

Voices through Water

The Creative and Activist Methodologies Toolkit



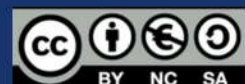
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Push & Pull

Advocacy, Activist



The activity consists in highlighting the PUSH and PULL factors of a migrant story, therefore the factors that pushed someone to leave his/her own country and the factors that pulled that person to migrate where he/she migrated to.



Target group

Young people 15+ years old

Minimum 7 – no maximum



Environment

A room or a space big enough for all the participants



Time needed

30 minutes or more depending on the length and numbers of stories



Materials

A real-life story

Objective/aim

The aim of the activity is to support participants in understanding what are the "push" factors that make people need and/or want to leave his/her own country and the "pull" factors that make people go in a certain country or region, and so make participants understand the reasons why people need and/or want to migrate.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Explain to the group that they need to pick up, on a voluntary basis, 5 persons: the "storyteller", the "push factor", the "pull factor", the "obstacle factor" and the "accelerator factor".

Step 2

Once the group selected the 5 roles, the "storyteller" starts to walk forward really slowly while he/she tells a real-life story of a person who undertakes a migration journey, by giving as many details as he/she can. The story has to be told in the first person.

Step 3

Whenever an element in the story addresses the hardships and factors that contributed to him/her leaving his/her own country (persecution, hunger, threats, violence etc...), the storyteller is physically but gently pushed a bit further on by the "push factor" persons.

Whenever an element in the story indicates the reasons to go where he/she was heading (peace, social security, family members, etc...), the storyteller pulls a bit by the "pull factor" person.

Whenever the storyteller encounters obstacles of any sorts during the journey he/she is describing, he/she moves a little bit towards the right side by the "obstacle factor" person.

Whenever the storyteller faces something that would accelerate his/her journey, he/she moves a little towards the left side by the "accelerator factor" person.

Step 4

Once the storyteller finishes the story, make participants reflect on how many elements of the journey contribute to its unfolding, how fast or slow it is and what are the constraints, in a physical way as the storyteller is physically moved further, left and right.

Ask participants how they felt in seeing the physical journey of the storyteller, if they could identify the push and pull factors and guide a reflection on the activity.



Tips for the trainer

To make the exercise more impactful, it is better to tell a real migration story.

In order to be prepared, in case none of the participants have stories to tell or don't feel comfortable in telling a story of someone known, prepare some printed detailed story of a migration journey.

In order to respect the real persons behind the story, ask the storyteller to change the real name of the protagonist/of the story you print.

Do not force anyone to be the storyteller and explain that whenever someone feels uncomfortable in participating in the activity and/or listening to the story, that he/she can leave the room without any judgement – create a safe space.

If none of the participants want to be the storyteller, pick up one of the facilitators to do so.



Comment

The experience is a journey itself, interesting and introspective to watch for the audience as well as the storyteller.



Alternative

The storyteller could lose the concentration being pushed and pulled, so an alternative is to have a sixth role, the "actor", namely:

The storyteller just tells the story from a corner of the room, while the actor slowly walks, "impersonating" the protagonist of the story and being pulled and pushed by the "4 factors" persons.

If the person being pushed doesn't feel comfortable with physical contact, the physical contact of the pushing can be replaced with a sound so associating each push/movement in one direction with a different sound (i.e.: move forward to the sound of a bell; move backwards to the sound of snapping fingers; move right to the sound of clapping hands; move left to the sound of the whistle)



Source

Developed within the MyElections My EU! project by adapting different sources about the "push&pull" factors.

Additional useful sources:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbhpUlxYn-E>
- <https://earthmatters.populationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Migration-Stories.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV4zCTZV7EM>

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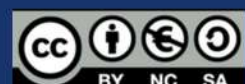
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Expectations & fears

Advocacy



This is an activity to create a common basis for the workshop and to facilitate the sharing of expectations and fears in relation to the workshop's implementation.



Target group

Young people 13+

Minimum 4 – no maximum



Environment

A room or a space big enough for all the participants



Time needed

30 - 60 minutes (depending on the group size)



Materials

- Flipchart
- Pens
- Post-its

Objective/aim

The aim of this activity is to create a safer space where participants feel free to express their fears/concerns and expectations in relation to a workshop or learning pathway, and collectively discuss these fears and expectations and set a common basis at the beginning of the pathway.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Prepare two flipcharts (or more, depending on the topics you are going to address), one for "fears" and one for "expectations".

Place them in the centre of the room and assign a colour to each of the flipcharts (i.e.: pink post-it for fears and yellow post-it for expectations).

Step 2

Explain that the aim is to create a safe space where people can feel free to express themselves without judgement from others.

Step 3

Give participants 10-15 minutes to individually reflect on:

- What do you expect from taking part in the workshops/learning pathway?
- What are your fears in relation to your participation in this workshop?

Step 4

Give participants the post-its and tell them to write down what emerged from their reflection in an anonymous way and to stick them on the correct flipchart.

Step 5

Once all participants have finished, read the post-its one-by-one and facilitate a group discussion on the emerging issues by guiding them (i.e.: by asking: do you feel the same? How can we prevent this fear from materialising? What can we do to meet this expectation? Etc...)

Step 6

During the discussion, take notes and collectively select common rules that will help the group to meet their expectations and prevent the materialisation of the fears.

Step 7

Collect the flipcharts with the post-it and place them visibly in the room where the activities will take place; at the end of the workshop/learning pathway, go through the flipcharts together with the participants and collectively reflect on which expectations were met, which not and why, which fears materialised and how they were addressed, etc...



Tips for the trainer

Leave space for discussion between the participants. Make participants understand that this is a safe space where they can freely express themselves.



Alternative

The activity can be upscaled by adding other topics that could be useful for laying down a common basis or group agreement (i.e.: common rules, personal contributions, etc...).



Comment

It is better to always foresee a longer time for this activity, especially for big groups, in order to give them the time to comment on the outcome of the activity and not interrupt the discussion.



Source

Adapted from "SALTO-YOUTH: Toolbox for training and youth work"

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Advocacy roleplay

Advocacy, Activist



This activity helps participants to step into the roles of youth advocates and prepares them for debates with politicians. Through research, discussion and a structured roleplay, they prepare key advocacy messages and questions to bring forward to real-life decision-makers, such as Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The goal is to simulate a meeting or public Q&A with a politician, focusing on youth demands.



Target group

Young people aged 15–30

Min. 4 – Max. 30 (divided into pairs or small groups)



Time needed

Approx. 2 hours, depending on group size



Environment

A space with tables for group work and a designated "meeting stage"/area for the roleplay.



Materials

- Internet access or printed bios of (real) MEPs
- Pens and paper or laptops
- Template for preparing questions and demands
- Optional: name tags or props for roleplay

Objective/aim

To empower participants in understanding how political advocacy works at the EU level, build confidence in engaging with decision-makers, and strengthen their argumentation, collaboration and public speaking skills.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Introduction

5 min

Briefly introduce the role of MEPs and how youth can engage with them.

Explain the discussion format and time frame for the actual advocacy meeting if planned. Depart from the youth's own demands or bring in some recent news on a chosen topic.

Step 2

Form research pairs/small groups

15 min

Participants work in pairs or groups of up to four people.

Each group chooses or is assigned a real MEP (ideally from different political groups or countries).

They research:

- The MEP's party affiliation, country, committees
- Their past votes or statements on a selected issue

Step 3

Develop your demands and questions

20 min

Each group prepares:

- One clear advocacy demand and question for the MEP
- 2–3 supporting arguments
- Optional: A short intro (Who are you? Why does this matter to youth?)
- Optional: prepare a symbolic action, prop, or visual aid to support your point

Step 4

Roleplay: Youth meets MEP

40 min

Introduce the scenario. In front of the group (or in breakout pairs), each group presents their demand in a mock meeting. One person from one group volunteers to play the MEP (based on their real political position), and one person from another group plays the youth advocate.

- Include a ritual for the youth where they actively step in and out of their role ("shake off your role").
- If there is enough time, make sure the participants switch roles, so everyone has the possibility to try both sides.
- Encourage realistic but constructive responses: MEPs can disagree or be hesitant, and youth should try to respond or negotiate.

Step 5

Reflection and debrief

20 min

Group discussion in small groups or the whole group depending on group size.

Reflect on the possible questions:

- What was challenging or empowering?
- What worked in getting your message across?
- How did it feel to play the politician, (especially when playing the role of a politician with whom you disagree)?
- How did it feel to play the youth advocate?
- How is it to debate with someone who has totally opposite beliefs and points of view?
- Would you do anything differently in a real-life meeting?



Tips for the trainer

- Encourage creativity: props, posters, and slogans can help boost engagement.
- Model respectful disagreement and political nuance when helping with roleplay prep.



Alternative

Instead of real MEPs, you can create fictional characters with clear ideological profiles to keep it simpler. This also works well if access to the internet is limited.



Comment

Participants often feel more confident after trying out this roleplay, especially when the setting allows for safe trial and error. It also makes the often distant world of EU politics feel more accessible and real.



Source

Developed by Maria Hammer within the My Elections – My EU! project, based on participatory advocacy workshops and simulations from various European youth trainings implemented by colleagues at Südwind

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Election Programmes Workshop

Advocacy, Activist



This activity focuses on analysing and comparing different political parties' election programmes on a chosen topic. Participants critically evaluate party positions, identify gaps, and develop their own proposals, fostering civic engagement and critical thinking.



Target group

Young people aged 16-25 years old (but can be adapted to older groups)
10-30 participants



Environment

A room large enough for group work, with tables and chairs. Ideally, one table per party programme.



Time needed

2-2.5 hours (flexible)



Materials

Printed election programmes (or excerpts) on a specific topic (e.g., climate, migration), pens, flipchart paper, markers, sticky notes.

Objective/aim

The activity aims to strengthen participants' skills in critically analysing political texts, encourage active participation in democratic processes, and empower young people to form their own opinions on party positions regarding a specific topic.

Step by step instructions

Preparation

Print and prepare the parties' or party groups' election programmes on the selected topic. Clearly label each set of documents with the party name and place them on separate tables.

Step 1

Group division

Divide participants into smaller groups (3–5 people per group) and assign each group to one party table. Ensure all groups have pens and paper. (5 minutes)

Step 2

Content analysis

Each group reads and summarises their assigned party's position on the topic. They note the key demands, proposals, and arguments on flipchart paper. Encourage them to focus on the main points rather than details. (20 minutes)

Step 3

Critical discussion

Groups discuss internally what they think about the party's position, whether they agree or disagree with the party's programme. They also reflect on what might be missing or unclear. All comments should be noted on the flipchart. (20 minutes)

Step 4

Developing own proposals

Each group formulates their own policy suggestions or alternative ideas on the topic. These should be presented clearly (as bullet points or a short manifesto) on a new flipchart sheet. (30 minutes)

Step 5

Group presentations

Groups present their analyses and proposals to the whole group. After each presentation, allow for a few questions and short feedback. (30 minutes)

Step 6

Reflection and conclusion

Facilitate a final reflection round to consolidate the learning. Possible guiding questions (15 minutes):

- What did you learn about the different party positions?
- Did anything surprise you?
- How did it feel to create your own demands?
- Why is it important to read party programmes before voting?



Tips for the trainer

Move between groups to answer questions, clarify terms if needed, stimulate discussion, and ensure equal participation. Remind groups to focus on key points rather than getting lost in details. Consider using a timer to keep each step on track.



Alternative

Step 6: Optional World Café

As an alternative to step 4, you can open a general World Café discussion on the same topic. Use the party analyses as starting points to deepen the debate and gather collective insights. (30–45 minutes)

Participants can work with speeches, campaign videos, or social media posts instead of written programmes.



Comment

This method is promoting political literacy and empowering young people to critically engage with election content. It encourages them to move beyond slogans and understand concrete policy proposals and develop their own ideas.



Source

Developed as part of the My Elections-My EU! project by Südwind and inspired by World Café and participatory education methods.

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Group Agreement

Activist



This activity invites all participants to co-create a group agreement at the start of a shared project, experience or when living in a temporary community. It sets the tone for collaboration, respect, and inclusivity by collecting shared values and expectations. Everyone contributes equally, including coordinators, facilitators, and participants.



Target group

A group of people any age participating in a group process (e.g. workshop week, youth exchange, political or artistic project)

Min. 3 – max. 40 (can be adapted to group size)



Time needed

Approximately 1 hour or more depending on group size



Environment

A room or a space big enough for all the participants



Materials

- Post-its in various colours
- Pens or markers
- Large flipchart paper or wall space for group agreement
- Tape

Objective/aim

To create a safer, brave and participatory space by forming a shared agreement on how the group wants to work and live together, including expectations, needs and responsibilities.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Briefly introduce the concept

5 minutes

"This activity helps us define how we want to work together this week. It's about building a safer space—not perfect, but intentional.

Everyone is part of this: participants, coordinators, creative facilitators." Lay out post-its and pens in the room.

Step 2

Ask participants 1-3 questions, such as:

- What is important for you in working together?
- What helps you feel safe, included and able to participate fully?
- What can you do to make this a safer, brave and participatory space for all?

Provide paper for participants to take notes.

Initially you could also ask participants to tune in with closed eyes in a comfortable position.

Step 3

Individual reflection

5 minutes

Each person writes notes for themselves regarding the questions.

Step 4

Small group work

15 minutes

Participants form groups of four, share their ideas and write shared key points on post-its.

Step 5

Plenary presentation

20-30 minutes but depending on group size

Each group presents their ideas but only new contributions (3 minutes per group).

If something has already been said, they add their post-its to the similar topic but don't repeat it verbally

After each group presentation, ask:

- "Is everyone okay with what has been added?"
- "Anything you would like to clarify or build on?"

This ensures collective affirmation and adjustment before moving on.

Step 6

Final confirmation and summary

10 minutes

Display the agreement visibly. Stick the post-its on a poster or wall after all groups have presented, let participants know:

"This is how we have decided to work together this week. These agreements reflect what we need to feel safe, included, and strong as a group. This is our common ground."

Ask for a volunteer (or assign someone in advance) to read out and briefly summarise the key points of the agreement, using the collected post-its.

Then ask:

- "Is everyone okay with this agreement as it stands now?"
- "Is there anything you feel is missing or unclear?"

Give space for final additions or comments before closing the session.

Step 7

Thank everyone for their contributions and say as a final remark:

- The agreement is not fixed – we can change things and add to it.
- If something feels missing or violated, you can raise it at a group check-in or with facilitators.
- We will return to this regularly to remind ourselves of what we agreed on.
- Let participants know where the agreement will be put up and have it at a place that is visible during the whole group process for everyone to read.



Tips for the trainer

- Emphasise that "safe" spaces are never guaranteed, but we can all work together toward safer and braver ones.
- Encourage participants to revisit the agreement if issues arise or parts of the agreement need to change.
- If time is tight, you can cluster similar ideas and summarise with the group's consent.



Alternative

For smaller groups, facilitate one joint discussion instead of breakout groups. For online or hybrid formats, use digital whiteboards like Jamboard, Miro or Padlet.



Comment

Including a short confirmation moment after each presentation helped participants feel heard and more responsible for the collective agreement. A crucial part of this exercise is to keep the group agreement alive, have it visible throughout the group process and use it as a tool when issues arise. If there has been a longer break and a follow-up workshop is planned, begin by revisiting the agreement—remind everyone of what was decided and, if needed, update or adapt it together.



Source

Co-developed within the My Elections – My EU! project based on participatory group facilitation and safer space practices by Maria Hammer and Maruša Vertacnik.

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Body Percussion

Artistic



The activity involves using the body as a musical instrument to create rhythmic sequences. Participants will learn to synchronize as a group, using hands, feet, and other body parts to generate a collective rhythm.



Target group

Young people and adults

Minimum 8, maximum 20



Environment

A room or space large enough to accommodate all participants



Time needed

1 hour 30 minutes



Materials

None

Objective/aim

The aim of the activity is to promote cooperation and synchronisation among participants, developing rhythmic awareness and body consciousness. Each participant learns to use the body as a musical instrument, creating a collective connection through rhythm.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Introduction to the activity:

the facilitator explains the concept of body percussion and demonstrates basic movements (e.g., clapping hands, snapping fingers, stomping feet).

Each participant should try to replicate the movements.

Step 2

Creating the basic rhythm (for example 4/4 or $\frac{3}{4}$ metre):

the facilitator creates a simple rhythmic sequence (e.g., clapping hands, snapping fingers, stomping feet) and invites participants to follow in sync.

Step 3

Creating a more complex sequence:

once the group has learnt the basic sequence, the facilitator adds new movements or variations, creating a more complex rhythm that the group must reproduce together.

Step 4

Working in groups:

participants are divided into pairs or small groups and each group creates its own rhythmic sequence.

Each group presents their sequence to the others, trying to maintain synchronisation.

Step 5

Collective Body Percussion:

all participants perform a sequence together (from step 3 or from step 4), aiming to maintain a common rhythm.

The facilitator guides the group to ensure everyone stays in sync.

Step 6

Debriefing session:

participants stop and reflect on the experience.

Questions to consider include:

- How did it feel to create a collective rhythm?
- Was it easy to synchronise with others?
- What sensations were evoked by using the body as a musical instrument?



Tips for the trainer

- Ensure all participants are actively involved.
- In case of difficulties with rhythm, slow down, and take breaks to practice separately before resuming as a group.



Alternative

If the number of participants allows, small groups can be created where each person adds a personalised movement to the rhythmic sequence, creating individual variations within a collective flow



Comment

During the session, it is interesting to observe how cooperation and mutual listening influence the success of the collective rhythm. This type of activity can also foster strong group bonding, as participants must work together to achieve a common result.



Source

Adapted from body percussion activities developed in the context of music education workshops.

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Rhythmic Machine

Artistic



The "Rhythmic Machine" activity uses rhythm and collective movement as a tool to stimulate cooperation, synchronisation, and reflection on group dynamics. Participants must work together to create a common rhythmic flow, where each member is a part of a mechanism that works only when everyone collaborates.



Target group

Adults and young people

Minimum 8, maximum 20



Environment

A room or space large enough to accommodate all participants, preferably without obstacles, to allow for fluid movement of the bodies.



Time needed

1 hour 30 minutes



Materials

None

Objective/aim

The aim of the activity is to help participants understand how collective work and synchronization are fundamental to the proper functioning of a group. The rhythmic machine acts as a social metaphor, where each individual is a "part" that contributes to the collective mechanism, exploring the dynamics of power, cooperation, and opposition in a group context.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Introduction to the rhythmic machine

The facilitator explains the concept of the "rhythmic machine" and how each participant will be part of a mechanism that depends on everyone's harmony and cooperation.

Each participant becomes a "part" of the machine, which can be a body movement or a sound.

Step 2

Creating the base rhythm

The facilitator guides the participants in creating a base rhythm using simple sounds or movements.

Each person is invited to contribute to a specific sound or movement, such as clapping hands, stomping feet, or making a vocal sound.

Step 3

Synchronization and building the group

The group starts working together to maintain the synchronization of the rhythm.

Each participant must follow the collective rhythm, contributing to the creation of the flow without interrupting it.

The facilitator observes and guides the group, encouraging mutual listening and harmony.

Step 4

Developing the collective rhythm

The facilitator introduces variations in the base rhythm, adding new actions or sounds.

For example, if the rhythm is created by clapping hands, you can add a vocal sound combined with a different movement of the body. Or, in a 4/4 rhythm you can insert a single sound, combined with a movement, tied to one of the four beats.

Each participant must adapt and modify their contribution to maintain the collective rhythmic flow.

At this stage, the group explores how the rhythm becomes increasingly complex but must remain synchronized.

Step 5

Exploring dissonances

The facilitator introduces moments of dissonance, where some participants deliberately interrupt the rhythm or perform actions that contrast with the group. For example, you can add a long sound with the voice connected to a movement, or sing a part of a song that is out of sync, disconnected from the rest of the rhythm. This moment is used to reflect on how "dissonances" or conflicts can affect the functioning of a group.

The group must try to restore harmony and find the common rhythm again.

Step 6

Debriefing and reflection

After the exercise, a discussion opens about the process.

Participants are invited to reflect on how they felt working together and the dynamics observed.

Some questions to ask during the debriefing:

- How was it to work together to maintain the common rhythm?
- What happened when someone interrupted the flow? How was synchronization restored?
- What power or cooperation dynamics emerged during the activity?



Tips for the trainer

Ensure that every participant has the opportunity to contribute to the collective rhythm.

- If the group struggles to maintain the rhythm, it is helpful to take breaks to focus on individual actions and then resume the rhythm together.
- Use moments of dissonance as opportunities to explore the dynamics of conflict and cooperation within the group.



Alternative

The sounds can be replaced with words or phrases. The rhythmic machine can thus be adapted to a social context. For example: through the creation of phrases spoken to a rhythm, one can create the rhythmic machine of the school, the rhythmic machine of office work, or the rhythmic machine of a day at the beach.



Comment

During the activity, it was noted that the group began to develop a greater awareness of teamwork and the importance of listening to each other. The metaphor of the rhythmic machine helped visualize how each individual is essential for the proper functioning of the group, and how "dissonances" can threaten the whole system.



Source

Adapted by Emilio Ajovalasit from the "Theatre of the Oppressed" method by Augusto Boal.

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Stick Dance

Artistic



The activity involves using sticks as a creative and relational tool among the participants.



Target group

Young people and adults

Maximum 30, the group should consist of an even number of people as the activity requires working in pairs.



Environment

A room or space large enough to accommodate all participants



Time needed

60 min



Materials

Wooden sticks about 1.5 meters in length, speakers and music

Objective/aim

The aim of the activity is to create a relationship among the participants based on listening and harmony. The stick becomes a tool for mutual connection.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Participants are divided into pairs, and each pair is given a stick.

Step 2

Participants place the stick on the palm of one hand, and the stick must be supported by the pressure both participants apply to it.

Step 3

Participants are invited to move around the space following the rhythm of the music, continuing to hold the stick by applying pressure with both hands. This activity lasts 7-10 minutes.

Step 4

Participants are arranged in a circle. Each participant is connected to the person beside them via a stick, which is held through the pressure of the palms of each hand. In this way, each participant will be connected on both the right and left through a stick held by the pressure of the hands.

Step 5

The whole group is invited to move, trying not to let the sticks fall. If any stick falls, the entire group must stop and wait until the stick is picked up and repositioned. This activity lasts 7-10 minutes.

Step 6

A debriefing session is held where all participants reflect on the activity, discussing the dynamics observed during the work in pairs and as a group. Participants are encouraged to share their impressions and feelings without judging others' work. Duration of this activity: 10-15 minutes depending on the group size.



Tips for the trainer

Be careful that the sticks are held through the pressure of the palms and not with the fingers.



Alternative

An alternative, if the number of participants allows, is to create groups of three people, where one person in the center holds two sticks with both hands in relation to the other two participants.



Comment

During the feedback session, it is interesting to focus on the dynamics that emerged and relate them to relationship dynamics within the groups.



Source

Adapted by Emilio Ajovalasit from theatre education workshops.

Voices through Water

The Creative and Activist Methodologies Toolkit

Project Number: 2023-1-AT01-KA220-YOU-000161835



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Horizontal decision making: Sociocracy

Advocacy, Activist



This activity offers participants an opportunity to practise horizontal decision-making inspired by sociocratic principles. You can use it alone or as an extension of the other activity called "Horizontal Decision-Making: Introduction and Consensus" included in this toolkit.



Target group

Young people 12+

Min. 4 - max. 40



Environment

A space large enough for all participants (the practical part - steps 4-7 - can also be done outdoors)



Time needed

2.5 h - 3 h



Materials

- Beamer or flipchart for presentation (Part 1)
- Flipchart paper
- Duct tape or another way to hang papers on wall (optional)
- Handouts with the principles of sociocracy (optional)

Objective/aim

- To introduce participants to the principles and practices of sociocracy
- To engage participants in horizontal decision-making
- To foster collaboration, communication, and inclusivity within the group.

Step by step instructions

If participants have already completed Horizontal Decision-Making: Introduction and Consensus, you may skip Step 1.

Part 1: Introduction and theory

Step 1

20 min - Ask participants what they know about or if they have experienced horizontal decision-making in the past. Briefly define what horizontal decision making means to set a common ground of understanding. Highlight the key principles of horizontal decision making: inclusivity, equality, respect for others and their opinions, and the aim for consensus/consent.

Gather the pros and cons of horizontal decision-making compared to hierarchical decision-making and visualise them on a flipchart

Step 2

10 min - Set the ground rules for respectful communication and equal participation. Involve participants in setting these rules (e.g. by using the brainstorming method or creating a group agreement - see another method in this Toolkit: Group agreement). This may help participants to remember and accept the ground rules more easily, while offering a space that aims to be as inclusive as possible.

This step can be skipped if you have already set the rules with the group beforehand.

Step 3

30 min - Introduce sociocracy (consider preparing a short presentation/handout and using a beamer or flipchart). For more information see: <https://www.sociocracyforall.org/sociocracy/>

Briefly explain

- The concept and origins of sociocracy
- Its core principles (see below): consent-based decision-making, circle structure, and double-linking

Explain key components

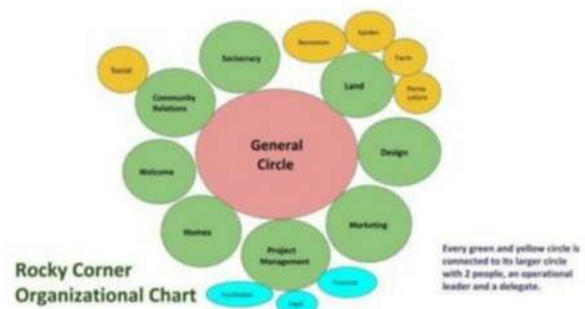
Consent decision-making:

A decision is made when no one has a reasoned objection. If you already tried another method in this toolkit: Consensus decision making, it is good to distinguish between consent and consensus:

- Consensus is full agreement of the group whereas consent is defined as "no objections", and objections are based on one's ability to work toward the aims of the group. Members discussing an idea in consent-based governance commonly ask themselves if it is "good enough for now, safe enough to try". If not, then there is an objection, which leads to a search for an acceptable adaptation of the original proposal to gain consent.

Circle structure:

- Groups are organised in circles.
- Those circles are connected by a General circle (a "higher" circle), which maintains overview on what is going on in the organization generally.
- The General circle consists of people who are members of all other ("lower") circles. Each circle has autonomy and usually it serves a specific purpose.
- (However in Part 2: Practical activity you will try a different variation where each small circle will deal with the same topic.) In more complex organisations other connected circles may also exist.
- Use [this picture](#) to illustrate the structure, including the double linking mentioned below.



Double linking:

- Ideally each circle sends a pair of people to the General circle. One is a Linking Representative, another one is Linking feedback. The representative brings the voice of their circle to the "higher" level discussions and decisions. The Linking Feedback person is the one who communicates back the decisions from the "higher" circle to the "lower" one. This ensures that the "lower" circle can understand the reasoning behind decisions and provide input or feedback.
- The double linking principle helps to keep transparency, accountability, and collaboration throughout the organisation. It ensures that all voices are heard in the decision-making process. Yet in smaller organisations where there may not be enough people, it is possible for one person to hold both the linking representative role and the linking feedback role.
- (In the simplified version in Part 2, each circle selects just one person to act as both representative and feedback link.)

Part 2: Practical activity

(40 minutes or more)

Introduce this activity as a way of horizontal decision making inspired by sociocracy. In this specific scenario all circles will work on a single topic together. There will be just one person from each circle that will hold both roles of Representative and Feedback person. (However you can keep the Double linking principle - consider what is suitable for your group of participants, based on their experience and size of group).

Step 4 - 15 min

- Divide participants randomly into small circles (4-6 people per circle). You may choose another way to form groups, depending on your context.
- Each circle selects a person that they will send to the General circle. This delegate will represent the conclusions / consent of their circle in the General circle and also bring feedback / consent from the General circle.
- Give each circle the same topic or question to discuss and decide (e.g. "Should we express our political demands verbally in our performance, or should we do it separately?").
- Remind participants of the Group agreement and encourage those who usually speak a lot to allow space for quieter voices.
- If you have already tried the method Horizontal decision making: Introduction and Consensus, it will be helpful to also ask volunteers in each circle to take the role of facilitator in their circle.

Step 5

15 min - Each circle discusses the topic to generate ideas and reach a preliminary decision. Encourage consent-based decision-making and ensure all voices are heard. Keep track of the time.

Step 6

15 min - Form a General circle - consisting of all delegates from smaller circles. If experienced, a participant can volunteer as facilitator; otherwise, you facilitate. Before the discussion in the General circle starts, Explain that delegates may return to their original circles when needed, e.g. for unclear or conflicting proposals. Start the discussion, try to integrate ideas and if possible reach consent. If consent is reached in the General circle, it is a good idea to verify the validity of this preliminary consent by having the delegates return to their "lower" circles and ask if everyone agrees with it. Then you may reach a group-wide consent!

Iteration (optional)

Repeat step 5 and 6 (30 min)

The larger circle can decide to send the discussion back to small circles for refinement or additional input. This iterative process repeats until consent is reached. In each round, a circle may select a different delegate if they wish. Not only is it recommended to give another participant the opportunity to try this role, but it can also minimise the risk of creating hidden hierarchies in the long term.)

Step 7

15 min - Bring back all participants together. Facilitate a reflection of the previous experience. Use questions such as:

- What did you find easy or challenging about this process?
- Did you feel that your voice was heard? How did that feel?
- What would make it easier next time?

Be open to questions. Highlight that skills for horizontal decision-making develop through practice: each attempt becomes more effective.

Step 8

15 min - Discuss the pros and cons of sociocracy (or horizontal decision making in general) and how it is different from hierarchy and voting.

You may ask questions like:

- Where else can sociocracy be useful?
 - Could you apply it in a larger organisation/collective?
 - Which is more inclusive, effective, time-efficient, or fun: sociocracy or hierarchy?
 - Are there any limits to sociocracy?
 - Does hierarchy completely disappear in sociocracy?
- What else can we do to minimise the hidden hierarchies?



Tips for the trainer

- If you're new to facilitating, this guide may help: Introduction to facilitating meetings: https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/downloads/short_facil.pdf
- Provide handouts to clarify specific concepts like sociocracy and its core principles, etc.
- Be open to questions. Highlight that skills for horizontal decision-making develop through practice: each attempt becomes more effective.
- Encourage a respectful and inclusive atmosphere where all voices are valued.
- If participants struggle to reach consent, reassure them that this is part of the learning process – skills develop with time and experience.
- Consider summarising the principles of effective, inclusive communication (e.g. active listening, clarifying, staying focused). Write these on a flipchart or provide them as handouts for reference during the practical activity.



Comment

See also the methods
Group Agreement and Horizontal decision making:
Introduction and Consensus.



Alternative

The practical part of this activity is inspired by sociocracy and does not include the double-linking principle by default. To make it fully aligned with sociocratic principles, include double-linking: each circle selects two people with specific roles – a delegate and a feedback person. For more information, see: Sociocracy for All – Double Linking



Source

<https://www.sociocracyforall.org/sociocracy/>

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Horizontal decision making: Introduction and consensus

Advocacy, Activist



The activity is an introduction to the theory of horizontal decision-making tools and training in facilitated discussion and consensus decision-making in small groups.



Target group

Young people 12+

In. 4 - max. 20 (can be adapted to group size)



Environment

A space large enough for all participants. It can also be carried out outdoors (especially the practical part: Steps 5–7).



Time needed

3 h (may vary depending on group size)



Materials

- Projector or flipchart for presentation
- Flipchart papers
- Flipchart markers
- Tape (or other materials to hang flipcharts on the wall)

Objective/aim

- Develop competencies for group decision-making.
- Learn about horizontal decision-making tools and try them out.
- Empower effective collaboration without establishing or reinforcing a hierarchy in the group.

Step by step instructions

First part: Introduction and theory

Step 1 - 30 min

Explain the most common decision-making processes (e.g. autocratic, representative and voting) that are used in our society and gather them on a flipchart. Ask participants about the downsides of those processes:

Ask questions, such as:

- "How do people feel when their opinions and needs are not taken into account in decision-making?"
- "What happens to the minority that has been outvoted? How do they feel? How engaged will they be in further group processes?"
- "What can be the outcome when the decision-making process is not preceded by a quality discussion?"

Say: "What if there is another way of making decisions without hierarchy? Have any of you ever experienced something like horizontal decision-making before? What was it about?"

Briefly define what horizontal decision-making means to establish a common understanding. For example: It is a way of decision-making in which all participants ideally have equal power to decide on a given matter. Highlight the key principles of horizontal decision-making:

- inclusivity
- equality
- respect for others and for different opinions
- consensus/consent

Provide an overview on a flipchart of the potential advantages and disadvantages of horizontal decision-making in comparison to hierarchical decision-making attitudes. You may compare the methods of voting and consensus decision making. Ask participants for further points.

	Voting	Consensus
P r o s	· Familiar and easy to use. · Useful when time constraints make reaching consensus difficult.	· Ensures inclusion of all members, thus increasing the likelihood of success. · Members strive to make the best decision for the group rather than competing for personal preferences. · All perspectives and needs are taken into account. Strengthens cooperation.
C o n s	· Does not allow for discussion of minority opinions. · May not encourage full-group interaction. · Creates winners and losers. · Strengthens hierarchy.	· Time-consuming. · The larger the group, the more difficult to execute. · Power dynamics in the group can make equal participation difficult.

Step 2 - 10 min

Set the ground rules for respectful communication and equal participation. Involve participants in setting these rules (e.g. by using the brainstorming method or creating a group agreement - see another method in this Toolkit: Group agreement). This may help participants to remember and accept the ground rules more easily, while offering a space that aims to be as inclusive as possible. This step can be skipped if you have already set the rules with the group beforehand.

Step 3 - 20 min

Introduce the process of consensus decision-making. This method strives for a consensus within a group. Consensus is a state in which all participants agree with some proposal. The key to reaching consensus is a high-quality discussion that includes all participants and takes their needs and opinions into account. These factors are usually monitored by a facilitator who tries also to help the group reach a consensual decision while making sure all voices are being heard.

Describe the process of group decision-making based on this diagram:

<https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/downloads/consflow.pdf>

- 1) Introduce and clarify the issue
- 2) Open up the discussion
- 3) Explore ideas in a broad discussion
- 4) Form a proposal
- 5) Amend the proposal
- 6) Test for agreement
- 7) Work out how to implement the decision

Step 4 - 30 min

Introduce facilitation as a tool that supports groups in decision-making processes. Without a facilitator, discussions may be dominated by extroverts or people in positions of informal power. The opinions of others could be overlooked. The resulting decision could be accepted with silent disagreement or even despite the disagreement of some participants. On the other hand, the facilitator should not make decisions or propose decisions. To reduce the risk of the facilitator's role being abused to give a particular person influence over the group, it is common for group members to take turns in this role at individual meetings.

Describe the key facilitation skills:

- Active listening (see also: <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/activelisting>)
- Questioning - ask questions for clarification
- Summarising - briefly repeat someone else's suggestion or idea.

Describe also basic facilitation tools that facilitators use to make the process of decision making easier:

- Go-rounds: People sit in a circle and all participants can express their opinions on a question or suggestion in turn.
- Ideastorms (brainstorming): Participants are encouraged to come up with as many ideas as possible.
- Discussion in small groups/pairs: In larger groups, some people may be shy about expressing their opinions, whereas in smaller groups they may find it easier to participate actively.
- Temperature-check: In a situation where the facilitator is unsure how the group feels about a proposal, the facilitator asks all participants to use their hands to show how much they like or dislike the proposal. The more a person likes the proposal, the higher they raise their hands. Conversely, the less they like the proposal, the lower they raise their hands. Hands at waist level mean that the person is neither for nor against the proposal.

Additional tools that help the facilitator to keep the atmosphere respectful and inclusive:

- Reminding about the ground rules of respectful communication and equal participation.
- Direct questions to quieter participants.
- Interventions (gently interrupting dominant speakers and steering the conversation back to the group).
- Introduce an object that participants must hold in order to speak. This can help to regulate who speaks and encourage others to wait their turn.

Write the list of the mentioned facilitation skills (active listening, clarifying, summarising) and tools (go-rounds, ideastorms, small groups discussion, temperature check) on a flipchart paper and hang it in a visible place for everyone to see.

Second part: Practical activity

Step 5 - 15 min

Introduce this part as a practical training:

"Let's try it on your own! You will take part in a facilitated discussion in small groups and try to reach consensus."

Let participants suggest the topic, if possible. If they do not have any suggestions, make sure you have something prepared. Try to avoid too complex or controversial topics and choose rather a simple one which would be easy for training.

Step 6 - 45 min

Form groups of 4-5 people (depending on the number of participants) and ask a volunteer in each group to take on the role of the facilitator. Instruct the smaller groups to find comfortable spots that are far enough apart so that they are not distracted by the other groups. Give the groups 30 minutes (15 minutes for discussion + 15 minutes to find a consensus). After the activity has started, keep checking in with each group to see how they are progressing and to help the facilitators if needed. Remind them of the time after 20 minutes and 5 minutes before the end of the exercise.

Third part: Reflection and final discussion

Step 7 - 30 min

Get back together as a whole group. Ask participants to share their emotions, if any, and then ask them about their experiences and insights about the process. Discuss what challenges they encountered and what strategies they developed to overcome them. You can ask questions like:

- Did you manage to reach a consensus? If not, can you imagine reaching a consensus if you had more time?
- Was there an opinion that was strongly opposed to another opinion? How did you deal with it?
- Was there someone who talked much more than others? How did you deal with it?
- Was there someone who didn't talk at all or only very little? How did you deal with this?
- Did you get stuck at any point during the discussion? How did you deal with it?

Encourage participants that the skills required for horizontal decision making can be practised like any other skill and that they become more effective with each attempt. It is okay if consensus was not reached – the focus here is on learning. Emphasise that the ability to make horizontal decisions can be trained.



Tips for the trainer

Provide handouts regarding all concepts (e.g. common decision-making processes in our society, horizontal-decision making, etc.) or try to visualise them on a flipchart to prevent confusion among the participants by the amount of information.



Alternative

- In case there is more time, repeat steps 5 and 6 with different topics and different facilitators in each group.
- Instead of consensus, you can also choose consent, which will be easier to achieve.
- For large groups, print and distribute the consensus flowchart and facilitation tips.



Source

Consensus: <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/consensus>

Introduction to facilitating meetings: https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/downloads/short_facil.pdf

Groaning Zone: https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Diamond_of_Participation

Consensus Flowchart: <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/downloads/consflow.pdf>

Voices through Water

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Social Media Literacy

Activist



The activity focuses on the critical use of social media and its potential to promote social and political issues.



Target group

Young people aged 15 to 23

15 to 20 participants



Environment

A room or a space large enough for all the participants.



Time needed

1.5 hours



Materials

- Papers
- Pens
- Prints of social media news on the topic you want to address, with at least one example being fake or misleading

Objective/aim

The activity aims to develop critical thinking skills about the use of social media and the misleading or fake news that appear in the digital world, and to learn how to effectively engage with social and political issues on social platforms, especially in terms of content creation and dissemination.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Divide the participants into pairs. Each participant comes up with three statements about themselves, with two being true and one being false. The other participant needs to guess which one is false. Then they swap roles. (5 minutes)

Step 2

Bring all participants back into a single group. Give them time to discuss the activity (10 minutes).

You can ask the following questions:

- Did you guess which statement was false?
- How did you guess? What was your clue?

Step 3

Divide the participants into smaller groups. Give each group a copy of the social media news on a specific topic, with at least one example of fake news (e.g. migration, climate crisis). After reading and observing the news and images, ask them to discuss the following questions (10 minutes):

- Did they find the news interesting? What appealed to them and what did not?
- Is the news they received genuine or fake?
- Why do they think so?
- What steps could they take to make sure?

Step 4

Bring the participants back into a larger group to share the discussions they had in smaller groups. Tell them which of the news stories was fake. Take time to discuss the following questions (15 minutes):

- Have you come across misleading or fake news online before? How often?
- How did you know it was misleading or fake news? How can you identify it?
- What is the main reason you decide to share some information on your social media?
- What sources do you usually use to get your information?

Step 5

Divide the participants into the same groups as before. Based on the news they received in step 3 (fake news is also included, as social media campaigns can also be fake and misleading), they should come up with a social media campaign in the form of a post, reel, video etc. (they can choose which social media platform). Before getting started, they should think about the target group they are addressing with the campaign, what message they want to convey, and how to make the campaign effective and appealing. Each group writes/draws the idea on a piece of paper. (25 minutes)

Step 6

Each group presents their idea to the rest of the group. Comment on the ideas and take time to discuss the following questions (15 minutes):

- Which campaign do you think would be most successful? Why?
- What do you think about the campaign based on fake news? How does it make you feel?
- Have you ever engaged in any social media campaign? How? What appealed to you?

Step 7

Take time to discuss and evaluate the activity (10 minutes)



Tips for the trainer

- It is important to have some prior information about the tools for identifying misleading or fake news.
- Make sure that everyone is involved and that only one participant speaks at a time.
- Listen to others and show respect for the views of all of the participants.



Alternative

In step 3, instead of reading the news, participants can also work in small groups to write a fake or real article, trying to be as convincing as possible. They then read it out to the rest of the group, who have to determine whether the article is true or fake



Comment

This is an interesting activity for addressing the issues of fake and misleading news online and for showing the challenging as well as the beneficial aspects of social media use



Source

The method was inspired by the approach developed within the project E-trick your mind, with partners from Slovenia (Zavod Voluntariat and Humanitas), Ireland (Comhlámh) and the Czech Republic (INEX – Sdružení dobrovolných aktivit), funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the EU.

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World cafe on migration

Advocacy, Activist



The activity is designed in a World Café format, which is intended for in-depth discussion, analysis and consideration of different opinions, proposals and solutions. It is suitable for both small and large groups of participants and is useful for exploring all topics.



Target group

We worked with young people aged 15 to 23 years old but the age is actually unlimited for this method.

Minimum 10 people; it works better with groups of up to 30 people, but it can also be adapted for larger groups



Time needed

Depending on the number of rounds, each round should take around 15 minutes.



Environment

A room or a space large enough for all the participants. The room should be equipped with sufficient chairs and tables.



Materials

- Post-its
- Markers
- Pencils
- Flipcharts
- A board

Objective/aim

The activity aims to share and integrate as many different views and perspectives on migration as possible, with the participation of all participants, and to bring them together.

Step by step instructions

Preparation

The whole space is set up like a café. Participants form groups of four to six people (depending on the number of participants) around the tables; each table has paper and pens.

Step 1

For each table, you need one participant to act as a volunteer table host/facilitator (it is helpful if they already have some facilitation skills). Their role is to ensure an open, clear and respectful conversation. The hosts always remain at their table while other participants change tables. In each round, the hosts summarise the main ideas and key findings of the previous rounds for the new participants. At the end of the process, they summarise the key findings reached at their table.

Step 2

Divide the participants into several groups according to the number of tables and assign each group to their table. (10 min)

Step 3

Ask an introductory question on migration. All questions should be written on the board in the middle of the room or printed on cards on the table; in any case, they should be visible to all.

Possible questions:

- What are the reasons for people leaving their place of origin?
- Do you think this has changed throughout history? If so, how?

The tables record their cues, thoughts, and introductions on a large sheet of paper or a board. The trainer should move around the tables during the discussion to encourage participation and debate.

Step 4

Signal that the first round is over and ask participants (except the hosts) to move to a new table. Continue with further rounds of discussion.

Possible questions for each round:

- In what ways can people who arrive in a new environment influence it?
- In what ways does the new environment influence the people who enter it?
- What are the challenges of migration? (for the people who migrate and for the environment they arrive to)
- What are the opportunities that migration presents? (for the people who migrate and for the environment they arrive to)
- In what ways could we create and ensure peaceful, fruitful and mutually understanding coexistence between migrants and their new environment?

Step 5

Reflection phase

The hosts are given five minutes to summarise the findings of their tables. Then ask participants if there is anything they would like to clarify or change, and explain what will happen with the World Café results (e.g. the pooling of ideas and insights and in-depth analysis). Then, thank participants for their participation and officially close the World Café. (25 min)



Tips for the trainer

For a real café atmosphere, there may be drinks, biscuits, flowers, etc. on the table.

Timekeeping is an important thing - having an extra person to watch time is very helpful.

It is also useful to have a bell or some other tool with which you can announce the time to change the table



Comment

In the project we worked on the topics of migration and climate crisis.



Source

Adapted from

User participation: <https://www.user-participation.eu/sl/nacrtovanje-procesa/5-korak-participativne-metode/nacrtovanje-prihodnosti-vizije-strategije-projekti/svetovna-kavarna>

Društvo moderatorjev Slovenije (SLOVENIAN ASSOCIATION OF FACILITATORS):

<https://drustvo-moderatorjev.si/o-moderiranju/primeri-iz-prakse/svetovna-kavarna/>



Alternative

You can change the questions or adapt them to the level of the age group. You can also use the methods for a different topic you want to address.

In this project, we worked on the 2024 European Parliament elections and held an additional session ahead of the World Café focusing on the party groups' election programmes.

If you are also working with young people on elections, you can adapt this method as follows: Print out all the election programmes of all running parties or party groups concerning a specific topic. Some parties might have ten pages on it, while others might not even mention it or only include a single sentence. Prepare the prints on different tables in the room with a clear marking of which party's programme it is.

Then, divide the participants into smaller groups and assign each group to work on a specific party's programme.

The first question for them is to summarise the party's demands on that specific topic.

In the next step, they should discuss together what they think about it, if they agree/do not agree with those demands, or what might be missing.

In the third step, they can make their own suggestions.

Instead of the third step, you can also open up into a more general World Café discussion on the same topic as described here. In the end, the groups can present their work to the others, so everyone gets an insight into the different election programmes and a critical reflection about them. It is important to make space for critical discussions on the demands and programmes and clarify terms if needed.

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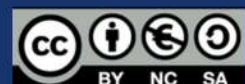


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Purple Yellow Country Game

Artistic, Activist

The activity is a simulation game where participants are divided into two groups, the purple group and the yellow group symbolising two countries.

The purple country is flooded due to the climate crisis, and the purple people have to flee in fear of drowning. The yellow country notices what happened to the purple country, they live in a capitalist wealthy society. As they are very hardworking and busy with their lives, they have not yet agreed on any solutions.



Target group

Young people aged 15-30

Min. 4 - max. 30 people – 2 groups



Environment

A room or a space big enough for all the participants



Time needed

60-80 mins



Alternative

Purple-Yellow-Game as a forum theatre Intervention in a public space (5 mins plus 40 mins interventions with strangers – needs at least one rehearsal before and a good preparation for the moderator)



Tips for the trainer

Ask questions about the countries in the beginning (food, clothing, colour etc.). This helps that the participants really identify with their country. Affirm the ideas that the participants voice by repeating them loudly. The exercise requires compassion so as not to trigger any of the participants – the trainer could ask if any of the participants has traumatic experiences with floods, other catastrophes.



Comment

The exercise was developed for young activists to try out their ideas concerning climate change and migration. When we played the game, some participants decided that they would rather drown instead of fleeing and that decision-making took so long, that political and financial aid from the wealthy state came too late. Regardless, some other activists chose immediate help over longer democratic processes. The game might have individual ideas/outcomes. This also varies between different groups, their characteristics and group dynamics.



Source

Developed by project participants Caleb Zöttl and Ida Bürgermeister based on methods of the Theatre of Oppression

Objective/aim

The aim of the activity is to give participants the possibility to put themselves in the shoes of migrants, decision makers, oppressors and oppressed people. The activity allows participants to test their solution ideas since they can try them out within their country group

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Divide the participants into two groups and explain that they symbolise two countries. Each country chooses a colour they identify with (e.g. purple, yellow etc.) and a signature food of their country. Explain that one country gets flooded and the other one country is safe and wealthy.

Step 2

Both groups are asked about what they are going to do about this and how they react in their individual situation.

Step 3

Participants are invited to try out their different ideas of reacting to the issue by voicing their ideas out loud and discussing them, by talking to people of the other country, by moving there and supporting their needs etc.

Step 4

The game leader moderates the theatrical improvisation of the different ideas and discusses the possible consequences of the improvisations.

Step 5

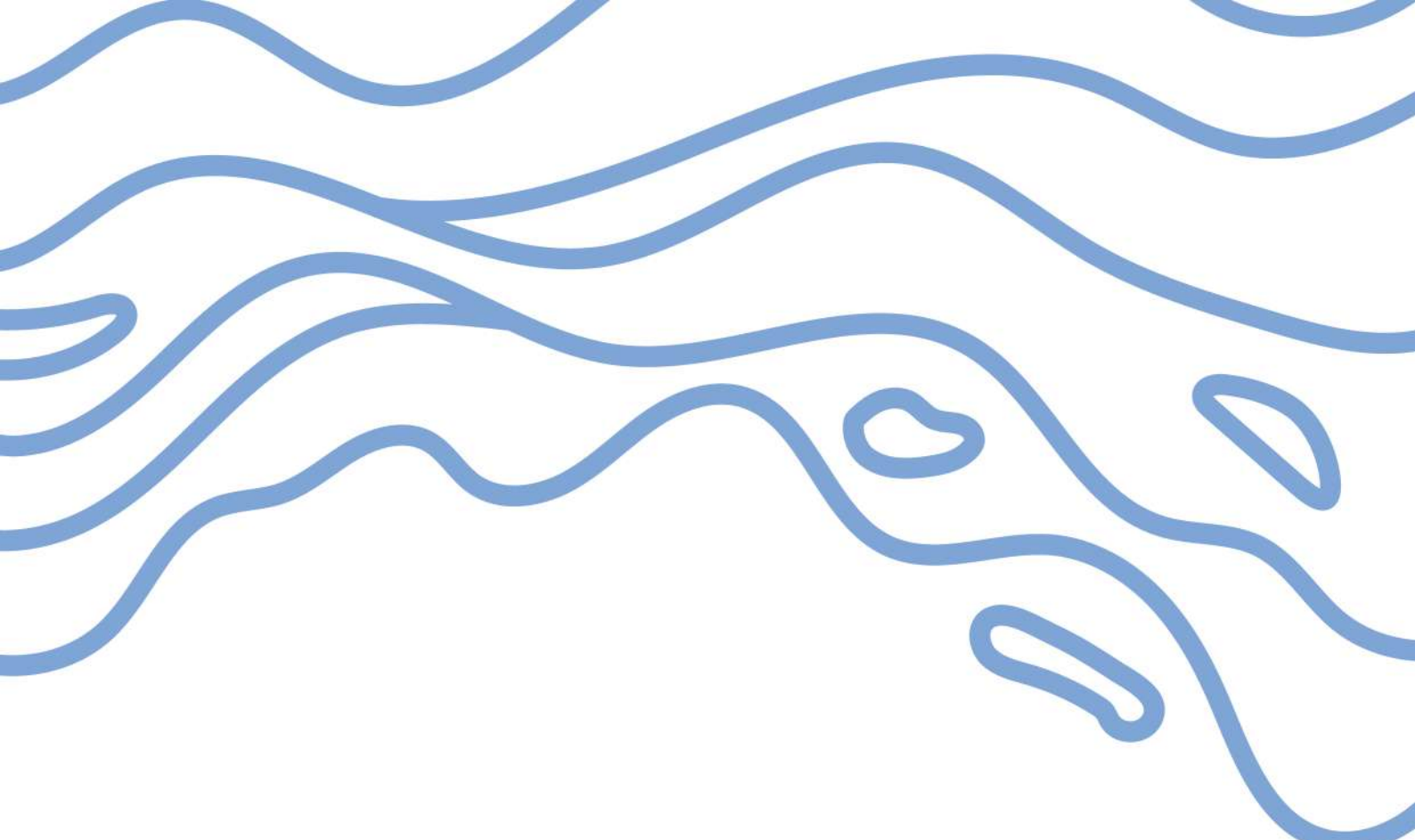
Individual game outcomes

Maybe people have drowned, maybe people have fled to the other country, maybe democratic decisions took so long that all people died, maybe some activists did not wait for democratic decisions and went over to help, maybe they built a bridge between those two countries, maybe they have found some short-term emergency and/or long term solutions that work for one or both countries.

Step 6

Reflection

- How was it for you?
- What did you see?
- How do you feel about your own activism, political decision-making, and responsibilities?



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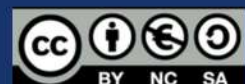
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Scenes of Change: Forum Theatre with SDGs

Artistic, Activist, Advocacy



The workshop introduces participants to Forum Theatre techniques from Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, integrating themes from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through group work, creative scene development and interactive performance, participants critically explore social and global issues.



Target group

Young people aged 15-35

Min. 5 - max. 26 people, divided in smaller groups of 3 to 7 participants



Environment

A large indoor or outdoor space with enough room for all groups to rehearse and perform separately



Time needed

2,5-6 hours



Materials

- Theoretical input (e.g. PowerPoint)
- SDGs cards or summaries
- A safer space agreement (see: Method Group Agreement)

Objective/aim

The aim of the activity is to empower participants to explore social and global issues using Forum Theatre methods. By embodying conflicts and experimenting with interventions, they learn to imagine and rehearse alternative solutions. It encourages critical thinking, empathy, collective problem-solving, and the development of alternative solutions to real-life challenges represented in theatrical scenes.

Step by step instructions

Step 1 - Theoretical Input - 15 min

- Brief introduction to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): What are they and why are they relevant?
- Example: SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions): Indigenous communities in Colombia and peace dialogues.
- Explain that participants will work with an SDG that resonates with them, creating short scenes using Forum Theatre methods.
- Visual support: draw or show the "Forum Theatre curve" (e.g., conflict escalation and transformation).

Step 2 - Warm up exercise - 5 min

- Walk freely around the room
- Imagine a character that is not yourself (pause and raise hands once imagined).
- Choose an inner number (1 = insecure, 10 = very secure) and an outer number (1 = visibly insecure, 10 = completely confident).
- Interact with others as this character (greet, introduce yourself and show your 'habitus').
- Shake off the character at the end.

Step 3 - Create scenes - 25 min

Form 3 groups that create a short scene with no happy ending. The groups have 20 minutes time for a 1-2min scene.

Choose one clear theme with a conflict, everybody embodies a character in the situation.

Choose one SDG, afterwards the groups get three words to create a scene around.

- SDG 1 No poverty: SLandlord, capitalism, single father
- SDG 2 Zero hunger: Supermarket, food waste, asylum seeker
- SDG 3 Good health and well-being: Factory, ambulance, worker
- SDG 4 Quality education: Private school, socioeconomic background, student
- SDG 5 Gender equality: News channel, sexism, non-binary person
- SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation: Contamination, privatisation of water, girl

- SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy: Gas, inflation, dog
- SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth: Textile factory, riot, woman leading the department
- SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure: Investment, traffic, nurse
- SDG 10 Reduced inequalities: Bureaucracy, deportation, hiding person
- SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities: Smog, corruption, mayor
- SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production: Smartphone producer, increased consumption, teenagers working in a mine
- SDG 13 Climate action: Government, coal energy, family
- SDG 14 Life below water: Trawling nets, species extinction, fisher
- SDG 15 Life on land: Forest, biodiversity, Indigenous community
- SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions: Group of rebels, dictator, siblings fleeing
- SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals: Nuclear bomb, economic sanctions, president

Step 4 - Perform and intervene - 1-5 h

- One group at a time presents their scene.
- Scenes are repeated; now the audience can stop the performance and intervene either by:
 - a) Stepping in to replace a character, or
 - b) Asking questions to the performers before the scene continues.
- Rule: You cannot take the oppressor's highest power position to solve the conflict.
- Only one intervention per group per round; on-stage participants stay in character, those stepping in try to propose improvements or alternatives.
- Joker moderation: countdown "3, 2, 1, action", then ask: What feels wrong on stage? What is each character's secret wish? Discuss with the audience and actors how the intervention felt and what changed.

Step 5 - Debrief - 15 min

Take time to properly debrief this experience in smaller groups or a plenary depending on group size.



Tips for the trainer

- Familiarise yourself with the Theatre of the Oppressed literature; safe facilitation of interventions is essential.
- With less time, focus on the theoretical input and one or two warm-ups, then allow each group to create shorter or combined scenes. Limit interventions to one per group if needed.



Comment

This structure is suitable for both educational and training contexts where experiential learning and social engagement are central. Be mindful of group dynamics, ensure a safer space for creative expression, and allow enough time for meaningful debriefing.



Alternative

You can carry out this activity in different ways according to the participants' experience level, group size, and available time. For example, theoretical input can be presented via video or digital slides instead of a flipchart. The reflection at the end can be done as a group discussion instead of individual written work.



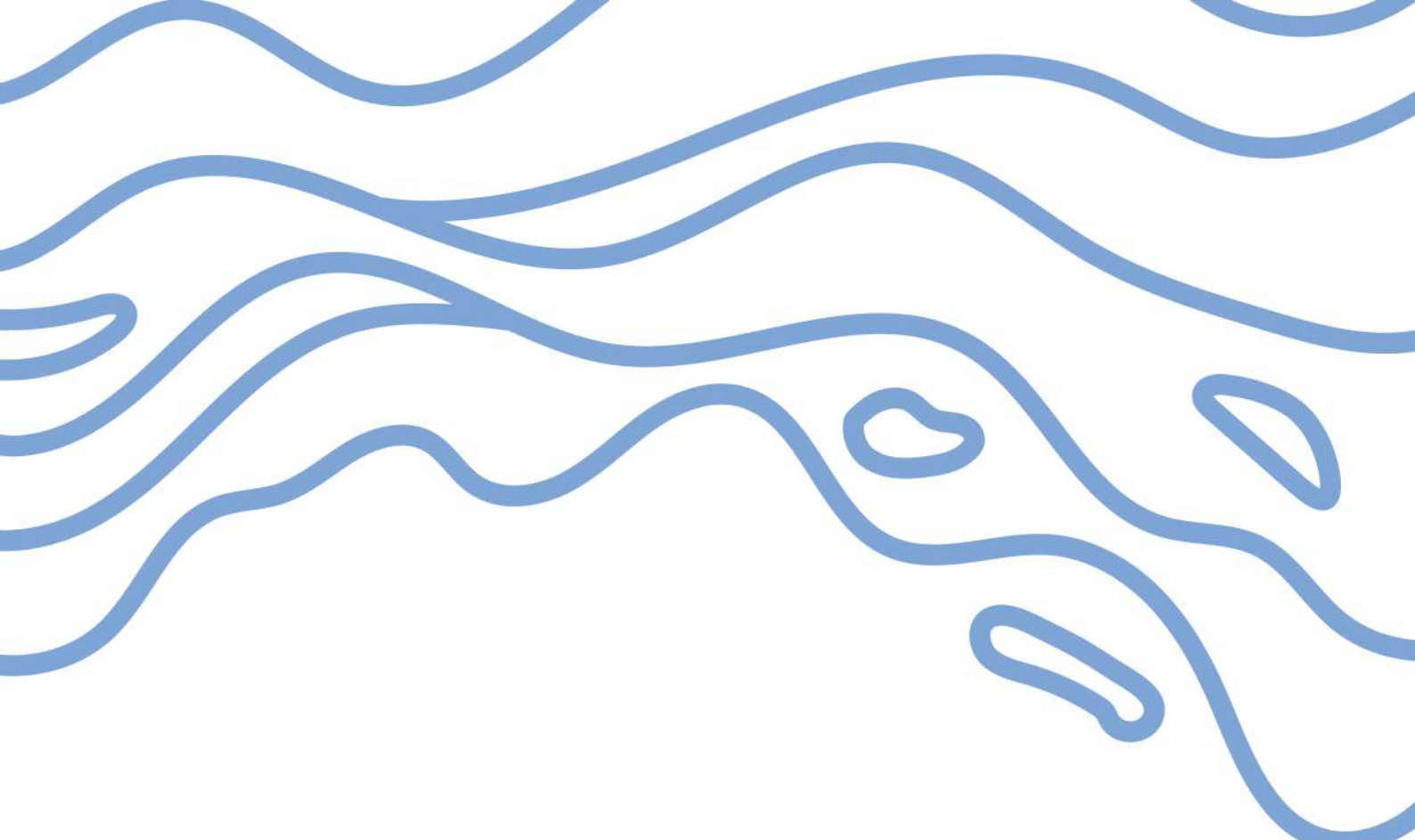
Source

This setting was invented and described for a Master Thesis by a participant, Ida Bürgermeister:

- Bürgermeister, I. (2025). *Scenes of Change – An Action Research on the Application of Forum Theatre in ESD and Green Pedagogy*. Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltpädagogik

Important literature:

- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [Department of Economic and Social Affairs]. <https://sdgs.un.org/publications/transforming-our-world-2030-agenda-sustainable-development-17981>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. <https://www.fachportal-paedagogik.de/literatur/vollanzeige.html?FId=3073910>
- Boal, A. (2013). *Übungen und Spiele für Schauspieler und Nicht-Schauspieler*. Suhrkamp Verlag.



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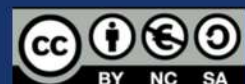
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The Game of 7

Artistic



Participants test their reaction time, attention, and inhibition in a failure-friendly environment.



Target group

Any group of participants who are able to hear and move their upper limbs (although alternatives are listed below). Preferred age 12+, however, the game can also be adapted for younger people.

Min. 5, max 30.



Environment

A room or a space large enough for all participants



Time needed

10–20 minutes

Objective/aim

The aim of the activity is to develop attention span and reaction time, while playing with the topic of failure.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Setup!

1 minute

Participants are divided into group(s) of 5-9 people, standing in circles, facing the inside of the circle. One person starts with passing the "impulse" by tapping their left or right shoulder while saying loudly "One!". The person who is standing on the side of the shoulder tapped – is the next one to act. They tap either their left or right shoulder, while saying loudly "Two!". Then the same happens, until the number "Seven!" is reached. After that – the next person starts from "One!".

Step 2

Challenge!

1 minute

Instead of saying "Seven!" – the seventh person jumps up in silence, arms along their body. The signal goes "through" them to the next person, who then starts with "One!". For example, if the person saying "Six!" taps their left arm, the person to their left jumps up in silence, and then the next person to the left says "One" and taps their shoulder as in step 1.

Step 3

Failure?

3 minutes

A person makes a mistake when instead of jumping in silence while being the seventh they say "Seven!" or if they get the number order wrong. Everyone is a judge of their own mistakes – we avoid pointing fingers but allow them to realise they messed up. When someone realises they have made a mistake – they make one round running around the circle, while shouting happily "Yes! I've made a mistake! Hurray!" – or something along these lines. After running, they rejoin the group. Meanwhile the group can continue playing, omitting the running person.

Step 4

3-10 minutes

Encourage participants to pick a tempo and stick to it. Now there is one additional mistake condition – skipping the tempo by reacting too slowly.

Step 5

3-10 minutes

If you play in two or more groups – if someone makes a mistake – they run around shouting happily, but then join the group with the least number of participants.

Step 6

The game can last indefinitely – there is no "winning" condition.



Tips for the trainer

Presentation and explaining the rules

It is easier to show the game than explain it with words. I usually explain to one group, ask the others to observe and then make a round through the groups to make sure everyone understands Step 1 before moving further. The same goes for every other step. Once the game starts – it is better to explain next steps to one group at a time.

Not feeling happy?

If someone does not want to shout – it is ok! They can express their emotions any other way – by jumping or moving their arms while running or humming to themselves.

You can also opt not for "Hurray, I've made a mistake" but "Ohhh noooo, I've made a mistake" shouted in a failure mocking way.

How to make it more challenging?

1. If there are more languages spoken in your group – after Step 5 you can propose the participants to count in their native language. Bonus points for using numbers they've picked up in the game!
2. You can exchange any number with any activity – for example instead of saying "Two!" – make a pirouette or say one of the "Youth Demands". This way the game can be transformed into a performative act.
3. Speed up the tempo! The game gets more challenging when played at high speed. Make sure that the group adapts the tempo to the most resisting participants.

How to make it less challenging?

1. Start slow!
2. Emphasis that everyone is responsible for recognising their own mistakes.



Alternative

If participants you play with can't stand or jump – the game can be played while seated or lying down. Exchange the jump for a motion that's in your participant's area of capability.

Your participants cannot hear? Ask them to show the numbers with their fingers or use their National Sign Language.

Younger participants? Let them count to 4 instead of 7.



Source

This is a variation of the Clowning game we use in circus practice in order to develop awareness and reaction time. In improvisation and on stage – quick wit is the king. We learn to stay vigilant, react swiftly but also – not get into the routine by adapting your behaviour to the varying rules. Step 5, multilingual and inclusive variants designed by Adam Banach.



Comment

When we implemented this dynamic, it served as a perfect release of tension. We were in a difficult phase of the creative process, and seeing how both participants and staff allowed themselves to play, make mistakes, and even celebrate them created a truly special experience

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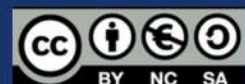


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The Game of Sticks

Artistic



Participants duel each other in a dexterity-based game, while adopting various roles.



Target group

Young people 12+

Min. 2 - max. 30



Time needed

30-60 minutes



Environment

A room or a space large enough for all the participants



Materials

One smooth stick (at least 1.2 m long) per participant

Objective/aim

- Practise distinguishing yourself from your character through embodied role-play.
- Develop agility, presence and focused attention.
- Explore physical thresholds and transitions (inspired by Michael Chekhov's technique)

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Setup

3 min

- Create a circle using the sticks, with ends touching.
- Participants stand around the outside, one step away, facing inwards.

Step 2

Explain the Game of Sticks

1 minute

Use a live demonstration with a participant.

Basic rules:

- Two players stand one stick-length apart.
- Hold the stick vertically between them, one end touching the ground.
- One player tilts and pushes the stick to the other, who catches it before it falls and returns it.
- Keep one end of the stick on the ground at all times.
- Increase speed or change direction suddenly to make it more challenging.
- If the stick drops, the other player scores a point.
- Keep this explanation under one minute. You may demonstrate again once players are in character.

Step 3

Crossing the Threshold – Entering Role

2-5 minutes

Explain that the circle represents a threshold from your daily self into a character. First role: A child.

Transition Ritual:

- Step forward and place a hand inside the circle. Imagine it is the hand of a child.
- Take the hand back – it becomes your ordinary hand again. Then repeat with your foot, then your head – one at a time.
- When ready, step fully into the circle and take your first breath "as a child."
- Pick up a stick and find a partner.

Step 4

The Game (in role)

3-8 minutes

Participants play the Game of Sticks while staying in character.

Introduce variations (e.g. touch the stick only with your head, feet, or back). Switch partners once or twice.

Step 5

Return

3-5 minutes

Participants say goodbye to their partner, find a personal space and place their stick flat on the ground.

When ready, step back over the threshold and return to your everyday self.

Rebuild the circle with the sticks.

Step 6

New Rounds

(circa 8 minutes each)

Repeat with different roles: e.g. activist, athlete, politician, teacher...

Each role begins with the same threshold ritual.

Step 7

Group Discussion

10 minutes

Use questions:

- "What changed in your attitude toward the game in each role?"
- "What shifted in how you interacted with partners?"
- "What did the threshold mean to you?"

Leave space for emotional reflection.



Tips for the trainer

This game is very open ended - adapt the roles to suit the purpose of your training.

During the game step, the level of prompting needed to keep participants in character may vary. Some may need constant reminders to remain in character. Avoid using judgmental language; instead, use neutral phrases like, 'Let's connect with our inner child' or 'Let's stay in our child role.'

This game requires agility and activity - it works best after a warm-up.

You can also explain the rules while participants are already in role. However, the child role can make it challenging to concentrate on instructions at the same time.



Comment

When we implemented this activity, we realised that for many young people it was the first time they had consciously made a distinction between their own person and a character they play. This distinction is vital both for the quality of performance and their psychological well-being.



Alternative

If there is an uneven number of participants - you can participate yourself or ask one pair to form a group of three instead.

For people with alternative motorics - the game itself is a secondary objective of the activity. You can exchange it to any other activity that lies within your group's capabilities. The threshold itself can be hanging over the participant (e.g. to not obstruct the movement) or be made of fabric.



Source

The exercise is the mixture of classic physical theatre and circus exercises with a stick and "crossing the threshold" practice from Michael Chekhov. It was developed for the purposes of the My Elections - My EU! project by Adam Banach.

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Chain of associations

Advocacy, Activist



The method allows participants to come up with a series of words associated with a designated topic. You can use them to create a slogan or a name – primarily, it stimulates your brain to think more deeply about a given topic.

Objective/aim

This method helps collect words useful for creating a slogan, manifesto, banner text, etc. It can also be used as a warm-up before discussing a specific topic.

Step by step instructions

Participants stand in a circle. Although the method works well in small groups (e.g. 5 people), it offers greater possibilities when used with larger groups (around a dozen participants or more).

The trainer designates a first basic word and passes it to the first participant. Each subsequent person should say the next word they associate with the previous one as quickly as possible. Ideally, each person has no more than two seconds to respond. Emphasise that useful responses can include nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

Example: forest → trees → leaves → green → growing → etc.



Target group

Preferable age 12+, though the method can be adapted for younger participants
Min. 5, also suitable for larger groups



Environment

A room or a space large enough for all participants



Time needed

5 minutes or more, depending on group size



Materials

A board or flipchart, markers (for the alternative version: a piece of paper and pen).



Tips for the trainer

You can record all the associated words and later use them to work on creating a name, slogan, banner text, etc.



Alternative

Instead of speaking, you can pass around a piece of paper and ask participants to write down the next associated word. This version works better with quieter participants.



Comment

The number of rounds in the circle depends on how many words are needed – one round may be enough for larger groups, several for smaller ones.

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Privilege walk

Activist

A privilege walk is a structured activity, often used in workshops or educational settings, designed to help participants understand how social privileges and disadvantages influence their lives. It involves participants standing in a line and taking steps forward or backward based on statements about their experiences and characteristics, revealing how different groups may have varying advantages or disadvantages.



Target group

Young people 15+

Min. 3



Time needed

1.5-2 hours



Tips for the trainer

Sensitivity

The activity can be emotionally challenging, especially to participants who did make no or only a few steps forward. It is crucial to create a safe and supportive environment or offer a one-to-one conversation to every participant beforehand, if they do not want to share their feelings or experiences after the exercise with the whole group.

Ground Rules

Clear ground rules, including respecting others' experiences and listening without judgment, are essential.

Debriefing

Ask the participants before the Reflection how they want to share their experiences during the exercise. A thorough debriefing session is crucial to help participants process them and discuss the broader implications of privilege and power within our society.



Environment

A room or a space big enough for all participants



Materials

Prepared statements



Alternative

Alternatives like "The Power House Activity" are available for those seeking a less emotionally intense approach.

The activity can also be done with closed eyes until all statements have been read.



Source

Written by project participant Anastas Krusińska and edited by Südwind, seen on various awareness, inclusivity and non-discrimination projects. Some sources:

· <https://leadershipfordiversity.eu/ehub-post/privilege-walk/>

· https://www.evoves.com.au/the-privilege-walk/?fbclid=IwY2xjawLbXCtleHRuA2FlbQlXMAbicmlkETBsTkpEamphcVAzYk5qRU5TAR4pnPFX6lRg7Q9H4nwKmVV836EKP5KM_jCkAxF4Uo8euqSWhAupdlDyBPLJLQ_aem_ZKc-BdRIIDFBBad3OnfdNg

Additional source:

<https://students.dartmouth.edu/opal/education/introduction-power-privilege-and-social-justice>

Objective/aim

- To explore the concept of privilege in our society and its impact on individuals and groups.
- To promote self-awareness and understanding of one's own position within social structures.
- To encourage empathy and inclusivity by highlighting the different experiences of individuals.
- To initiate conversations about power dynamics and social justice.

Step by step instructions

Step 1 - 20 min

Set the ground rules for respectful communication and equal participation before you start with the exercise. Involve participants in setting these rules (e.g. by using the brainstorming method or creating a group agreement - see another method in this Toolkit: Group agreement). This may help participants to remember and accept the ground rules more easily.

It is important to create a safer space before the start of the exercise and to create awareness of the possibility of negative experiences during the exercise.

Offer the participants that they do not have to participate and may step out at any time if they feel uncomfortable with the situation.

Step 2 - 30 min - Introduction

Provide an introduction to the concept of privilege in our society, what it means and how it gives power to specific groups/individuals and how it affects specific groups/individuals.

That privileges are advantages and favours that individuals receive because of their membership of a social group and that privileges are often the result of systematic targeting and/or marginalisation of another social group. Give examples for social groups (e.g. based on gender, race, social class, religion, etc.).

Step 3 - 5 min - Setup

Participants form a line, facing forward.

Step 4 - Statements

Explain that you will read out statements and that participants shall take a step forward if the statement applies to them. The facilitator starts to read statements that describe situations or circumstances, some reflecting privilege and others reflecting disadvantage.

Step 5 - 20 min - Movement

Participants step forward if the statement applies to them and step back if it does not.

Step 6 - 5 min - Observation

Participants are encouraged to observe the distribution of people as the walk progresses, noticing how groups may cluster together or spread out.

Step 7 - 30 min or more - Debriefing/Reflection

A discussion follows, allowing participants to share their reflections on the experience and the concepts of privilege and disadvantage.

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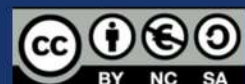
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Creating a Short Documentary Film with a Personal Story

Artistic, Advocacy, Activist



This activity guides participants through the process of creating a short documentary film that combines a personal journey with deeper social themes. Inspired by Stela Joudal's film *3 days* (Film_3 DAYS_My Elections_My EU_Stela Joudal.mov), who created a dual portrait of her journey to Lampedusa contrasted with the story of a young refugee. Participants will learn how to plan, film, edit and distribute their own short documentary film that explores personal experiences in the context of broader social issues.

Objective/aim

- Learn the basics of documentary filmmaking from concept to distribution
- Process personal experiences through artistic expression
- Connect personal stories with broader social themes
- Develop critical thinking and research skills
- Gain confidence in presenting your own work
- Create a meaningful document that can influence perceptions of important issues
- Learn basics of ethical approaches to sensitive topics



Target group

Young adults, anyone interested in documentary filmmaking and social issues

1-8 participants (ideally 3-5 for mutual support and experience sharing)



Time needed

3-6 months total process (flexible depending on the scope of the project):

Planning and preparation: 2-4 weeks

Filming: 1-4 weeks (depending on journey/project length)

Post-production: 4-8 weeks

Distribution: ongoing after completion

Workshop introduction: 3-4 hours

Step by step instructions

Phase 1 - Planning and conception

2-4 weeks

In "My Elections - My EU!" we focused on the topic of climate change and migration. We identified themes and perspectives that interested us most about that topic and then searched for a personal connection to it. We dealt with the question of who we want to connect our story with this topic, in a visual way, storyboard etc. We then documented our experience on the travels to Lampedusa, Zicksee, Brussels and our home countries.

Phase 2 - Preliminary research

1-2 weeks

Then we researched about the topic, got insights from NGO workers, experts on the theme and artists and did interviews with local people.

Phase 3 - Filming

1-4 weeks

- Film long takes - they will be useful in editing
- Document the entire process, including preparations and reflections
- Capture authentic moments and emotions
- Plan B-roll footage (supplementary images)

Phase 4 - In-depth research

2-3 weeks

- Continue research even after filming
- Verify facts and gain more perspectives on the topic
- For sensitive topics, consider ethical aspects of processing

Phase 5 - Editing and post-production

4-6 weeks

The artist then supported participants in editing their material - in short videos, or short documentations.

- Select material and create a rough cut
- Show work-in-progress version to target audience for feedback
- Complete visual and audio post-production
- Create a final version of the film

Phase 6 - Distribution

ongoing

- Identify suitable venues for screening (festivals, schools, premises of NGOs)
- Prepare a film presentation and a topic discussion
- Use social media and online platforms



Environment

Varied - part of the work takes place outdoors during filming, part at a studio, with access to computers with editing software (post-production). For workshops/presentations, a suitable room with projector and video playback capability is needed.



Tips for the trainer

- Emphasise importance of ethical approaches, especially when working with sensitive topics
- Encourage participants to have confidence and not be afraid to experiment
- Remind that long takes are better than short ones - you will appreciate the choice in editing
- Help participants find balance between personal story and broader context
- Emphasize importance of thorough research - people will expect expertise from them
- Encourage seeking mentors or more experienced filmmakers
- Prepare participants that the process will be long and demanding, but very enriching
- Film long takes - they will be useful in editing



Comment

This activity is particularly effective for young people who are looking for ways to make sense of their experiences through film. By combining a personal story with a wider social issue, authentic and powerful documents are created. Participants often find that the process of making films helps them to process their own experiences and gain a deeper understanding of complex issues. It is important to prepare participants for the fact that a good documentary film requires time, patience and thorough preparation. The success of Stela Joudal, who was honoured at her first festival, shows that authentic stories can reach both audiences and professionals.



Materials

Equipment

- Recording device (smartphone, camera with video function, or professional camera)
- Microphone for quality audio (external or built-in)
- Stabilizer or tripod (optional)
- Sufficient storage/memory cards
- Quality vs. practicality

Software

- Editing program
- Computer with sufficient performance

Other

- Notebook for planning
- Internet access for research



Alternative

- Collective version: Group of participants creates a film together, each contributing their personal story
- Online version: Film can be created solely from home, without travelling
- Shorter version: Instead of long documentary, create a series of short videos for social media
- Thematic variants: Focus on other social topics (climate change, social inequalities, technology)
- Workshop format: One-week intensive workshop with a fast process from concept to rough cut



Source

Inspired by Stela Joudal's experience filming a documentary within the "My Elections - My EU!" project, combined with principles of documentary filmmaking and ethical storytelling

Voices through Water

The Creative and Activist Methodologies Toolkit

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Film/Audio documentary: Message to Your Best Friend

Artistic, Advocacy, Activist



This activity invites participants to create a brief documentary-style message to their best friend about a specific place or situation. By framing observations as a personal message, participants develop a storytelling approach that balances journalistic reporting with a personal perspective, resulting in a video or audio piece of 2-3 minutes in length.

We used this method to reflect about our travels during the project, reflect about our feelings and observations and practise sharing them with others.



Target group

Young people; media students, content creators, journalists, or anyone interested in documentary storytelling

Min. 1- max. 20 participants (can be done individually or in small groups of 2-3 people)



Time needed

1.5-2 hours



Environment

Any environment – can be completed on site or prepared in the classroom prior to recording



Materials

- Smartphones or cameras for video recording
- Notebooks, pens and pads for scripting
- Optional: Basic editing apps on phones

Objective/aim

- Develop skills in observational storytelling and documentary techniques
- Practice balancing objective reporting with personal perspective
- Explore documentary as a tool for sharing observations and as an inspiring action

Step by step instructions

Step 1 - Introduction

10 minutes

- Explain the concept: creating a documentary message for a close friend
- Briefly discuss balancing factual reporting with personal reaction

Step 2 - Location/Topic Selection & Script Development

20 minutes

- Participants quickly identify a place, situation, or issue to document
- Create a simple outline including:
 - Where they are and what they are observing
 - Key facts about the place/situation
 - Personal reactions
 - Possible solutions or next steps (if applicable)

Step 3 - Technical Tips

5 minutes

Basic recording tips for smartphone video/audio:

- Hold your phone horizontally (landscape) unless you specifically need vertical footage.
- Natural light is your friend - position yourself so light falls on your subject's face, not behind them.
- Get as close to your subject as possible - phone mics work best within 3-6 feet.
- Shoot in the highest resolution your phone offers and always start with a full battery and plenty of storage space. Bring a power bank for longer shoots.
- A reminder about ethical considerations when filming in public:

Consent and Transparency - Always identify yourself as a filmmaker and explain your project when approaching people. Avoid filming people in vulnerable situations even if they're in public.

Cultural Sensitivity - Research local customs and cultural norms before filming. What's acceptable in one community may be offensive in another.

Step 4 - Recording/Filming

45 minutes

- Participants go to their chosen locations (ideally nearby)
- Record their documentary messages (aim for 2-3 minutes final length)
- Capture any supporting footage/audio

Step 5 - Review and Basic Assembly

30 minutes

Return to the meeting space

- Review footage and select the best takes
- Simple arranging of material (minimal editing)

Step 6 - Sharing & Reflection

10 minutes

- Watch/listen to the created documentaries
- Brief discussion on effectiveness and potential applications



Tips for the trainer

- Choose a location with several interesting documentary possibilities nearby
- Emphasise that technical perfection is less important than storytelling
- For an even tighter schedule, have participants work in couples where one films while the other one speaks
- Suggest having a simple structure: introduction, 3 key observations, personal reaction, conclusion
- Remind participants that shorter is often better - aim for clarity and impact
- Be mindful of filming people who may be experiencing homelessness, mental health crises, or other difficult circumstances.
- Just in case, make sure you have enough space to store your recorded material. Keep an eye on the weather and any sudden changes.



Comment

The short version of this activity emphasises spontaneity and instinctive storytelling over elaborate production. The time constraints help participants focus on the most important elements of their message rather than getting lost in perfectionism. The resulting short documentaries are often characterised by an engaging immediacy that lends itself well to social media and quick communication.



Alternative

Online implementation:

- Have participants document their immediate surroundings or a space visible from their windows
- Use video conferencing breakout rooms for small group planning
- Create screen recordings with voice-over for participants who prefer not to film physical spaces
- Share drafts of scripts in collaborative documents before recording
- Use a digital shared folder for submitting finished pieces
- During the sharing phase, use screen sharing to present the documentaries
- For reflection, create a digital feedback form in addition to verbal discussion



Source

Adapted from rapid documentary techniques used in mobile journalism training by Ivona Remundová

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Winning an Oscar

Artistic



'Winning an Oscar' is a creative visualisation exercise in which participants imagine receiving a prestigious award for their project and prepare an acceptance speech. This forward-thinking activity helps groups envision the journey of their project from inception to successful completion, define goals, recognise potential challenges and identify necessary resources - all before they have even started.



Target group

Artists, activists, creative professionals, students, or any group like the participants of My Elections - My EU! starting a collaborative project

Min. 4 - max. 25 participants (can also work with larger groups if divided into subgroups of 4-6 people)



Environment

Indoor space with sufficient room for small groups to work separately without disturbing each other; comfortable seating arranged in circles for each group. Online participation is also possible



Time needed

60-90 minutes (15 minutes for introduction, 30-45 minutes for group work, 15-30 minutes for presentations)

Objective/aim

- Help participants envision the successful completion of their project
- Identify the key elements required for project success
- Clarify project objectives, messages, and intended impact
- Build team cohesion through collaborative planning
- Encourage creative thinking about potential challenges and solutions
- Assemble the necessary resources, collaborators, and support networks



Materials

- A large piece of paper or poster board for each group
- Markers, pens, or pencils
- Optional: mock award (could be a toy trophy or a handmade paper award)
- Optional: podium or designated "stage" area for final presentations
- Optional: a timer for monitoring the preparation and presentation

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Introduction

15 minutes

- Explain the concept: Participants will imagine receiving a prestigious award for their completed project
- Describe what makes a good acceptance speech (gratitude, acknowledging challenges, sharing impact)

Step 2

Group Formation

5 minutes

- Divide participants into small groups of 4-6 people
- If they already have project groups, use them

Step 3

Speech Planning

30-40 minutes

- Groups discuss and plan their acceptance speech
- They should address:
 - Project inspiration and origin of their story
 - Main message and goals
 - The problem or issue addressed
 - Challenges faced and how they were overcome
 - Key discoveries made during the process
 - People and resources that were essential for the success
- The project's impact and ideal outcome
- Groups should write out key points or a full script

Step 4

Speech Delivery

25-40 minutes

- Ideally, everyone takes part in presenting the speeches
- Groups present their acceptance speeches (5-10 minutes for each group including a buffer time for logistics – depends on number of groups)
- Optional: A mock award to be handed over to the speakers to intensify the feeling of completing the project successfully

Step 5

Reflection

10 minutes

- Discuss how this exercise helps reveals what is important for their project
- Identify concrete steps they can now take based on their future vision



Tips for the trainer

- Encourage participants to be specific rather than general in their speeches
- Recommend participants to select from a range of the topics to choose the one that was the most important for them, or the one they believe is crucial for the successful completion of the project
- Remind groups to balance ambition with realism in their project vision
- If working with shy participants, emphasise that the activity is about planning, not performance
- For groups struggling with the concept, provide a template with questions or guiding phrases
- Keep the atmosphere playful and celebratory, not competitive
- Take notes during presentations to highlight valuable insights during reflection



Comment

This exercise is particularly effective at the beginning of long-term projects as it creates a shared vision and helps identify potential challenges before they arise. It also infuses the planning process with positive energy by focusing on success rather than obstacles. Participants often report that by imagining success in detail, they become more motivated and develop clearer pathways to achieve their goals.



Alternative

- For online implementation, use breakout rooms for group discussions and shared digital documents for collaborative writing
- For individual projects, participants can write personal acceptance speeches and share them in pairs
- Film the speeches as time capsules to revisit at the end of the project.



Source

Adapted from creative visualisation techniques in project planning and theatre-based exercises for collaborative work, written by Ivona Remundová

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Walking Meditation

Artistic



This meditation is done in a group or alone. Participants will walk, reflect and think on their own, while focusing more and more on walking and therefore arriving in the present moment



Target group

Young people aged 13+

1 to 20 people



Time needed

15-30 minutes



Environment

A room or a space big enough for all the participants to walk in a line without touching each other



Materials

none

Objective/aim

The aim of the practice is to arrive in the present, as a meditative state, that helps you cope with difficult feelings and situations. It enables you to distinguish inner processes from outer processes. Arriving in your body, guided by breath.

We found this approach helpful when dealing with distressing and challenging topics such as the climate crisis and migration.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Form a circle, warm up your body, do whatever you feel like doing, stretching, shaking etc. Take one or two songs/or five to ten minutes to explore your needs. You explain the exercise in a circle; the room should already be empty. Set a timer for 5-7 minutes (beginners) to 15 minutes (advanced). Make sure that your body is relaxed, you stand on both legs, have soft knees and jaw, and your breath is carrying you through the practice. Take some deep breaths together. Before starting, guide the group again through the aim of the practice: to arrive in your body, see thoughts coming and going, while focusing more and more on your steps.

Step 2

People come to stand in line. Make sure everyone has enough space around them. Hold your hands behind your back or in front of your body, and do not change this position further. Let your gaze be soft, looking to the front but without focusing on anything in particular.

Step 3

Now concentrate on thinking "standing, standing, standing" then think and say to yourself „right foot in front“, „left in front“ - formulate this thought for yourself in your mother tongue. Then step in front while thinking about it. „Right in front, left in front, right in front...“

Step 4

If a thought crosses your mind while stepping in front, in your mind say „stop, stop, stop“, stop the movement and stand on both legs again. Then name the thought three times that crossed your mind, like e.g.. „future, future, future“ or present, past, anger, lust, pain, etc.

Step 5

Then say to yourself, „standing, standing, standing“ and start walking again. „Right in front, left in front“, like in Step 3. This procedure is continuously repeated. Be true to yourself and your thoughts and concentrate on your practice (not on others).

Step 6

When you reach the end of the line, say to yourself „change, change, change“ while turning around over your right shoulder and start again „„ Right in front, left in front“

Step 7

When you hear the timer ring, stop where you are and take a deep breath in.

After this activity, you can either do creative writing as an outlet for what came up, or give the participants a break and talk about the experiences in small groups or one-on-one.

All experiences and feelings are welcome; there is no right or wrong. Remember the aim, to arrive in the here and now, your body and breath, and to differentiate between yourself and your thoughts.



Tips for the trainer

If you choose to work with this form of meditation, it is recommended to practise it daily, to really dive into it and get used to the form. Choose the length of the meditation wisely, not too long, but also not too short; 7 minutes is recommended.



Comment

This practice is a meditative practice that needs self-experience to guide others through it. It's recommended that you have tried it yourself for some weeks, at best with a facilitator. Like this, you are also able to share your experiences.



Alternative

This meditation can also be done by yourself. A softer alternative would be to walk and, while walking, let flowers grow underneath your feet- for every step you take, a flower is growing underneath your step. You can also take a walk in nature and wander around, thus breaking the line.



Source

Christina Rauchbauer learned this method from Minako Seki (Butoh artist, Germany/Japan). The meditation is part of a form of Vipassana meditation.

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Images on a topic

Artistic, Advocacy, Activist



A short game that combines participants' imagination and knowledge to depict situations on a certain topic.



Target group

People aged 12+

Min. 5 - max. 20 persons



Environment

A room or space big enough for each participant to move freely.



Time needed

45 min – 75 min



Materials

none

Objective/aim

This exercise aims to create body images on a certain topic and engage participants to consider different aspects of a situation.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Guided discussion on the topic to define a set of words that connect to it.

In our case, the topics were climate and migration, some words that came from the discussion were boat, drought, border, and flood.

Step 2

The participants walk around the space. The facilitator claps and calls out a word. All participants immediately make an image of the word with their bodies. Then the group continues to walk. This continues for some time, pushing the limits from stereotypical images to more disrupted, abstract images from different points of view, as the participants should not repeat themselves.

At some point, the participants can start working in pairs or larger groups to create an image together (without previous preparation).

Step 3

Participants create a circle. Each participant chooses one statue they believe fits best for each word.

The facilitator calls all the words separately in order for each participant to observe other' participants' figures.

Step 4

Further discussion about the relevance and influence of each word on the chosen topic can be moderated in order to deepen the meaning of each word.



Tips for the trainer

The tempo of calling out the words may vary. The participants can benefit both from rapid-fire word calling, as they do not have the time to think about them, as well as from thinking and reflecting about them to organise their newly found images into something unique.



Alternative

Step 2 can also be accompanied by some music. Steps 3 and 4 can be done in smaller circles first. Each circle chooses one fit for each word that is later presented to the wider group with some accompanying thoughts and comments.



Comment

This is a very good introductory exercise to open up a chosen topic(s) and get participants to start thinking about it and getting creative with their bodies.



Source

<https://sites.google.com/education.nsw.gov.au/boa/boa/image-theatre>

Voices through Water

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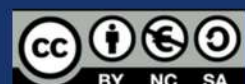


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Performative Demands

Artistic, Activist



This method is a participatory way to connect and transform political demands from participants into performative scenes. We start working in the big group and then form smaller groups to continue working on the scenes.



Target group

People aged 15+

Min 8 max 30



Environment

Movement space; enough space to work in separate groups



Time needed

2-3 hours



Materials

- Paper and pens
- Political demands from previous workshops, props that you worked with in other scenes (e.g. blankets, microphones etc.)

Objective/aim

The aim of this practice is to transform political demands into performative scenes that can be performed in small or big groups. We developed this approach because the participants had the strong wish to work with activist content in the performance for the MEPs in the Parliament. By using this method, we managed to have a strong intuitive and sensory approach, speaking to the viewer's emotions as well as political content in the scenes.

All inputs came from the group, so the activity is participatory and makes all voices of the group heard. Furthermore, group structures and dynamics can be mixed up with this exercise.

Step by step instructions

Step 1: After revisiting the political demands, e.g. "reforestation strategies of the EU" the participants should take some time to think about one to three demands that resonate most with them. Walk with these demands in the room. Speak them aloud or in your mind, whisper them etc., while continuing to walk.

Step 2: To move from thinking into the performative body, we start warming up the voice and the body. Here you can use simple and the group's favourite exercises. Also, concentrate on your position and presence in space.

Step 3: Then start to move in space and take positions: lying down, sitting, standing far away/close to each other etc. Concentrate on the distance and relationship to others in the space. Stay in a position for a while then change again. You can decide how much and fast/slow you want to change into different positions. Do this without speaking, for 10-15 minutes until you feel like everybody tried out different constellations and felt the connection of the bodies in space.

Step 4: Then form a circle. One person starts stepping into space stating their most important political demand and taking a position in space (like before). Once you take a position, you stay there until everybody has voiced their demand and found a position. If this demand or position resonates with you, you can also step into the space, say your demands and connect to the person – choose if you stand close to the person, sit next to them etc. One person after the other. Like this, every member of the group is stating their demand and relating to it in the space. Make a very clear picture for yourself: Who are you standing close/distant to? Which are connections that interest you? Remember them. When all stated their demand, form a circle again.

Step 5: Repeat Step 4 two to three times – maybe you want to change your statement or position; maybe the relations change because of the order.

Step 6: After the third round, see who are you standing in connection with. In this constellation start talking about your demands; maybe you want to invite other people to join you. Find your group, the number of participants is flexible. Take 30 minutes to work in this group transforming your demands into one scene. Start by deciding on one slogan and a group name; think of the scene like a pitch to your audience. Think about the form of the scene: it can be a show, a dance scene, participatory, an advertisement, a lecture etc. Work with all the performative knowledge and material that you have gained before. Artistic facilitators help the different groups if they need assistance. An example from our process: the demands related to reforestation/ or greener cities can be transformed into slogans like "Green Not Concrete", the form of the scene was a TV advertisement for glasses. We encouraged the small group (that didn't work together before) to let everybody speak, to find ideas together, trust their inputs and try out scenes.

Step 7: Present your scenes. Give feedback, maybe use the phrasing „what worked for me..." Then continue working on the scenes as long as your time allows.

In the end the scene "green not concrete" turned out to be a very funny commercial – and the MEP in the Parliament got sunglasses made out of cardboard as a sample. The feedback was that the scene reflected critical methods of greenwashing and that laughter helped to connect to the theme in a different way.



Tips for the trainer

It's recommended to do this activity close to the end of an artistic process, when the participants have performative tools at hand, know each other and already worked and are satisfied with their political demands.

Encourage the participants to raise their voice and stand behind their beliefs and demands. Remind them to feel the response of their demands through the movement of others and encourage the formation of other groups. Give them time to find their form of the scene, remind them of the performative tools they already have. It is good there are at least two facilitators present, to help them work in small groups.

Also encourage them to trust their bodies and voices in their expressions and the emotional level of their statements. Why is it important to you? What do you want to say about the demand? What connects you as a working group to focus on that demand?



Alternative

If you want to work more abstractly or with dance, the participants can also transform their statement into a short movement sequence; instead of saying it. Then furthermore concentrate on the intuitive connections of the movements, finding groups etc.



Comment

When we implemented the activity, we realised that especially because new groups were forming, they needed more assistance. The strong point of this approach is that all participants are heard and train to stand behind their own beliefs.

Be aware that this process may take time and don't rush people, respect their boundaries.



Source

Christina Rauchbauer was part of a „Wiener Perspective Meeting“ guided among others by Mariella Greil (Viennese performer) who introduced her to a similar approach.

The full approach of the "DasArts Feedback Method" used for giving feedback like "What worked for me ..." also mentioned here, you can find online:

<https://www.atd.ahk.nl/en/theatre-programmes/das-theatre/study-programme/feedback-method-1/>

Voices through Water

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Images of oppression

Artistic



This is an image theatre exercise that enables participants to use their knowledge and opinions on a particular topic to create visual images and short scenes about that topic.



Target group

Young people 15+

Minimum 10, maximum 20



Environment

Indoors or outdoors; a space large enough for 2–4 groups to work separately



Time needed

1 – 1.5 hours



Materials

Possibly a flipchart and pen to summarise the results or key words

Objective/aim

The aim of the exercise is to explore topics of oppression and to use participants' knowledge and creativity to create images and simple scenes that depict, examine and discuss different forms of oppression – considering their causes and possible solutions.

Step by step instructions

Step 1: Participants walk freely around the space. The facilitator calls out different characters related to various types of oppression (e.g. mother, father, child, police officer, activist, refugee, etc.). Each time a character is called out, the facilitator claps – and all participants immediately create a body image of that character. They should not overthink it: the image should be their first visual association. Once frozen, participants look around to see the images others have made. (10 min)

Step 2: The facilitator moderates a short discussion about the images, e.g.: Did you notice any similarities or differences between images? Why might that be? Participants may share quick thoughts and associations. (10 min)

Step 3: Participants form a circle facing outwards (so they cannot see each other). The facilitator calls out a term connected to the topic (the term can be more general; in our case, the topic was climate migration, and this was also the term that was called out in this step). Each participant has 30–60 seconds to create a body image representing what this term means to them. (5 min)

Step 4: Once everyone has formed their image, the facilitator claps, and all participants turn around to see the images created by the others, while still holding their own image. (2 min)

Step 5: Still holding their images, participants move and join others whose images they feel are similar or connected, forming groups of 4–6 people. If groups are too uneven, the facilitator may make minor adjustments to balance them. (3 min)

Step 6: Each group arranges itself in the space, positioning the individual images in a way that best expresses the relationships between them, without changing the original poses. (5 min)

Step 7: Each group presents their finished group image to the other participants. The audience gives short, one-word feedback: their first associations upon seeing the image. (10 min)

Step 8: Groups have a short time to refine their image based on the feedback received, clarifying the type of oppression their image depicts. (10 min)

Step 9: Each group creates a second image showing what they believe led to the situation presented in their original (current) image, representing a past state. In this way, they get images that present a past state and a current state of affairs. (5 min)

Step 10: Each group creates a third image depicting how they wish the situation in the original image could be positively resolved, representing a future state. Once they create all 3 images, they need to come up with how to make the transitions from one image to another (how each individual can move from one position to the other). (5 min)

Step 11: Each group presents the entire sequence. The facilitator instructs the audience to close their eyes while the group sets up the past image. Then the audience opens their eyes. After 20–30 seconds, the facilitator claps and counts down 5–10 seconds for the transition to the present image. The process repeats for the move to the future image. (15 min)

Step 12: Hold a group discussion on what participants saw and felt in the images. Suggested questions:

- What causes did you recognise?
- Do you feel these are realistic causes?
- Do the proposed solutions feel satisfactory and realistic?
- Can you think of alternative solutions?
- How did the exercise make you feel?

Allow space for any personal reflections. (10 min)



Tips for the trainer

This is not a difficult exercise but participants should understand basic terms beforehand (e.g. image, oppression).



Comment

One of the goals of image theatre is to communicate visually, minimising words, so encourage groups to focus on creating physical images rather than lengthy discussions. Keep the creation time for each new image short (about 5 minutes).



Alternative

If participants are feeling comfortable with the exercise, they may include sounds, verbal and movement components into the images (e.g. one expression and repetitive movement that the character they represent might use in the presented image). The instructions for this would be included in Steps 8, 9, and 10.



Source

This exercise is adapted from the image theatre method developed by Augusto Boal as part of the Theatre of the Oppressed:
<https://sites.google.com/education.nsw.gov.au/boaldoe/boal/image-theatre>

Voices through Water

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Performing objects

Artistic



The method takes real-life objects as inspiration for participants to create short movement scenes that visually express the story of objects.



Target group

Young people 15+

Min. 1 – Max. 12



Environment

A movement space with enough room for each participant to move freely



Time needed

1-2 hours



Materials

Selected real-life objects

Objective/aim

The aim of this practice is to create visual movement scenes on a certain topic, inspired by objects that either do or could come from a real-life situation connected to that topic. For example, our situation was migrants crossing the Mediterranean sea, so we used objects we imagined migrants might take with them on such a journey (e.g. a water bottle, a sweater, etc.).

Step by step instructions

Step 1

The objects are assembled together (at least one object per participant). 5 min

Step 2

Participants observe the objects and each selects one they feel inspired by or drawn to. 5 min

Step 3

Participants are invited to position themselves in space with their chosen object. Then the facilitator begins a guided visualisation, leading participants from observing their object to finding a way to embody it, e.g. putting their body into a position or form that resembles the object, whatever that means to them. 10 min

Step 4

Once the participants have embodied their objects, the visualisation continues with the story of the objects (in our case: boarding a boat, crossing the sea, experiencing a storm and capsizing, floating until the objects are washed ashore). As the story progresses, participants are asked to enact the events, e.g. to explore how their embodied objects might move and react to various moments in the narrative. 15 min

Step 5

Refinement. Each participant presents their object and movement. If needed, the story can be repeated to develop a more fixed group choreography 10-30 min

Step 6

Perform the final version of the story without verbal narration, using only the participants' movement choreography inspired by the story. If a public presentation is the final goal, Step 5 can be repeated several times. 10 min



Tips for the trainer

This is a relatively advanced exercise, recommended only after some prior training with the group, so that a sense of trust and safety has already been established.

It is a poetic method for presenting selected topics, which can vary widely.

If the topic is 'heavy' or emotionally charged, a feedback session is recommended after Step 4.

During this session, the facilitator invites participants to share their thoughts about the exercise: whether they find this form of expression meaningful and satisfying, and whether they feel comfortable performing it, or if it is emotionally challenging.



Comment

Depending on the topic, this exercise may not be suitable for everyone. Make sure you explain the method clearly beforehand, and that participants feel comfortable with it. Ideally, it works best in groups of 5–6.



Alternative

If participants are comfortable with the exercise, verbal material can also be introduced into the movement (e.g. what would the objects say? how would they feel in the situation?), in order to strengthen the scene and its potential message. These instructions would be included in Step 4.



Source

This exercise was derived and adapted from street theatre training with the group KUD Ljud: <https://www.ljud.si/slo/en/about-us-2/>