.

Outcome:

The main outcome is an online community map representing the young people's perceptions and ideas to implement areas for action, planning, etc.



Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- Focuses on the individual perspective
- Empowers the young to feel more confident
- Is good to use with kids since it takes them outside to learn
- The youth are in charge/engagement
- The youth learn new skills (sense of scale, reading a map, use of google maps, etc.)
- Youth can use this method to make suggestions/recommendations for institutions
- The youth are able to get to know the neighbourhood
- Good as an ice-breaker method on the first day at school
- Promotes local change
- Can be used to consider the local, physical and political contexts

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- It can be difficult to people with physical disabilities (for example for blind people, but it could be adapted for example by substituting mental maps for physically exploring the area)
- It relies on first impressions
- It can be difficult to find background map material
- Not everyone is adept at reading maps

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- The method should be adapted to be more inclusive for disabled people (for example, blind people or people in wheelchairs)
- Youths should map where they work and live separately
- Increase the promotion/diffusion of maps created by youths through community platforms and other similar platforms
- Consider other ways of collecting data (in the training, the participants wrote on a paper map, a digital adaptation of the method was also discussed)
- Create an app to upload pics and the route (can also be reused for future groups in the same city)

Instawalks

Observing

Learning objectives:

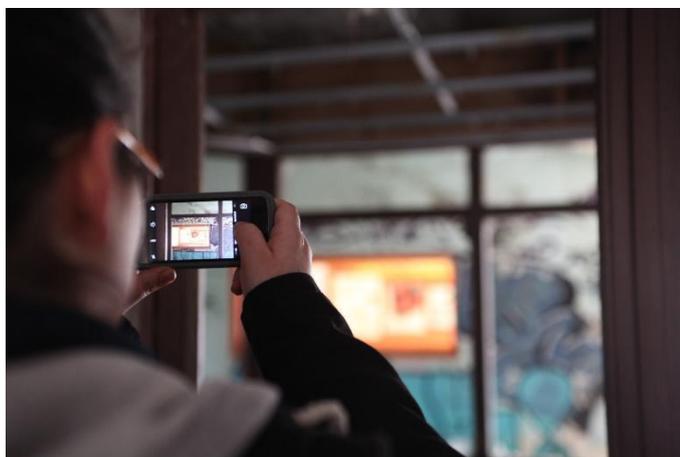
The participants gain confidence in going to new and unfamiliar spaces or examining well-known spaces with a critical eye. The Instawalk method is intended to train youths in detailed observation, formulation and verbalization of emotions and desires, and targeted communication of ideas. If the Instawalk is used to engage youths as “peer ambassadors,” the method additionally trains youths in persuasive communication and how to teach others using a variety of verbal and visual techniques. The method furthermore strengthens digital competencies.

Contents:

The location and content of the Instawalk is decided in collaboration between the youth workers and the youths and is centred around a specific topic, question, or space. An Instawalk can be used, for example, to gain youth input on a street that is going to be renovated soon or to familiarize them with a space that they otherwise would not go, such as the city hall.

The method is organized into several steps:

1. Before the Instawalk, the youth workers and the youths decide on the location, content, time and date of the event and ensure that the space is accessible for all intended participants and that enough digital devices (cell phones with cameras or digital cameras) are available for all individuals or groups who want to participate.
2. At the agreed time and date, the group meets at the set meeting point and the youth workers explain the method to the youths. The youths can either go individually or be paired off. The youth workers should give the youths leading questions and topics to concentrate on during the Instawalk. Examples include: How would you explain this space to someone else? What do you feel as you walk through the space? What signs or texts do you see as you walk through the space and what do they tell you? If the youths are in pairs, they should alternate making notes and taking photos. The Instawalk can be guided or unguided, depending on the complexity and size of the space and the intended purpose of the walk.
3. One or more youths should be designated as the timekeeper(s) and are responsible for making sure that all participants return to the meeting point punctually at the agreed-upon ending point.
4. The youths are then allowed to freely explore the space, taking photos with their digital devices (or a small camera) and making notes about their impressions and the leading



questions/topics. This portion of the exercise should use half of the remaining time.

5. After the youth walk, the youths regroup at a set meeting point, for example the youth centre or a nearby quiet outdoor space. The youth workers explain the next steps: each individual or group will be asked to present a selection of their photos (for example three) and explain their relevance to the leading question/topic. Again, roles should be defined (rotating): one youth writes down what is being said, one youth “interviews” the presenters, and one youth/pair of youths presents their results.
6. The photos can be gathered by the youth workers and paired with the comments in order to inform other methods (such as a youth forum).

Materials:

- Enough digital devices for all participants/pairs
- Suitable location (NB: check accessibility needs!)
- Quiet space for discussion afterwards
- Writing materials for notes during and after Instawalk

Methodology:

This method is practical/active and participatory.

Needs addressed:

- Could be an input for concrete planning (accountability)
- Low threshold
- Building peer-group social capital
- Youths can express their experiences in their own words (method fits youths’ reality)

Outcome:

- Photos
- Documentation/notes (can be used as a basis of information/data for other methods, such as the youth forum)



Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- The method is detail-orientated
- It offers the potential for youth to develop respect/affinity for a building/place
- Good use of technology outside of an office/school setting
- Offers the opportunity for youths to take a fresh look at a (familiar) space

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- The product is a picture but not the photographer's context or reasons for taking that picture
- The method relies on one sense (eyes) so is not inclusive to all; Accessibility + ability barriers
- It relies on the use of apps/technology

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- Expand from photos to small video clips
- Use more platforms (not just Instagram)
- Open it up to different company spaces so that the youths can get familiar with potential future places of work (the example given in the training was that an instawalk had been conducted in a city hall)
- Develop a city list of potential instawalk sites in order to promote the ability to easily conduct an instawalk without having to go through a lengthy permissions process
- Create an instaride with bikes or another form of wheeled transportation

Go-Along

Observing

Learning objectives:

The participants learn how to observe the youths' familiar physical environment and identify hot spots – places which are emotionally meaningful to the individuals' daily routines and are the locations of both positive and negative memories. Using interview skills, the participants learn how to engage in active listening and empathetic dialogues. At the end of the module, the participants know how to follow youngsters around and observe their spatial practices while accessing their experiences and interpretations.

Contents:

The Go-Along module focuses on natural outings in which the youngster's stream of experiences can be explored while they move through and interact with their physical and social environment. The Go-Along method requires that the youth worker (researcher) take a more active stance towards capturing the informant's actions and interpretation. What makes this method different from simply accompanying and interviewing the subject is that the researcher is able to observe the informant's special practices *in situ* while exploring their experiences and interpretations at the same time.

The Go-Along should occur as "natural go-along" – that is, it should take place along the participant's natural route. This method aims at capturing the stream of perceptions, emotions, and interpretations that participants normally keep to themselves. The duration of the Go-Along is dictated by the participant and their natural route – the youth worker can limit the time in advance if needed.

The conversation can be recorded (using a voice recorder or telephone) or the youth worker can take notes. The decision how to record the information should be made by the youth worker on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind that their presence should not interfere with the natural walk.

If the participant insists on directions, the youth worker can ask some questions – like "what does that garden mean to you," "comment on whatever comes to your mind when walk in front of...", and to share what they usually experience on their usual daily trips.

Kusenbach identifies five themes for which the go-along is well-suited: (1) perception (i.e. informants' knowledge and values that guide the experiences of their everyday social and physical environments); (2) spatial practices (i.e. the ways in which people engage with their environment); (3) linkages between biography and place; (4) the social architecture of natural settings (i.e. the various types or forms of relationships between people and how informants situate themselves within this social setting; and (5) social realms (i.e. interaction patterns and how place shapes the nature of interaction).

The module is schedule as follow:

- The trainer starts by presenting the Go-Along, including concepts such as: observation; questioning, active listening and emphatic dialogue, and daily footpaths;
- After the introducing the topic, the participants carry out a 15-minute exploration of the surroundings in pairs;

The module ends with the analysis of the data collected, which includes the identification of meaningful spots and the experiences, emotions, and memories attached to them.

Materials:

- Computer and projector
- Presentation
- Notebook and pens for each participant
- Big room (able to place chairs in a circle)
- Audio recorder if needed (mobile phone)

Methodology:

The exercise consists of a short outing on foot outdoors and the subsequent analysis of the data collected. There is a small evaluation at the end of the module.

**Needs addressed:**

This module is adequate for young participants that develop their daily routines in their community. Thanks to the fact that the method is developed outdoor young participants are particularly prone to explore and access spatial and social features of their community. Finally, the module, addresses the possible disengagement between youngsters and their community, thus allowing the identification of meaningful hot spots

Outcome:

The main outcome is the creation of a cognitive map of the community where significant hot spots are located. The map can also be drawn...



Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- It gathers meaningful info
- It builds relationships
- It builds the youth worker's understanding of an area
- It has the potential to reverse power dynamics (this could also be a limitation)
- It doesn't require many resources
- It's fun
- It offers the opportunity to share individual perspectives

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- The method is very time-consuming
- It relies on prior relationships, and this can be a barrier to engagement
- The method is potentially not compatible with safeguarding, since the youth worker is alone with the youth
- Can be limited to use with youth that don't have their own path (for example because their parents drive them to destinations)

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- The method could be peer-led
- This method could be turned into series
- Go-alongs could be used to build bridges between communities (for example young people and police officers)
- "Bike along" as an alternative to walking
- Using the go-along technique to explore a new or unexplored path (this could be a solution to working with youths who do not have their own path)
- Inclusion in terms of disabilities

Sketching

Observing

Learning objectives:

Sketching is a method that allows the visual representation of collected data. The main objective is that the participants learn how to interpret an urban context by synthesizing the information collected through the sketching process. At the end of the course, the participants know how to design the legend of an urban map which they themselves have created and how to categorize the information collected as signs and symbols. The method stimulates the process of active and interdisciplinary learning, associative chaining, creative thinking, and digital skills.

Contents:

The sketching module focuses on the conceptualization of symbols and on the collection of data by a group of young participants. The final aim is the creation of an urban map legend including symbols and signs sketched by the participants. The method is suitable for a group of maximum 15 participants.

The work plan is organized as follows:

- In phase one, the trainer, after a short presentation of the group participants, starts by introducing the concept of symbols and signs and how we used them to graphically identify the main features of a selected urban space.
- After the introduction to the topic, the participants go for an urban exploration to collect visual data for the development of the symbols/icons and start to sketch them on sketchbooks provided by the trainer. The sketchbook includes also a map of the neighbourhood in which the urban exploration is conducted. Participants rapidly and instinctively sketch what they see or what they imagine in their sketchbook.
- After the exploration, the group comes back to the training space to work on the definition of the sketches and design their map and legend.
- The final phase of the module is the transformation of the symbols sketched by the participants in digital icons. The trainer helps the participants digitalise the symbols. The icons could be used also for a community mapping platform.



Materials:

- An A2 sketchbook with a map of the urban space and blank pages for sketching
- A presentation to introduce the concept of symbols and signs and to show the participants examples of maps with legends
- A room with a big table, chairs, and a projector and laptop to work on the digitalisation of the icons.

Methodology:

This method includes both outdoor sketching and adding the symbols produced in the community mapping platform.

Needs addressed:

This method is suitable for young participants with a low level of education & literacy. Thanks to the visual (non-linguistic) nature of the exercise, even participants with low language competency are able to express themselves and participate. The method also directly addresses the disconnection of the young participants from civil society by giving them a practical example of how to observe and define their neighbourhood by creating their own legend.

Outcome:

The creation of one sketchbook per participant with a map and legend.



Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- Sketching fosters creativity and allows young people to express themselves
- It's cheap and the materials are easy to find
- The method is well-suited for younger children or older people who don't know how to write
- Easily adaptable to different topics
- It simplifies complex realities into simple and visual signs and symbols

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- Adaption to other contexts could be difficult
- There is a need to adapt the method to the group age
- Can be hard/intimidating on people who don't know how to draw

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- It could be helpful to have a drawing / painting / sketching workshop before implementing this method
- Open the design process of the signs / symbols to the group
- Work in pairs to make youth more comfortable about the sketching process (this can be especially helpful for youths who are afraid of or don't know how to draw)
- Create a welcoming environment (for example have a little lunch group at the end)

Interacting

Peer Methodology

Interacting

Learning objectives:

Peer methodology promotes trust and proximity between youth and technical staff (youth workers) and among youth workers themselves. Through the peer methodology, youth workers can better address young individuals in vulnerable situations by helping them express their opinions and make decisions. Through use of this method, participants learn how to work in partnership, advocacy skills, empathic listening, and group dynamics.

Contents:

Peer methodology covers three main domains: education, support and advocacy. Peer facilitators transfer knowledge (through specific teaching strategies adapted to each context and its needs) to young people sharing similar circumstances, experiences or backgrounds. It is also about understanding the others (empathetically) through shared knowledge by experience gained by being part of the same social group. The peer can be seen as someone who is at the same level as the other individuals; they can be a friend or a colleague, as long as they are involved in the same activity or context (in this specific case, youth work).

This method explores these three domains through three main activity groups as follows:

1. Education – addressing the concept of a peer;
2. Support – exploring where conflict resolution, empathy and communication should be used;
and
3. Advocacy – examining the concept of advocacy and rights

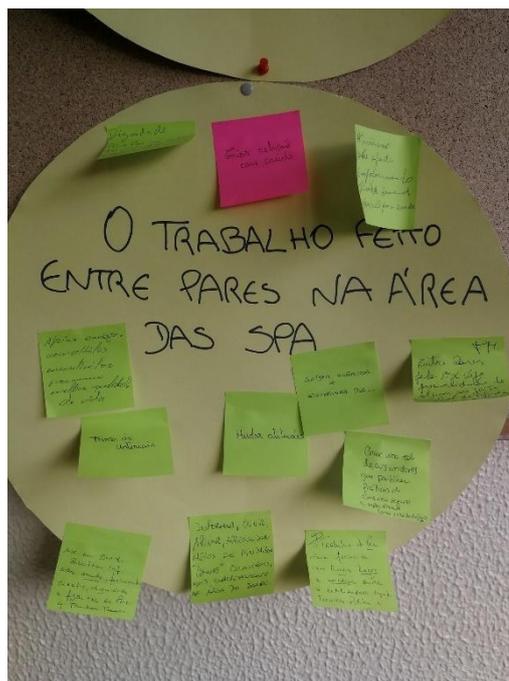
Domain	Specific Goal
Education	Defining the concept of peer methodology: Identifying the main characteristics of a peer
Support	Knowledge about conflict resolution, empathic posture / listening, emotion management and communication techniques
Advocacy	Participate actively and responsibly in collective actions aimed at finding answers to young people's problems, by promoting dialogue and shared discussion of ideas and problems. The promotion of youth citizenship should be fostered by the peer in a constructive and shared way and never imposed.
Note: All these areas are adaptable to the specific needs of the context. All these domains can be discussed in an informal environment.	

Materials:

- Room for the training sessions on peer education and in which to meet once a week
- Observational guides for tracking the work of youth workers with their peers – to be collected and discussed each week
- Computer and projector
- Presentation for training sessions
- Notebook and pens for each participant
- Audio recorder (mobile phone)

Methodology:

- This method includes both frontal learning (training session) and active portions (peer work with youths)
- Small group dynamic
- Small evaluation at the end of the module



Needs addressed:

Youth, especially those in or from vulnerable communities, might be hard to reach using other methods. Peer methodology builds a strong basis of trust founded in common experiences and shared social group belonging which can lead to genuine empowerment among the target group.

Outcome:

The involvement of peers in service delivery is acknowledged to be effective as a peer to peer approach has very positive effects in improving the quality of the process and its outcomes, by deeply changing the relationships, positions and rules among the involved stakeholders. Having youth workers who are peers – young people sharing similar circumstances, experiences or backgrounds – opens the process of participation, exchange and collaboration and has the potential to mobilise community resources not available otherwise and develop mutual trusting relationships between all the agents involved.



Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- It offers opportunities to talk about difficult topics - easy access to youths' honest feelings
- Good representation of a leadership development pathway (the peer as a role model)
- It incentivizes participation
- The method builds sense of common identity/community
- It's a way for the youth to build new relationships
- The problems & solutions are self-identified
- The peer and the youth use same language & codes
- It can be inspiring for youths - shows new opportunities (for example if the peer has successfully mastered a challenge that the youth(s) currently face such as drugs or homelessness)
- Can be used for harm reduction & promotion of positive ideas

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- The homogeneity of the group can be a limitation
- If it relies on unpaid youth work, this situation can create a sense of non-accountability
- Peers have an inherent lack of experience (since they are not trained youth workers)
- Not everybody is comfortable talking to "strangers" (the peers may be strangers to the youths in the beginning)
- Might keep people in the negative context you are trying to address (by trapping them in codes and norms of damaging communities such as drug users or convicts)

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- Pay peer leaders - increase self-esteem and motivation: time banking could be a money-less option
- Offer preparation time and support
- Involve more people who have had first-hand experience with the challenge at hand (link to inspiring youths)
- Widen the search to other topics (at the training, the presentation of peer methodology concentrated on harm reduction among drug users)
- Thinking about next steps (solutions) - not "just" talking

Role Play Using Personas

Interacting

Learning objectives:

Role playing is a method based on empathy in which the participants learn how to place themselves in another's position with the objective to raise awareness about specific issues (e.g. accessible routes, safe places, etc.) as well as the different needs and expectations that people have. The use of personas originates from the software design domain and provides a powerful tool for communicating the needs of different types of users or groups. At the end of the course, participants will be able to understand how other members of the community experience the local space and provide feedback to identify points for action that may not have arisen when looking at space from a personal or individualistic perspective.

At the end of the module it is expected that participants have learned how to:

- empathise with other community 'actors'
- read maps
- be spatially aware
- explore spaces with a critical lens
- develop observational skills
- communicate experiences and interpretations of spatial exploration

Contents:

Role play using 'personas' focuses on developing a deeper understanding of how space is used and experienced by different individuals and groups. The exercise should be carried out with a specific focus on an area in the locality and a topic or theme.

Before carrying out the practical exercise, the trainer should introduce the concept of personas and role play to show participants how to immerse themselves into the roles and scenarios being given. In addition, the topic/theme of focus should also be introduced to set the context.

Secondly, a series of personas modelled around the users/groups whose issues are to be tackled should be created, together with specific tasks/scenarios to carry out individually or in groups. Developing personas can be done in collaboration with the youth workers and youths during the session, or, if time is limited, these can be developed by the youth workers, in advance.

Each persona should represent a 'believable' character from within the local community and should include a:

- Name
- Persona categories
- Facts about the individual
- Behaviours
- Needs and goals

For example: *Josh is captain of his local wheelchair basketball society. He is really passionate about basketball, and is thrilled to see a famous basketball player speaking on campus at a lunchtime lecture in Darwin Biochemistry Lecture Theatre.*

Each task or scenario should require the individual to move from one location within the local area to another and could include spending some time in a specific location, such as a park bench, or city square.

For example: *You want to meet some friends for a drink in the Print Room Café on Greek St. You need to navigate from the library on campus to the Print Room Café. Is your journey accessible for wheelchair users? Record any barriers you encounter.*

In the examples provided above, the theme is wheelchair accessibility and the area of focus is in and around a university campus.

After introduction the concept and, where applicable, developing the personas and tasks, each participant should choose a persona from the collection and a task to carry out from those provided. The exercise can be done individually or in pairs. Sufficient time should be given to the participants for this exercise to enable them to get an understanding of the issue when exploring the area under the chosen persona.



Each participant or pair should be given a printed map of the area of focus and should be asked to draw the route on the map which they intend to take to carry out the specific task given.

During the exercise, participants should write down/record their observations and feelings throughout and use the printed map to identify where these observations or feelings were made and why.

At the end of the outdoor exercise participants should return to training venue where the facilitator should coordinate a feedback session to allow each participant or pair to share their experiences. Ultimately, these should be collated and then possible next steps or action planning based on their findings should be discussed.

Materials:

- Indoor space to present the aims of the exercise, concepts and to hold facilitated discussion afterwards.
- Information about the project and the objective of the exercise, this can be in the form of a presentation and/or a printed handout.
- A minimum of five persona cards, five task sheets, if these are pre-prepared. If not, the relevant blank cards and materials to create the personas and tasks.
- A3 maps of the location being targeted.
- Clipboards and pens
- Refreshments, if possible.

Methodology:

This method is practical/active and participatory.

Needs addressed:

Depending on the context and objectives laid out prior to conducting this activity this method could address inclusion of young people in:

- Local urban planning with youths able to look through different lenses at the current use/lack of use, and/or potential use of different urban spaces (accountability)
- Building a better and more empathetic understanding of their community demographic, needs and views in relation to places and spaces.
- Youths learn to communicate and express their experiences in their own words whilst gaining an understanding of other people's experiences.

The course also provides the young participants with a practical example of how to observe and define their neighbourhood from multiple angles.

Outcome:

- Documentation/Notes (can be used as a basis of information/data for other methods, such as perception mapping or prototyping)
- The series of maps generated can be used to create a community map that can form the basis for other activities and action planning



Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- Role-playing can promote inclusion by offering a first-hand experience
- It can also promote self-reflection – it helps the youth to see things from another perspective
- It has clear objectives
- Developed based on real stories (personas)
- Promotes the appreciation of one's own able-bodiedness, etc.
- Can be used for a diverse range of scenarios

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- The environment can get out of trainer's control
- Time-intensive
- It can reduce identity to something you can "try"
- If not done properly, it can reinforce stereotypes
- If not done properly, it can define a person by a single characteristic
- Personal experience can shape how the participants experience the method

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- Adapt the method to other disabilities, not only physical ones (the examples given or tested in the training were wheelchair accessibility and access for the seeing impaired)
- Clear framing of the challenge to avoid some of the limitations above
- Involve the participant's stories in the planning of the session
- Provide real-life situations for the group to discuss

Feeling Cards

Interacting

Learning objectives:

Feeling cards, inspired by non-violent communication, is a card game that can be used in groups or individually in order to promote social and emotional intelligence, foster group cohesion and connection, encourage listening and empathy skills, create better understanding in relationships, clarify goals and group vision/mission, celebrate accomplishments, improve communication, and assist in resolving conflicts.

Contents:

Each card contains a word referring to a feeling. The aim is to help the players to better express their emotional states. There is a pictorial version of the game which can be used with people with language difficulties or low literacy.

The cards can be a useful tool to start deeper engagement processes. The game provides a manual which contains enough information to use the feeling cards and no training is required. However, non-violent communication offers a specific training for facilitators to improve their understanding about the game and their communication skills. The manual provides different examples of how to use the cards, both in groups and individually. These examples give you a clear picture of how to use the cards depending on purpose.



Materials:

- Card game
- Manual
- Quiet place with tables and chairs
- Facilitator

Methodology:

This method is participatory and active.

Needs addressed:

Communication, interacting and engagement to promote social and emotional intelligence, foster group cohesion and connection, encourage listening and empathy skills, create better understanding in relationships, clarify goals and group vision/mission, celebrate accomplishments, improve communication, and assist in resolving conflicts.

Outcome:

The aim is to help the players to better express their emotional states. The cards can be a useful tool to start deeper engagement processes.

Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- It brings people together; it is a sociable way of learning
- The method is cheap and easy to use, not many resources are required
- It develops skills such as active listening, empathy, communication and the ability to express oneself
- Feeling cards can be used in different ways; they are flexible and can be combined well with other methods
- Straightforward
- Can be particularly useful for more closed off people
- Has low risk of “going wrong”
- Creates a space for discussion that may be useful to introduce difficult topics
- It can promote self-knowledge

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- The cards we used in the training (which did not have braille on them) are not accessible to the seeing impaired
- The method can create an observer paradox - participants may not be honest / may not tell the group how they actually feel
- Choosing a single word may be limiting/reducing
- More closed off people may be excluded from or by this method
- There may be cultural barriers; this method may not work as well in cultures which are more closed off or do not typically talk openly about feelings

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- To create cards with both pictures and words, not one or the other
- Develop feeling cards with braille for the seeing impaired
- Before introducing the cards, it may be useful to have a general conversation about feelings, in order to show them how the cards can help them in naming/expressing their feelings
- Include this exercise in peer training
- Incorporate other forms of expression such as drawing, dance or theatre

Person behind the Uniform

Interacting

Learning objectives:

The goal of the Person behind the Uniform program is to raise young people's engagement in society, reduce crime and create fruitful meetings between youths and uniform wearers. This in turn will lead to a better understanding between young people and the uniform wearing professions. When youths and adults work together in this unique way, it creates a better understanding of each other's work, and they also get an understanding of each other as individuals that creates good supporting relationships in both directions.

The youths get to meet the different professions in their work environment. They also get an opportunity to try some of their work, for example CPR, a staged road accident, climbing a fire ladder, etc. These exercises create good ground for dialogue and discussions that lead to better understanding and knowledge of each other.

Contents:

The PBU is a 10-week program that consists of 10 sessions, one per week, as follows:

1. Kick-off meeting: Meeting and introductions by both the youth and uniform wearers.
2. SOS communication centre
3. Fire department
4. Police station
5. Emergency medical services
6. Securitas ticket inspectors
7. Visit to the memorial to a 1994 fire at a youth disco
8. Training at the fire department
9. Staged road accident
10. Final dinner



Materials:

The program could be held in a youth centre where there is access to a large room for gathering followed by certain sessions held at the workplace of the uniform wearers taking part in the program. The 10-week program must be planned in collaboration with the uniformed organisations that are taking part in the program, i.e. fire brigade, police, emergency services and security officers. Some sessions are held at the different uniform wearers' organisations.

Methodology:

The exercises are practical and consist of the youths trying out some of the elements of the work the uniform wearers do. For example, CPR, staged road accident, climbing a fire ladder etc. Each session is three hours long; the sessions always contain a practical part and a theoretical part and end with a brief evaluation.

Needs addressed:

Inclusion & positive experiences between authority figures and youths

The needs of the youth: To enhance youth engagement, participation and influence. Prevent youth crime and gang affiliation.

The needs of the uniform wearers: Promote trust in uniform profession within the local community (especially in vulnerable areas). Promote engagement and better understanding of young people.

The needs of the local community (esp. vulnerable areas): Create trust in society and in uniformed professions.

Outcome:

After the 10-week program, the youths receive a certificate of attendance. They can then go on to become ambassadors for PBU to continue to work and spread the spirit of the concept.



Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- This method creates positive opportunities to:
 - Engage with uniformed personnel in a positive way
 - Consider different jobs
 - Create long term relationships (both with the other youth and with uniformed personnel)
 - Learn practical skills (like CPR)
 - Change perspectives both among the youths and among the uniformed personnel
- It can work to break down barriers between the youth and the uniformed personnel
- It is transferable
- It can be a way out for problematic youth and give them a new path

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- The method is very time-consuming (the method as it is used in Gothenburg is a 10-week program)
- There may be financial barriers to implementation (this method involves a lot of money), including the fact that the method is patented
- The method does not address structural violence and discrimination in the system; It also can reinforce structural violence
- Difficult to adapt to other countries (again because of the patent)
- Underage kids require their parents' permission (and some parents don't want their kids talking to the police)
- It may prevent youth workers from criticizing the system because of the close relationship with uniformed professions

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- Uniformed personnel should come to the first meeting in plainclothes to create a sense of equality and community (instead of hierarchy)
- This method could be adapted to work with "invisible" uniforms (teachers, doctors...)
- Pay the youth participants and ambassadors
- Expand to the rest of society

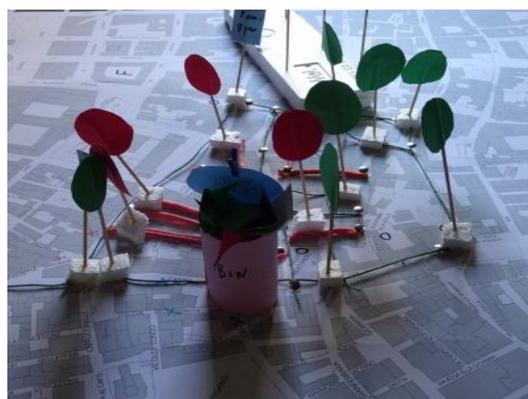
Proposing

Prototyping Solution Workshop

Proposing

Learning objectives:

The prototyping solution workshop is a method which allows the participants to propose a small-scale solution to an urban challenge. The method stimulates the process of active learning among the participants by involving them directly in the practice of solution creation and problem solving. This process engages participants' use of cognitive skills and promotes a reciprocal exchange of visions, points of view, and ideas. The method furthermore stimulates the youths' capacity to reflect on their socio-economic environment, in particular as related to urban transformation, environmental challenges, urban poverty, multiculturalism, neighbourhood identity, and opportunities. At the end of this learning path, course participants visualise their ideal solution by creating a small-scale model that reflects their vision for the future.



Prototyping can be used to reveal new solutions to problems or to find out whether or not the implemented solutions could be successful. The results generated from these tests can be used by the participants to redefine the challenges identified in the first step of the workshop and to build a more robust understanding of the problems users and stakeholders may face when interacting with the solution in the intended environment.

This method stimulates problem solving and the ability to work in groups, and motivates participants to connect abstract contents to concrete application.

Contents:

The prototyping solution workshop is a workshop format involving a group of youth participants and led by an expert facilitator. The participants should either be residents of the target neighbourhood or have in-depth knowledge of it (i.e. they work or study there or nearby). The workshop is organized in seven steps, as follows:

1. Step one includes the presentation of the participants and the facilitator, the explanation of the objectives and work plan, an introduction to the prototype concept, and the creation of working groups. The participants are then divided into groups of up to four people to discuss and determine one (or maximum two interconnected) topic(s) that they collectively recognize as urban challenges in their neighbourhood.
2. In step two, the participants draw or sketch their proposed solutions. Participants are free to choose how they express their ideas, including sketching the different phases of building it or representing it through key words or concepts. The participants should also identify the main local stakeholders and target of the solution and write it down on their paper.
3. In step three, the participants choose the material they want to use to build the prototype. The facilitator should prepare the materials beforehand in one corner of the room. Examples of

materials could be Legos, paper, pens, boxes, pieces of wood or any type of material that could be useful to visually represent the main urban challenges of the intended local environment.

4. In step four, the participants finally prototype the solution by using a map of the neighbourhood as a reference to physically point out the location of the prototype.
5. In step five, the participants present their prototype to the group. They collect the groups' feedback on a notepad.
6. In step six, which is optional, the attendants start to evaluate the feasibility of the prototypes in their real context. The facilitator documents the discussion.
7. Finally, in step seven, the participants plan how to transform the prototype in a real action. In this case they are requested to prepare a concrete action plan that includes timeline, resources needed, costs, stakeholders to be involved.

Materials:

- Materials for prototype (i.e. Legos, paper, stones, cardboard, etc.)
- A large-format neighbourhood map
- Tables, spacious room, chairs
- Notepads

A presentation of the prototype concept including images is suggested.

Methodology:

The main exercises included are prototyping, the use of the map and eventually the action plan draft. The method should be preceded by a preparatory urban exploration workshop.

Needs addressed:

This method works to combat the feeling of exclusion in decision making. It furthermore improves self-confidence, active learning, the sense of initiative and active participation and the capacity to think and act collectively for a common benefit.

Outcome:

The main outcome is a physical prototype of an urban challenge solution combined with a neighbourhood map. In addition, this method can also yield a feasibility plan and an action plan (optional outcomes).



Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- It has the capacity to boost creativity
- It is hands on
- It supports thinking outside the box
- It creates detailed awareness of the local needs/observations
- It's very fun
- It's something different
- Affordable materials; materials can be adapted to what is at hand or gathered by the participants

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- The method is time-consuming
- The youth worker needs a space to host the workshop
- If the prototypes don't lead to any form of action, this can lead to disappointment
- Requires existing relationships with stakeholders such as politicians and administrators

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- The youth worker should oversee time spent on the task so that all participants are able to complete it successfully and present their results at the end
- Add next steps to promote follow-up
- Invite the key stakeholders to the workshop

Youth Forum

Proposing

Learning objectives:

The youth forum is an empowering, participatory method used to enable democratic participation through low-threshold engagement, familiarize youths with democratic structures, and generate concrete suggestions for further use in official channels such as local planning boards. Youths learn how to constructively and persuasively discuss specific topics and practice compromise.

Contents:

Youth forums convene to discuss specific topics, but they typically meet in the same space with generally the same participants repeatedly. A single meeting of the youth forum has eight steps, as follows:

1. First, the youth worker initiates the selection of a topic by the youths. The topic may be a need that the youths have voiced or a potential change proposed by the neighbourhood or municipal government.
2. Next, the youth worker coordinates the research of the topic, selects fitting methods to facilitate participation (for example world café, future forum, planning for real, etc.), and schedules the meeting. In addition, the youth worker, together with the youths, should research whether there are political or administrative meetings where these results can be presented (regular meetings, for example of the local planning committee, are best) and suggests visiting this meeting with the youth forum results.
3. For best results, the youth forum should take place at the same time on the same weekday, especially if there are multiple meetings for the same topic. Be aware that it is likely that the group composition will change over time if there are multiple meetings for the same topic.
4. Social media is used to coordinate and activate the youths around a certain topic (for example WhatsApp, Facebook). Posters and other flyers or word of mouth can also be used.
5. During the meeting, the youths should be responsible for moderating, writing notes and running the meeting as much as possible based on age group and skill level (an experienced moderator should be present).
6. At the end of the meeting, the youth or youths who are responsible for protocolling the meeting present the notes to the group, which agrees to what has been written and/or offers changes.



7. The youth worker assists the youths in registering to speak at the political or administrative meeting which the youth worker researched in step 2 and/or choosing which meeting would be best to present the results.
8. Finally, the youth worker and the youths attend the meeting in question, where the youths present their results.

Materials:

- Conference room
- Paper, pin board, markers, etc. for intermediate steps of decision-making/presenting ideas within the youth forum

Methodology:

The youth forum is an active and participatory method which takes an empowering approach. For best results, it should take place in an attractive location (for example a youth centre) and be combined with leisure activities (for example a barbeque).

Needs addressed:

- Input for concrete planning (accountability)
- Low threshold format
- Affirmative approach; Encourages youths to engage with authority figures in positive ways
- Learning democratic decision-making structures and constructive discussion
- Building peer-group social capital
- Method is connected to a topic which affects the youths directly (method fits youths' reality)

Outcome:

- Concrete suggestions for further steps documented in a protocol
- Documentation of intermediate steps (for example photos of pin boards and drawings)



Feedback:

The participants in the CIVACT training stated the following **benefits** of this method:

- It is an effective way to encourage everyone to participate in the decision-making process
- It is very inclusive
- It gives the youth a voice in the local community
- It has an informal format
- It uses a bottom-up approach
- It's a way to learn important skills such as communication, research, team work, etc.
- It is flexible

In terms of **limitations**, the participants stated that:

- It can be difficult to get politicians involved and get them to listen to the youth forum
- If not properly managed, it has the potential to become chaotic
- It has the potential to marginalize quiet young people
- Approaching young people and getting them to participate is a challenge

Finally, the participants made the following **suggestions**:

- Include a check in/out (for example with feeling cards)
- Invite politicians and other decision makers to the youth forum
- Show “newcomers” earlier work/results to get them to see the benefits of participating

Suggestions on how to use this curriculum

As mentioned at the outset, the CIVACT curriculum is primarily intended for autodidactic and non-formal learning, but can also be used to develop a formalised training or workshop. We would like to make some suggestions for the latter case below based on our experiences planning the CIVACT training in Palermo, as it demonstrates how we delivered all ten modules in this curriculum in a formalised training.

As mentioned at the outset of this document, the CIVACT curriculum was used by the project partners during a 3-day train-the-trainer event in Palermo in October 2019. The event was an interesting learning opportunity for the nearly 20 youth workers, educators, partner staff and trainers who took part. During the event, the modules contained in this curriculum were presented; a selection of them was also tested by the participants.

Each of the three days of the training was organized around one of the three categories of methods: observing, interacting and proposing. The partner who had contributed the method prepared a PowerPoint presentation which not only presented the information contained here and in the methods database, but also went into depth based on their personal experience in using the method with the project's target group. A generous amount of time was left at the end of each method presentation for questions from the training participants. Due to the relatively small size of the group and the inclusive atmosphere of the training, the question session took place in an informal "round table" fashion.

The design of the training also included active testing of a selection of the methods (due to time constraints and the limitations provided by certain methods, it was not possible to test them all). The selection of methods for active testing was based on the ability of the method to be adapted to an international event and tested in a new and unfamiliar environment, the time needed for execution, and the local context in which the training was hosted.

Presentations were limited to thirty minutes (including question sessions), with no more than three presentations in a row. The goal was to vary the experience of the participants, make the training fun and interactive, and engage the participants in active "learning by doing." In addition, an attempt was made to combine aspects of methods which could not be tested (such as person behind the uniform) into methods which were able to be tested; so, for example, one of the personas used in the testing of role play using personas was a fire fighter. The training in Palermo included active testing of perception mapping & instawalks on day 1, role play using personas & feeling cards on day 2 and the prototyping solutions workshop on day 3.

At the end of each day, the participants were asked to give their feedback in a world café style session. This feedback session gave the participants the opportunity to express their opinions about the methods, including limitations and benefits of each and suggestions on how to improve and/or adapt the methods. Finally, at the end of day 3, the youth workers were asked to give their feedback on the training as a whole.

The youth workers generally found the methods helpful and useful. Their feedback included lots of comments about adapting or mixing them, especially with methods already in use in their organizations. The participants considered the diverse group of peers from other countries and contexts to be a

distinct added benefit. The interactive testing of the methods was also mentioned as a highlight of the training.

To summarise:

- In teaching these methods to a group, a combination of frontal learning, active testing and feedback/reflection was very effective for content retention. The participants particularly enjoyed the active testing and the feedback round allowed them to already consider the implementation of the method in their own local context.
- The ability to actively test the methods will be dependent on a variety of conditions, including available materials and space, location of the training, participant familiarity with the area/neighbourhood that the training is conducted in, and the group size and composition.
- It was quite helpful to have the modules presented by people who had already used/tested the methods themselves. This enhanced the peer-learning aspect of the training, as the participants could ask detailed and specific questions directly. The group size at the CIVACT training (20 people) as well as the rotating presenter role was ideal for a relaxed and informal atmosphere in which participants felt comfortable asking questions. In situations where the learning atmosphere is more formalised, facilitation methods such as small group discussions or world café may be suitable for gathering questions between the teaching and testing of each method.
- The presenter does not need to have a training or pedagogical background to deliver the modules effectively. Basic facilitation and presenting skills are sufficient and, as mentioned in the previous point, experience with the methods seemed to be more valuable than professional presenting experience in delivering the modules effectively. These modules therefore lend themselves well to peer-learning activities.

We hope this information is helpful for you in the use of this curriculum in your own context!

Further reading

Online

The EU homepage on youth work contains a range of interesting and constantly updated links:

https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/work_en

The Youth Wiki is an online platform which offers information on EU countries' youth policies. Read

more here: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>

Check out more about digital youth work (including more about Instawalks, for example) here:

<https://www.digitalyouthwork.eu/>

Non-violent communication (NVC) is a process of communication, developed by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg that is based on compassion, authenticity, and courage. NVC is founded on language and communication skills that strengthen our ability to remain human, even under trying conditions. Find more information here: <https://www.cnvc.org/>.

The UCL Street Mobility Project Toolkit also contains a range of great methods and information:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology-health-care/research/epidemiology-and-public-health/research/health-and-social-surveys-research-group/toolkit>

Seeds for Change offers a wealth of openly-available resources on their website, including a range of resources in languages other than English. Find out more here:

<https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/resources>

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