



# *Training* TOOLKIT ON LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY IN THE AREA OF MEANINGFUL ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH WORKERS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF LONG TERM KA2 ERASMUS+ PROJECT ENTITLED "TAKE ACTION, CREATE THE CHANGE"

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- 3 • **Acknowledgements**

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- 4 • **Chapter 1: About the toolkit**

---
- 5 • **Chapter 2: Scope of the project**

---
- 6 • **Chapter 3: Enhancing leadership in youths**
  - Why is Youth Leadership Development important?
  - Characteristics of a leader
  - Leadership styles
  - How do we prepare for Youth Leadership Development?
  - What are some challenges of Youth Leadership Development?

---
- 11 • **Chapter 4: Enhancing advocacy in youths**
  - Why is youth advocacy development important?
  - Characteristics of an advocate
  - Types of Advocacy
    - Self-advocacy
    - Advocacy for others (group advocacy, peer advocacy, etc.)
  - What are some challenges for Youth Advocacy development?

---
- 14 • **Chapter 5: Leadership and advocacy skills development**
  - Vision and purpose
  - Trust
  - Values
  - Emotional Intelligence
  - Motivation
  - Public speaking
  - Strategic sharing
  - Nonviolent Communication
  - Public narrative
  - Storytelling
  - Creativity
  - Resilience
  - Civic Engagement and Social Change
  - Teamwork

---
- 34 • **Chapter 6: Youth empowerment**
  - Youth-Adult partnership
  - Inclusion of disadvantaged youth.
  - Youth challenges at Global and European level
  - Some youth leaders and advocates
  - What can I do?

---
- 43 • **Chapter 7: Youth Leadership and Advocacy Training**

---
- 44 • **Chapter 8: Appendix**
  - References

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It consists of three main **documents**:

- I. The **theoretical part** includes knowledge and information on leadership and advocacy elements that youth can be equipped with. It is developed by CONEXX-EU.
- II. The **leadership training curriculum** which provides an agenda, sessions and toolkit to be used by youth workers and peer educators to indulge in their work and volunteerism. It is developed by IFYD.
- III. The **advocacy training curriculum** that consists of an agenda, sessions and toolkit to be used by youth workers and peer educators that supports them to implement their own activities and training locally and beyond. It is developed by IFYD.

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# chapter 1: ABOUT THE MANUAL

Based on the consortiums experience working with young people and youth workers through peer education sessions, youth exchanges, focus groups, discussions, consultations and one to one interviews, advocacy movements & campaigns and public events, we saw many youth are suffering from lack of political and social engagement, while youth workers and activists often lack the necessary competencies, skills and concrete tools to address these issues when working with young people or approaching decision-makers.

Young people represent a significant percentage of the population of the countries involved in this project. Yet many suffer from lack of political and social engagement. We believe that young people and youth workers should have the capacity to contribute to the implementation of the *EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027* and *The 11 European Youth Goals* in their countries and organisations, especially by exercising their right to participation on every level of decision-making.

As youth-led organisations, we believe young people can play a vital role in their communities, if awareness is raised among them, and they are well informed about these important fundamental youth agendas and processes, as well about their issues; if their leadership and advocacy skills are enhanced and if they are motivated to take actions and to bring a positive change. Moreover, they need to be provided and trained with the right tools for bringing the change among their peers and for potentially approaching decision-makers and other stakeholders advocating for their rights to actively engage in policies affecting their lives at all levels. We know that youth workers are already engaged in creating change but we also know that many of them need more specific tools to take on an even stronger role in social change. This project result will guide the youth workers through a number of steps and will provide concrete tools for them to work with adolescents and youth on leadership and advocacy, on community organising and campaigning, on identifying different needs in their communities and addressing them. Therefore, through this project results we will introduce concepts and training tools related to civic engagement and social change.



# chapter 2: SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

## TACC: Main Objectives and expected outcomes

The main objectives of the project are related to building the capacities, leadership and advocacy skills of adolescents and youth, as well as of youth workers, through strengthening the organisational competences of the participating organisations to promote youth participation and civic engagement in various scales and formats. It also aims to support active citizenship of young people, particularly youth at risk of social exclusion, and to help the participating organisations work effectively with adolescents and youth ensuring that the needs of disadvantaged groups are addressed, ensuring that they are meaningfully engaged and actively participate as partners in the development and implementation of policies, programs, and processes that affect them, in accordance with the core values and principles of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and the 11 European Youth Goals.

## Youth Strategy 2019-2027

Through the EU Youth Strategy, the EU aims young people to be engaged and to become active citizens involved in democratic life and in civil society. The EU Youth Strategy focuses on three core areas of action, around the three words: Engage, Connect, Empower, while working on joint implementation across sectors. EU youth cooperation aims to make the most of youth policy's potential. It fosters youth participation in democratic life, supports social and civic engagement, ensuring that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society.

- ▶ Prior Objectives
- ▶ 3 Basis of the strategy (engage, connect, empower)

The EU Youth Strategy focuses on three core areas of action, around the three words: Engage, Connect, Empower.

- ▶ 11 European Youth Goals

The 11 European Youth Goals are connected with sustainable development and also prioritize gender equality in all its aspects, as well as constructive dialogue and participation for all.

- ▶ Activities driven by European Union

# chapter 3: ENHANCING LEADERSHIP IN YOUTHS

## Why is Youth Leadership Development important?

It is essential to build young people's leadership so that they can learn from past and current leaders in order to adapt the most effective approaches for tomorrow's challenges. Moreover, young people need to be prepared to work in partnership with adults in local and global institutions, since they are more likely to reach out to youth audiences. So empowering youth leadership can have a significant impact on a wider audience, engaging young people and inspiring them to take action.

In conclusion, fostering youth leadership development is a great way to promote the learning of positive life skills, as it will help shape their personality and attitude to face present and future challenges, especially developing their ability to analyse their own strengths and weaknesses, setting personal and vocational goals, building self-esteem, confidence and motivation, and the ability to lead or direct others.

## 2. Characteristics of a leader

Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other team members. It involves making sound and difficult decisions, creating a clear vision, establishing achievable goals and providing followers with the necessary tools and knowledge in order to achieve those goals.

We most commonly say a leader is a charismatic person who can fascinate others in the right way and motivate them to overcome obstacles together. Leadership, then, can be described as the process of social influencing in which an individual enhances and supports others when carrying out a common vision. However, the time when leaders had to be charismatic, convincing, diehard, conniving, and only bottom lined focus has ended. There are some key characteristics that are shared by actual leaders:

- **Determination:** It is based on additional characteristics such as initiative, assertiveness and perseverance. Determinative people often tend to unconditionally fulfil their objectives, work long hours, are ambitious and often very competitive.
- **Developed cognitive abilities:** The development of cognitive abilities is really important for succeeding as a leader. Their intelligence, analytical and verbal skills, flexibility in behaviour and good judgements are essential to formulate solutions to problems, work well under stress, adapt to changing situations and create well thought-out plans for the future.

► **Self-confidence:** It involves qualities such as high self-esteem, assertiveness, emotional stability and self-assurance. Self-confident individuals do not doubt themselves or their abilities and decisions. They also enhance the projection of those attributes in others, strengthening their confidence and loyalty.

► **Acting with integrity:** Integrity is the condition of an individual to maintain its values and convictions. A leader's integrity means acting consistently, in accordance with his, her, their mission and moral convictions. Acting with integrity builds trust, creates a solid reputation, and has a strong influence value on others, helping them to commit to the cause.

► **Caring for people:** It creates many types of connections, such as warmth, kindness, sympathy, empathy, compassion, and ultimately, nurturing. As a consequence of those connections, teams get motivated, and general aptitudes increase oriented for achieving common goals. Moreover, a caring culture produces beneficial ripple effects. People connected to caring people are more likely to develop those connections with each other, and it is also more likely to extend it to other relationships in their lives, resulting in more happiness.

► **Communication skill:** Is the ability to be a good listener, communicate information, thought clear ideas and master verbal, non-verbal, and written communication. Developed communication skills enable driving meaningful dialogues and dominating storytelling, which often encourages and inspires other people to take action.

► **Being open-minded:** It enables leaders to break out their normal thinking patterns to find innovative ideas. Is the ability to be respectful, practice self-reflection, make gratitude a habit, and seek out feedback and suggestions. This allows leaders to broaden their horizons, and are more likely to accept and adapt to changes.

► **Emotion's management:** Is the ability that enables leaders to control their emotions in various situations without outbursts of anger or panicking. It allows them to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses and understand personal manifestations in stressful situations.



### 3. Leadership styles

These are the multiple ways in which leaders set the direction, implement plans and motivate people. Different situations require different styles of leadership. The success of a leader consists in adapting its leadership style to each moment. There are five leadership styles: Authoritarian, Participative, Delegative, Transactional and Transformational leadership.

#### Authoritarian Leadership

It appears when all the power is concentrated in the hands of the leader. It can turn out to be useful in situations when a leader is the most experienced in the team. Although being an efficient strategy in certain situations, creativity and innovation is sacrificed.

##### Advantages

- Time spent on making decisions is reduced.
- Mistakes in the implementation of plans can be reduced.

##### Disadvantages

- A very authoritarian leadership style can demotivate peers and often leads to rebellion.
- It kills group creativity and innovation.
- It reduces group collaboration, and the group input can be reduced significantly.

#### Participative Leadership

The essence of this leadership style is to involve team members in decision-making processes. As a consequence, they feel included, engaged and motivated to contribute.

##### Advantages

- It increases the motivation and satisfaction of peers, and encourages creativity.
- Creation of a strong team and long-term relationships.
- High performance and productivity can be achieved as a result of engagement of the peers.

##### Disadvantages

- Time-consuming decision making processes.
- Poor decisions can be made if the peers are unskilled.
- Communication failures are more likely to happen as a result of massive participation.





## Delegative Leadership

This leadership style focuses on delegating the initiative to team members. This can be a successful strategy if team members are competent and take responsibility. However, disagreements among peers may split and divide the group.

### Advantages

- Experienced team members can take advantage of their competence.
- Innovation and creativity is highly valued.
- It can generate high levels of engagement and a positive work environment.

### Disadvantages

- Time-consuming decision making processes.
- Responsibilities can be sometimes poorly defined, leading to misunderstandings and disagreements among peers.
- It creates difficulties in adapting to changes.

## Transactional Leadership

This style focuses on tasks as transactions between the leader and the followers. Rewards, punishments and other exchanges are established for getting the tasks done.

### Advantages

- SMART goals are established, which are achievable for peers.
- It eliminates confusion in decision making and how things should be done.
- Peers are often rewarded, which helps to increase their motivation and productivity.

### Disadvantages

- Innovation and creativity are minimised.
- Empathy and other personal skills are often not valued.
- The system creates more followers than leaders among the peers.

## Transformational Leadership

In a transformational leadership style, the leader inspires its followers with vision and then encourages and empowers them.

### Advantages

- Peers are encouraged and empowered to take action. As a result, high morale of peers is often experienced.
- It generates high value relationships and enhances teamwork among a common goal.
- The support of peers is sustainable, based on inspiration, instead of rewards and punishments.

### Disadvantages

- If badly managed, peers can be sorely disappointed and even deceived by leaders.
- Tasks cannot be pushed forward without the agreement of the peers.
- It can sometimes lead to deviation from established protocols and regulations.

## 4. How do we prepare for Youth Leadership Development?

Youth leadership development requires preparation and planning. It is important for organisations and adults to foster a positive youth development philosophy.

### Positive Youth Development (PYD)

Young people need support and opportunities to make a successful transition to adulthood. The PYD approach implies supporting them to acquire the knowledge and skills they will need during this transition.

In the following lines we explore some ideas that can help adults and organisations to develop PYD:

- **Provide solid training and clear guidance:** As young people's responsibilities increase, their education should also increase, with the objective of making them feel prepared. This will boost their confidence and sense of commitment to the cause. As adults, it is important to spend time listening to young people and responding to their concerns.
- **Setting goals and action plans:** It is important that adults and institutions have a conversation to set their objectives together with them. When setting goals, it is important to give them responsibilities that make them feel part of the team and thus commit them to the common project.
- **Youth Advisory Councils:** These are useful means for adult staff to receive feedback and recommendations to ensure youth-friendly organisations. The basic purpose is to allow young people to have a voice on different issues and challenges. In some cases the opinion of young people can even lead to a reorientation of the mission of certain organisations.
- **Peer to peer education:** It is the teaching or sharing of information with others who may share similar backgrounds and social experiences. Young people can make presentations, lead small discussion groups or mentor other young people.

## 5. What are some challenges of Youth Leadership Development?

Adults and organisations also need to adapt their thinking to develop successful youth leadership. Implementing positive youth development can be challenging for a number of reasons:

- Organisational and cultural resistance to empowering young people, and adapting to change.
- The difficulty that many adults may have stepping back and letting youth lead.
- The doubts that young people may have about whether they are really being listened to or whether their actions are having an impact on the team.
- Time, remuneration, transport and scheduling, which are often not favourable to young people's participation.

# chapter 4: ENHANCING ADVOCACY IN YOUTHS

## 1. Why is Youth Advocacy Development important?

Advocacy is about acting to help yourself and/or others, say what you/they want, secure your/their rights, represent your/their interests and get the services you/they need. It promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice. Youth advocacy is the process of identifying, understanding and addressing issues that are relevant to young people.

According to the United Nations[1], there are an estimated 1.21 billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24, which represents 15.5% of the world's population. Most of them, especially those in developing countries, face social and economic challenges. However, they are regularly excluded from decisions that affect them now and have implications for their future.

In the following lines we summarise the reasons for the need of youth advocacy development:

- ▶ Young people represent a **large part of the population** and deserve to be heard and taken into account in the search for solutions to the global and specific challenges that affect them.
- ▶ There are **issues surrounding youth that cannot be ignored** and are specific to young people. In addition, some of the SDGs affect youth issues, such as SDG4- Quality education or SDG8- Decent work and economic growth.
- ▶ It can **raise awareness on the challenges faced by young people** and engage them in society.
- ▶ Young people **are more adept at new technologies**, which may be a turning point in the search for innovative solutions to today's challenges.

## 2. Characteristics of an advocate

**I. Passion:** Advocates are enthusiastic, motivated, compassionate and caring. Their work is more than a profession or a responsibility, it is a vocation, a lifelong mission.

**II. Information:** Advocates are continually learning, connected to current sources of information and are always ready to share their knowledge, debate and build strong arguments that are aligned with their cause. They are well informed in their area of interest, and are prepared to educate others.

**III. Communication:** Exceptional advocates communicate clearly, persuasively and respectfully to share information and to promote their mission.

**IV. Goal orientation:** They have discovered their mission, and their goals are long-term oriented, which allows them to be consistent in their actions, and not to hesitate in pursuing their cause.

**V. Connections:** They build partnerships and coalitions that connect people to useful resources and information.

**VI. Empathy:** Having the ability to understand others' perspective allows advocates to engage with people for a common cause, and to tailor messages for effective communication.

**VII. Inspiration:** Great advocates inspire others to take action, stir their thoughts and empower them to collectively achieve goals.

**VIII. Persistence:** Achieving important goals in advocacy can take decades, advocates are aware of their mission and understand that, although the road will not be easy, they have to take a leadership role to help others.

## Types of Advocacy

### Self-advocacy

It refers to a person's ability to effectively communicate their own interests, desires, needs and rights. This approach to advocacy recognises that people are experts by experience and involves them talking about the things that are important to them, explaining their thoughts and feelings.

Self-advocacy differs from other forms of advocacy in that the individuals self-assess a personal situation or problem and talk about their own needs.

### Advocacy for others

There are different types of advocacy that aim to act to help others represent their interests or secure their rights.

➤ **Group advocacy:** This involves people with shared experiences, positions or values coming together in groups to talk and listen to each other, improving their ability to express themselves collectively on issues that are important to them. The most important goal of local group advocacy is to include them in planning committees and to involve them in the decision-making and monitoring of social welfare services.

➤ **Non-instructed advocacy:** When people are unable to give their own opinion and make their own decisions despite being provided with assistance and support, non-instructed advocacy is needed. In this case, it is necessary to use the information gathered to represent others with the aim of securing the person's rights, promoting their welfare and ensuring that their wishes are fully taken into account.

► **Peer advocacy:** This refers to the individualised support provided by advocates with a similar challenge, experience or disability who use services. This type of advocate is particularly well placed to empathise with people's needs, approaching them as their equals and fighting for their needs.

► **Citizen advocacy:** They aim to involve the inhabitants of a local community by empowering their voice and their impact on decision-making about the things that affect their lives. Citizen advocacy partnerships are used to stay for the long term, through the ongoing engagement of members in the local community. They are often unpaid as a coordinated scheme.

► **Professional advocacy:** This is the support of a paid advocate to speak out and represent your own views. It is mostly used in times of major change or crisis.

### Which are some challenges for youth advocacy development?

► Youngs can be used as tokens for publicity. Sometimes people seem to support young people when they don't really share their goals, as their desire is to outwardly show a commitment to the young generation.

► Young people's opinion is not a unified single opinion. In certain situations some people or institutions tend to characterise young people as an homogeneous group thinking in the same way.

► Often, it seems that youth advocates need to have an incredible personal story behind them, tending to discourage young people who do not have such stories.



# chapter 5: LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

According to our research, the most important skills to be a successful leader and advocate are the following:

## VISION AND PURPOSE

Leadership and advocacy begin with leading oneself before others. Purpose is a foundational aspect. Before people can expand in a process of influencing others towards common goals, they must first emerge and mature internally. Peter Drucker, one of the world's best known and most influential management thinkers, often insisted that we must periodically strengthen our inner connection to stay connected to our sense of purpose, which will help us to find our place in society, to make decisions, to learn, to reach out to others, to follow our values and to be aware of our strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, a sense of purpose effectively practised can lead to self-motivation, which is a powerful capacity to push us to act.

Purpose is not what we do, but how and why we do it. The development of purpose directly affects other skills that can improve not only our social impact but also our lifestyle:

- **Awareness:** A person with an expanded awareness makes decisions with a long-term vision, and will not engage in behaviours that conflict with their moral beliefs.
- **Respect:** Respect is a sign of recognising the value of others and appreciating them for who they are. Respect is a strong pillar of purposeful leadership and advocacy, as it means treating others equally and impartially, and guides the decisions we make based on our beliefs.
- **Vision:** It is defined as "a set of idealised goals established by a leader that represents a perspective shared by followers". These goals are not focused on a day-to-day application, but on a long-term direction. To develop a vision and translate it into a plan, the purpose must be clear.
- **Understanding:** Even when peers or other stakeholders may not understand the importance of certain steps, a good leader or advocate must be aware of the best possible strategies to achieve the most advantageous long-term goals. It is essential to understand the effect of active plans, and to change strategy when initial directions are not serving the true purpose.

## Finding your purpose

As described above, purpose is a personal commitment that you make in your life, living it through the stages you encounter. Your purpose, then, represents who you are and how you behave throughout your circumstances.

The first step to find purpose is to understand yourself, your passion and your underlying motivations. If reflection doesn't help, gathering feedback from a small group can help you recognise your greatest strengths and the things you enjoy doing most. This will help you develop your own purpose.

## TRUST

Trust is an essential mechanism for leadership and advocacy, as it allows leaders/advocates and followers/peers to exchange power and influence. Actions such as sharing confidential information, delegating or not hesitating in ambiguous situations require a great deal of trust. A relationship of trust is identified by two basic fundamentals.

The first is the competence or capacity, which implies the perception that the other party has the necessary knowledge and skills to manage a job or a common project. The second is the character, which can be divided into 1- Benevolence: The belief that one wants the good for the person who is trusting and 2- Integrity: The degree to which the person being trusted believes he or she follows the same ethical principles.

### Development of trust

Trust is a bilateral tool that requires mutual effort to develop. Still, the importance of the first step in developing trust must be emphasised, as it will be the foundation on which the speed of trust is built and can determine the success of the relationship. In this sense, it is often more appropriate for those in a position of greater influence to take the first step in building trust.

Different actions and behaviours that can foster a culture of trust are described below:

- **Using supportive, participatory and empowering leadership and advocacy behaviour:** Empowering support and participation sends a message about the trust you have in your followers, enhancing their confidence in the leader.
- **Transparency and positivity:** A credible leader or advocate must first develop credit with potential supporters before steering them in a new direction.
- **Developing knowledge-building behaviours:** Leaders and advocates must not lose sight of the importance of knowledge and continuous learning in order to make the best decisions. In addition, developing knowledge-sharing behaviours is essential to building a strong community. To do this, it is important to scan the environment, develop knowledge networks and share expertise among peers.
- **Developing an ethical climate:** Supporters do not trust advocates or leaders only for their knowledge and the help they can provide. The perception of an ethical climate that follows common values is essential to attract supporters and gain their trust.
- **Show benevolence:** Benevolence shows the extent to which leaders and advocates care about the interests of others.
- **Showing consideration for the needs of employees** and supporters, while protecting their rights, is also a confidence booster for the whole team.
- **Develop and maintain the perception of integrity:** To enhance integrity, it is essential to act in a way that is consistent with your values, play fair and equal in terms of justice, and share information transparently.
- In an increasingly global workplace, it is essential to **understand cultural differences** between people and countries. Understanding and respecting different religions, customs and backgrounds will allow you to adapt to each situation, enhancing a sense of trust.

## VALUES

Values are the energetic drivers of our aspirations and intentions. They describe what is important to us individually or collectively. Our values then, form the basis of our identities. They play a huge role in how we act, how we make decisions, and helps to create an impact on the people you serve.

However, many leaders don't spend the necessary time and energy turning into their personal values. They see them superficial, at a surface level, but they don't dig into the beliefs and feelings that drive the creation of their core values.

Values are represented by short universal concepts, such as honesty, openness, compassion, empathy, respect or humility.

### How to identify your values

To determine your core values, you can follow the next steps:

I. Write down a list of beliefs and behaviours that align with who you are. For example, you can think about the following words: Integrity, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, respect, influence, authenticity, optimism, passion, honesty, etc.

II. Explore the meanings of the previous words and beliefs: Take the time to understand the words you listed, and explore them in a meaningful way.

III. Observe the meaningful moments of your life: Consider the past happy and fulfilling experiences you have had. How would you describe those memorable experiences? What were you doing? How did you feel? What values were you exemplifying during these moments? Many times, those moments involve achieving difficult goals, creating something artistic, overcoming adversity or experiencing deep moments with family and friends.

IV. Conversely, explore moments in which you felt angry or frustrated. Probably, those were moments you were not aligned with your values. Try to think about the values you felt were being compromised or ignored.

V. Dig a bit deeper and choose your core values: When considering meaningful moments of your life, think about those hidden triggers that made you feel so happy. Perhaps, when getting a prom, your happiness trigger was not the increase of the salary, but the connections you made with the team and the comfort you felt.

### Benefits of identifying your values

- Finding your purpose
- Guiding your behaviour
- Making decisions
- Choosing a career
- Increasing confidence





## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions, and to recognise and influence the emotions of others. Modern leaders and advocates are expected to possess an extraordinary ability to influence the feelings of others. In this sense, identifying, understanding and managing not only one's own emotions but also those of others plays a key role in the daily life of a leader/advocate.

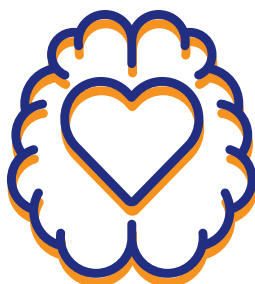
### Components of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence can then be decomposed into the following areas: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.

- **Self-awareness:** One of the first elements of effective advocacy and leadership is knowing yourself, from being aware of your own emotional state to understanding your strengths and limitations.
- **Self-regulation:** Emotion regulation is the ability to understand, accept and regulate one's own emotional experiences. It describes how you show, feel and communicate the emotions you experience. Having the ability to effectively manage one's emotions can have an impact on leadership and advocacy skills.
- **Motivation:** It can be measured by both self-motivation and inspiration to instil in others a desire to increase their level of commitment towards a common goal.
- **Empathy:** It entails sensitivity to the emotions and interests of others. It enables a leader or advocate to better listen to and understand their followers.
- **Social skills:** Developing social skills can help us to understand the emotions of those around us, with consequent benefits. Both the expression and accurate perception of emotions are crucial, and can help increase group cohesion, communication and effectiveness.

### How to build Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence can be learned at any time of a person's life. A good starting point for improving emotional intelligence can be taking a test, it will help you understand which area of emotional intelligence you need to work on the most.



## MOTIVATION

Motivation is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviours. In everyday usage, the term "motivation" is frequently used to describe why a person does something.

In leadership, motivating employees or peers is a crucial task, as motivation translates knowledge, skills and abilities into work behaviour and job performance.

### Which actions increase motivation?

From a leadership perspective, the multitude of established theories argue that the following actions are optimal for motivating your colleagues:

- ▶ Set SMART objectives that allow colleagues to focus attention and increase effort and persistence.
- ▶ Provide feedback that enables employees to measure their progress and adjust effort, persistence, and task strategies.
- ▶ Establish rewards and incentives that benefit workers based on their good performance.
- ▶ Allowing colleagues the freedom and discretion to carry out their tasks, which leads to greater engagement and a sense of responsibility.

However, motivating others is not always synonymous to increasing motivation, but sometimes to removing barriers to motivation. In many cases, colleagues have a need to feel competent, and to believe that their efforts will make a real impact.

As leaders, we should show individualised consideration of our colleagues to motivate them the best way possible by helping them surmount obstacles to high motivation. This shift from motivating to enabling employees motivation, is built on the assumption that employees know best what drives their motivation and what stifles it.

For that, asking employees the right question is one essential tool. **Motivational Interviewing (MI)** research and practice has developed and validated a system of conversational techniques that help raise people's motivation and lower resistance to change.



## PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public speeches can cover a wide range of different topics, their main purpose is to educate, entertain or influence listeners. Public speaking can take place in trainings, panels, workshops, conferences, etc.

We practise public speaking on a daily basis, when we want to inform someone about something, engage in debates or practice informal conversations to persuade others, or when we simply try to speak for entertainment.

Mastering public speaking skills can have several benefits for ourselves and our environment, such as: boost confidence, improve communication skills, become a better listener, learn to argue, motivate others or bring people together.

### How to get better at public speaking

Below are some tips to improve public speaking skills.

#### **Writing the speech**

The first thing we can do is to work on writing a well-organised and attractive speech. For this, it is important to:

- Research your audience and their needs or problems that you could help to solve.
- Select and research a topic that can help solve an identified problem.
- Write down the knowledge gathered in a structured way.

#### **Overcoming the fear of speaking out**

There are many actions that can help to overcome the fear of public speaking:

- Do some self-reflection to help set your boundaries: Don't try to be perfect. Lowering expectations of yourself will help reduce stress and anxiety.
- When you start to feel anxiety, don't reject it. Understand and accept the emotion, and use it as a positive tool that will make you more focused on the presentation.
- Reframe the way you look at the situation: Public speaking is not a performance that should be scripted. Public speaking should be framed as a conversation, rather than performing for people. A good tip for reframing public speaking into a conversation is to ask questions to engage the audience.
- Be present-oriented before the presentation. When we focus on future stages, we think about the consequences of a bad future. Instead, being on the present level before speaking can help reduce anxiety.

## **Practising the speech**

Practice helps you give a more effective speech, it increases your familiarity with the presentation and can help you think about other issues that may arise during the questions and answers phase.

- Practice with a friend or a group and ask for feedback.
- Record yourself as you practice and try to identify areas for improvement.

## **Preparing the design of the presentation**

Depending on the audience and the topic, it will be very important to find a presentation format that allows you to convey your messages in the most effective way. Some tips for preparing the design of the presentation are:

- Choose the design tools that best suit your audience and your topic. Examples of some of the tools used are PowerPoint, Google Slides or Keynote.
- Use outlines rather than full transcripts.

## **Giving the speech**

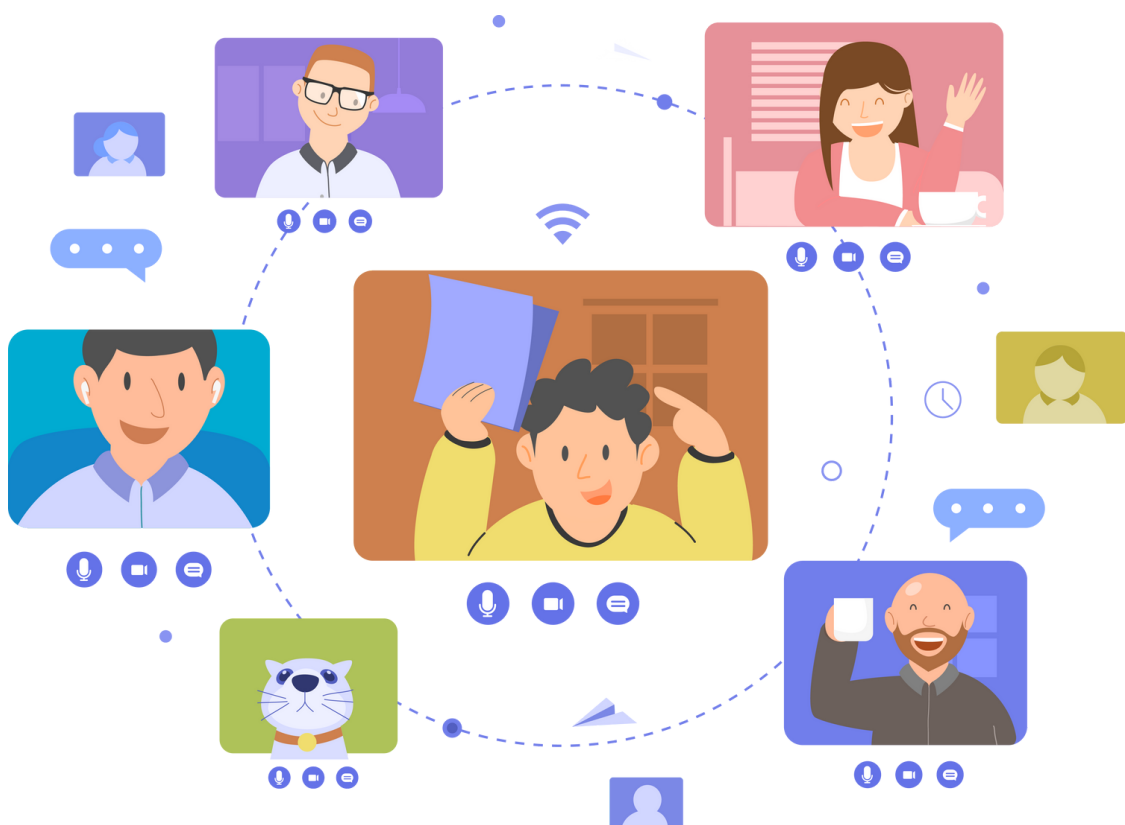
There are also some tips and tricks you can use on the day of your speech to make it go more smoothly:

- Change your approach to the conversation: See it as an opportunity to share your information, rather than a test in which you must do it perfectly.
- Present yourself with an attitude of giving. Your goal is to share with the audience something you know, have seen or have tried. Speakers often feel they can use the occasion to sell personal products rather than respond to the needs of the audience.
- Be aware that many times things will not go as planned and you will encounter unforeseen problems. You will have to find a way to overcome them.
- Work on body language to better engage the audience.
- Ask questions to engage the audience.
- Use inclusive conversational language: Try to target your messages to the questions your audience may ask, questions such as why is this important to me?
- Learn how to refine and simplify your messages. To do this, we can make use of structures. To remember telephone numbers, for example, we use the 3-3-4 number structure. When speaking in public, we can use the following structures:
  - Problem/ opportunity - Solution - Benefit structure.
  - What? (What it is) - So what? (Why is it important) - Next what? (Which are the next steps) structure.
- Try to give powerful messages to start and end your speech. People tend to remember better things that have been said at the beginning or at the end.

## Public speaking in online spaces

Online spaces have grown in recent years, spaces where it is easier to lose the public's attention. To stay in control, it is also important to consider actions that can minimise the impact of online spaces. While many of the above tips are applicable to online environments, the following are tips to keep in mind when preparing for a virtual presentation:

- **Use tools to engage and involve the audience.** For example, you can create a google document that you can share with your audience and ask everyone to write about a specific question or topic. Mentimeter or kahoot are other tools that can boost participation.
- **Anticipate technology failures** and imperfections, and think about how you will deal with them.
- **Invite people who do not speak** much to participate in order to gain their attention.
- **Incorporate visual elements** and share notes with the audience.
- **Take breaks** if the presentation lasts more than 1 hour.
- **Plan for accessibility** to your audience (technology, languages, etc.).



## STRATEGIC SHARING

Is a method of telling a story safely and effectively to others. It is an important process, as it provides you with the skills and abilities to achieve your desired goal when communicating, while ensuring that you protect yourself from negative consequences in the process.

### Why to share with others?

The first question to ask when telling a story is: "Why do I want to share the story and life experience with others? According to the Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures at Portland State University, it is important to identify whether the motive is positive or potentially negative. In the following lines we will look at the possible reasons and how we can deal with them when they are negative.

**Exploitation.** If you are telling a story just because you have been told to do so, it is possible that someone is taking advantage of you to achieve a goal that is important to them. To understand the risk and benefits of sharing your story, it is essential to understand the final goal. Sometimes people do not realise the pressure they are putting on you to share your experiences, and your wellbeing can be negatively affected by sharing those experiences before you are ready.

To tackle exploitation, there are some things you could try:

- **Talk to people who ask you to share your experiences.** Be sure to speak to them respectfully, but make the point that you are not comfortable sharing your experience.
- **Ask questions to better understand the topic.** Understanding the context and details for sharing the story will help you decide whether you agree or disagree with it.
- **Walk away if you are asked to share something you are not comfortable with.**

**Anger.** Sometimes we want to share stories because we are upset about the way a system or a person has treated us, or we are sad about experiences we have had. While anger can be a powerful motivator that inspires people to act, it can create a huge barrier to people hearing and accepting your message. In addition, anger can also affect our health, boosting the production of stress hormones.

To address the anger, the following can be done:

- **Wait to calm down.** Anger can cause us to lose our capacity for self-control. Waiting will prevent us from damaging our relationships with others, our well-being and our message.
- **Seek professional help.** Anger can often be a response to a past hurt we have experienced. A professional counsellor or therapist is trained to help us find the reason for our hurt and address it appropriately.
- **Check the facts.** When we are angry, we are more likely to be closed-minded and have difficulty seeing things objectively. Checking the facts will allow us to avoid giving messages that are not in line with reality and that, as a result, may have a negative effect on the recipients of the message.

**Attention seeking.** The effects of advocating for attention seeking are temporary, and often there is an underlying problem that wants to be addressed such as jealousy or low self-esteem. When you act to seek attention you are more likely to share more details about your story to keep people interested, which can lead to sharing information that can be damaging.

To address attention seeking,, the following can be done:

- ▶ **Refocus your thoughts.** It is important to think about the underlying reasons for your attention-seeking. By identifying them it will be easier to act. Ask yourself how it benefits you to feel this way, or whether the situation poses a threat to you.
- ▶ **Write down your feelings, both positive and negative.** This exercise will help you better understand why you feel the desire to seek attention.
- ▶ **Take a break and seek help.** In case you seek attention because you have low self-esteem, and you find relief in people's empathy, contacting a professional can be a good help.

There are many reasons why people may share their stories. However, you have to be careful, as it is easy for a positive reason to turn into a negative one.

### **Benefits of sharing**

Sharing stories is a powerful tool that can be done for a number of reasons. The following lines describe some of the benefits of sharing stories:

- ▶ The stories are memorable and compelling. They put a human face on issues, needs and problems. As a result, they can motivate and inspire people to act.
- ▶ Sharing life stories and experiences can help give meaning and significance to our own and others' experiences.
- ▶ It can help change stereotypes and assumptions, reducing the stigma associated with various issues.
- ▶ Stories stimulate creativity, engage our imagination and help us to see new possibilities and opportunities.
- ▶ It decreases isolation and helps us establish a supportive community.
- ▶ Stories are a learning tool that help us to learn and understand people's cultural identities.



## **Risks of sharing**

Talking about personal stories carries different risks that need to be understood and addressed. It can make us vulnerable and even make our listeners uncomfortable. The following outlines some risks to be aware of when we share our stories:

- ▶ **Sharing remorse:** Occurs when you have shared more than you wanted to because it felt good to be heard. However, you may think you have said too much, and you may worry about what people think of you, and whether they will react negatively.
- ▶ **Painful memories:** Sharing stories can bring to mind negative experiences, and even unresolved personal problems.
- ▶ **Credibility:** Some listeners will decide that your story is not credible if you share too much information or certain types of information. People's judgements about your credibility can affect your working relationships and opportunities.
- ▶ **Being labelled:** By sharing personal information, you run the risk of being labelled and put in a box as a case (for example, being considered too emotional). The assumptions people may make, even if they are not always objective, can have a negative impact on you.
- ▶ **Relationships:** Other people usually appear in our stories. These people may not want to be identified when you share, or they may disagree with what you share or how you present it. Sharing stories that involve them can affect the relationship.
- ▶ **Public information:** When we share personal stories, they can become public. Someone may share it or write about it, and it becomes available to a wider audience. Being exposed to the public can make you feel uncomfortable, stressed, and vulnerable as many people can access your personal stories.





## NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

This kind of communication is centered on both our needs and the values we share daily with those around us. Nonviolent communication is based on the use of a language that accentuates our compassion towards others.

Nonviolent communication is a great benefit to developing different types of relationships such as formal relationships (employee–employer), friendships or family relationships. Nonviolent communication is composed of four elements, namely observations, feelings, needs and requests. Each of these elements has a very important role in developing a conversation in which all participants feel free to express themselves without being violent.

► **Observation** represents the initial phase of nonviolent communication. At first, we must remember to only observe the other's behaviour and listen to their words without evaluating or judging what they do or say.

► **Feelings**, the second stage refers to what we feel when we observe the other's behaviour or when we listen to what they are conveying to us. We need to be aware of what emotions we feel in those moments, whether we enjoy, are scared of or sad about what we hear.

► **Needs**. After we have observed the other's behaviour and we have become aware of our own emotions, it is necessary to identify our needs. Maybe we need the other to change their tone of voice, or maybe we want to express to them that what they did or said made us happy.

► **Request** is the fourth phase of nonviolent communication. If we do not feel comfortable when someone talks to us in a certain way, we can ask them to change their way of addressing, or we can ask them to share our joy when the discussion makes us content. The request is based on identifying needs, when we have correctly identified what we need from the other. However, our request should also take into consideration the needs and feelings of our interlocutor.



## PUBLIC NARRATIVE

This is an exercise of leadership by motivating others to join you in action and on behalf of a shared purpose. As you learn this skill, you will be learning to tell a compelling story about yourself, and the need for urgent action.

Leadership requires both the head and the heart to mobilise others. It engages people interpreting why they should take action, and it shows how they can act to change the world.

To mobilise others, your story should be a mix of the following stories:

► **A story of now:** Expose an urgent challenge you hope to inspire others to take hopeful action on. What is your vision of successful action for this challenge? What actions should people take to face this challenge? How can they begin now, at this moment?

The key when persuading this point, is to call to take hopeful action, which means giving clarity to what will happen if we act or don't act, and engaging people in a common path to generating change by explaining actions that can really have an impact in your cause.

► **A story of us:** To what values, experiences or aspirations will you appeal when you call your community to take action? Which stories represent these values?

The challenge at this point is to explain the common values you think that are necessary for following your cause, and that your audience feel motivated and identified with those common values, and inspire them to act.

► **A story of self:** Reflect the sources of your motivation, the values that move you to act. Consider the purpose for which you're telling your story. Focus on challenges you had to face, choices you made about how to deal with them, and the satisfactions and frustrations that you experienced. What did they teach you about yourself, your family, your peers, your community, and about things that really matter to you? What about those stories was so intriguing?

Once you've reflected on the story of now, the story of us and the story of self, it is time to link those stories into a single public narrative. Each time you tell your story, you will adapt it (to make yourself clearer, to adjust to different audiences, etc.).



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### Elements of Public Narrative Structure

There are different ways in which you can structure the story you want to share. However, in the next lines, we propose the "Challenge - Choice - Outcome" structure.

This structure begins with an unexpected challenge that a central character confronts with an urgent need to pay attention. For this challenge, the main character should take a decision for which is unprepared. The decided choice yields an outcome, and the outcome teaches a moral.

The success of this kind of story is when the crowd empathetically identifies with the character. This is the main difference between hearing about someone's courage and being inspired by it. This can help listeners to think about their own values and challenges, and inspire them with new ways of thinking about how to make choices in their own lives.

To better reflect about the elements of the story, you can ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ **Challenge:** Why did you feel it was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it your challenge?
- ▶ **Choice:** Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you get the courage or hope? How did you feel?
- ▶ **Outcome:** How did the outcome feel? What did it teach you? What do you want to teach others about this outcome?



## STORYTELLING

It refers to the interactive art of using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the imagination of the listener. It is an ancient art form and a valuable way of human expression, as well as an effective approach of sharing information. Stories simplify complex messages and bring people together. Novelists, marketers, advertisers, etc. use storytelling to better connect with and engage their audiences.

### Case Study: The power of Storytelling

In 2006, New York Times Magazine journalist Rob Walker set out to determine whether storytelling was a powerful tool. To do so, he conducted the study "[Significant Objects](#)".

First, he collected two hundred objects of little value and no particularity (a plastic banana, a wooden mallet, etc.). He spent 190 dollars on the objects.

Next, he contacted 200 writers, including Meg Cabot, William Gibson, Ben Greeman, etc. Rob asked the writers to write a story about each item, to see if the stories could give a subjective value to the objects.

As a final step, Rob auctioned the items on eBay with the stories added to the descriptions.

And what happened? He ended up selling the items for almost \$8,000.

### Benefits of storytelling:

Storytelling can have several benefits for both the storyteller and the audience:

- Stories simplify complex messages and help to better understand new concepts.
- It forges connections among people, and between people and ideas. They convey the culture, history and values that bind people together.
- Good stories build familiarity and trust, and allow the listener to enter into the story and learn more from it.
- Stories enhance chemical reactions that improve our memory, emotional response and empathy.
- It is through stories that our minds form and examine our own truths and beliefs and discern how they correlate with the truth and belief of others.

## What makes a story good?

There are a few components that make for an excellent storytelling experience, both for the reader and the storyteller:

- **Entertainment:** The art of keeping the reader engaged and interested in what comes next.
- **Educational:** Good stories arouse curiosity and add to the reader's knowledge bank.
- **Universal:** They are relatable to all readers and tap into people's emotions and experiences.
- **Memorable:** Through inspiration, scandal or humour, good stories stick in the reader's mind.
- **Characters:** The character is the bridge between the narrator and the audience. If the audience can put themselves in the character's shoes, it will be easier for them to follow the call to action.
- **Conflict:** A conflict is a lesson in how a character overcomes a challenge. Conflict stirs emotions and connects with the audience through related experiences.
- **Resolution:** Every good story needs a resolution that sums it up, provides context about the characters and conflicts, and leaves the audience with a call to action.

## The Storytelling Process

Storytelling is like art it requires creativity, vision and skill. Like all art, storytelling needs to follow a process that can help you know where to start, how to develop your vision and perfect your practice over time:

I. **Know your audience:** The first step in the process is to identify who your ideal target audience is. Knowing their hopes, dreams, fears and frustrations will allow you to know how to convey your message.

II. **Define a central message:** Which is the main motivator that makes you want to tell the story? It is essential to establish a central message before moving forward.

III. **Decide on the type of story you want to tell:** To determine the type of story you are going to tell, think about how you want your audience to feel or react. Depending on your objective, different types of stories can be told:

Objective	Story to tell
<b>Incite action</b>	Describe how a successful action was carried out to explain how the audience could take action.
<b>Tell people about yourself</b>	Tell a story that presents genuine, humanising struggles, failures and victories. Authenticity is essential to engage the audience.
<b>Foster collaboration</b>	Tell a story that triggers familiar emotions, so that the audience can understand how the story applies to their own lives. This is especially important when discussing values that some people do not agree with or understand.
<b>Impart knowledge</b>	Tell a story that includes a trial-and-error experience, so that readers can learn about a problem and how a solution was applied.

IV. **Establish a call to action:** What exactly do you want your audience to do? Establish mechanisms that allow them to perform this action. For example, if the objective is to spread the message, a "Tap to share" button may be useful.

V. **Choose the medium of the story:** The next step is to choose how you are going to tell the story. It can be a written, spoken, audio or digital story.

VI. **Write the story:** Now that the core message, audience and call to action are established, add detail and creativity to your story. The storytelling formula can give you an idea of how to develop this phase.

VII. **Share the story:** Share and promote your story. Depending on the medium chosen, the story can also be shared via social media, email, blog, etc.

## CREATIVITY

It is the process of coming up with original ideas that have value. It is characterised by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena and to generate solutions.

As Rollo May states in his book "The courage to create", creativity is the process of bringing something new to life. It requires passion and commitment, and brings to our awareness what was previously hidden and points to a new life.

### Benefits of creativity important?

- It makes people think differently, coming up with new ideas, improving work processes and making a greater impact with their actions.
- It can lead to self-motivation of colleagues, boosting their enthusiasm and teamwork towards common goals.
- Through creativity, leaders and champions implement methodologies and tools that give colleagues a greater voice, getting them involved, increasing their sense of belonging and improving teamwork.
- Creativity leads to innovation, which is the implementation of a new or improved product, service or process that creates value for an organisation, government or society.
- A creative approach will make lasting impressions, could touch people's emotions and even appeal to the media, which could enable the dissemination of your story to a wider audience and attract greater community involvement.
- Challenges are often changing, unpredictable and increasingly complex. Consequently, creativity can be an appropriate tool to meet these challenges and find solutions in innovative ways.

### Principles of creativity

According to W. R. (Bill) Klemm in his text "Leadership and Creativity", a leader has to know what motivates people to be creative in order to provide the right motivation. In his opinion, the following 3 principles have to be taken into account:

**Freedom/ Autonomy.** Creative people are frustrated with leaders who think that only they can come up with good ideas. Leaders and advocates who want a culture of creativity among colleagues need to let their people know that creativity is expected and valued.

**Ownership.** Creativity does not increase if peers generate good ideas, but leaders and champions get all the credit. Recognition can provide deeper satisfaction than any other form of compensation. Ownership can be encouraged by having their names associated with a report of the process they have developed, letting them present their own work and giving them as much autonomy as is practical.

**Acceptance.** Creative people need to be valued. They need encouragement from leaders or other significant individuals. People tend to be naturally risk-averse, so encouraging them to take risks can have a big impact. In addition, punishing unaccepted ideas will defeat the message that creativity is expected and valued.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Youth civic engagement is defined as working to make a difference in the civic life of one's community. It also involves developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. These activities enrich the lives of youths and are socially beneficial to the community. Civic engagement includes both paid and unpaid forms of political activism, environmentalism, and community and national service.

Four interrelated constructs have been identified in the research literature as necessary for civic engagement:

**Civic Action**, or participation in activities such as volunteering or service-learning to help better the community.

**Civic commitment or duty**, or the willingness to make positive contributions to society.

**Civic Skills**, or the ability to be involved in civil society, politics and democracy.

**Social cohesion**, or a sense of reciprocity, trust and bonding with others.

### Volunteerism and social change!

Volunteerism is defined as the policy or practice of volunteering one's time or talents for charitable, educational, or other worthwhile activities, especially in one's community.

Volunteering is only one form of civic engagement included, as defined above, in the construct of civic action and civic commitment or duty, but research has also shown a connection between youth who volunteer and other forms of youth civic engagement. Findings suggest that among youth, volunteering plays a valuable role in shaping how youth learn to interact with their community and develop the skills, values, and sense of empowerment necessary to become active citizens.

While many youth volunteer, most young people do not see a connection between volunteering and political engagement or activism. However, volunteering can promote social change by contributing to personal transformation, whereby individuals change their beliefs, perspectives and day-to-day behaviours once they have developed a new awareness or understanding about a particular situation.

Studies have shown volunteering can have lifelong benefits for youth and help develop attributes that will benefit them in school, their career and in life such as:

I. **Increase self-esteem**: Acts of philanthropy can lead to a greater feeling of self-worth because helping others is fun and can help a teen reflect on what they have and enhance their sense of purpose.

II. **Gain more empathy**: Volunteering helps teens see that not everyone's life is like theirs. Helping people who have different life circumstances can help teens become more empathetic to everyone in their lives.

III. **Build long-term generosity**: Getting involved in philanthropic causes early in life can set up a teen for a life of generosity. People who volunteer when they are young are more likely to volunteer and donate to nonprofits and causes when they are older.



## TEAMWORK

Teamwork is the process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal. Teamwork means that people will try to cooperate, using their individual skills and providing constructive feedback, despite any personal conflict between individuals.

When people collaborate, they work together toward a common goal. Thus, the foundation for teamwork is a common goal.

### How to foster teamwork

- I. Get to know your team members
- II. Agree on a team mission
- III. Promote sharing
- IV. Map goals and timelines
- V. Ensure clear communication
- VI. Build the team relationship outside the workspace

### Positive effects of teamwork on youth and young people

- **Improves communication.** Being part of a team means that you have to verbalise many things. From giving instructions, to asking clarifying questions, to pointing out a different angle or idea on something; you have to talk. Teamwork allows youths to practice this critical life skill in order to assert their needs within the team framework through life.
- **Improves listening skills.** Listening is an active process that has many parts. From keeping eyes on the speaker, to not fidgeting, to show respect, to feeding back what is heard, to show understanding of the message; listening takes practice to master. In a team setting listening makes you more valuable because you understand the team's needs to propose appropriate solutions.
- **Motivation.** It comes from having goals and a desire to do something. And within a team, setting goals and the desired end result can help increase motivation.
- **Other positive effects of teamwork include:** Questioning, Helping, Sharing, Participating, Respecting, Persuading.



# chapter 6: YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

## Youth-Adult partnership

The intention of a youth-adult partnership is that the contribution of each group feels acknowledged and valued. A true youth-adult partnership is one in which both adults and young people have the opportunity to make suggestions and decisions about the issues facing young people, or the programmes and policies that affect them.

### Benefits of youth-adult partnership for young people

An effective youth-adult partnership can have a number of benefits for young people, according to the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development (Shepherd Z, et al. Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organisations. Madison, WI: National 4-H Council, 2000):

- ▶ It improves their **social competencies**, such as responsiveness, flexibility, empathy, communication skills and other pro-social behaviours.
- ▶ It empowers **autonomy**, including a sense of identity and the ability to act independently, exerting control over one's environment.
- ▶ It enhances a **sense of purpose and future**, which includes having healthy expectations, goals, motivation, educational aspirations and hope.
- ▶ It improves their **problem-solving skills**, including the ability to think abstractly, reflectively and flexibly.

### Benefits of youth-adult partnership for adults and organisations

Young people are not the only ones who benefit from the youth-adult partnership. Adults and organisations can also benefit from this kind of collaboration.

Amongst the benefits for adults we can find the following ones:

- ▶ **Change of perception:** They have the opportunity to experience the competence of young people and perceive them as legitimate and crucial contributors.
- ▶ **Understanding needs:** Adults gain a greater sense of connection to young people and are able to better understand their needs and concerns.
- ▶ **Fresh ideas:** Adults get new and fresh input from young people who have different perspectives which can help adults to develop new ways of thinking.
- ▶ **Breaking down stereotypes:** Collaboration between young people and adults can help to break down stereotypes about young people and adults, build better relationships, share knowledge and consequently develop more relevant and responsive services.

Some of the positive results for organisations are also:

- ▶ **Connection:** Adults and the organisation as a whole become more connected and responsive to young people in the community, leading to improved services.
- ▶ **Tailoring the mission:** Youth input can help clarify and focus the mission of organisations that primarily target young people. In conclusion, it can lead to better engagement and participation of young people.

### **Youth-adult partnership vs tokenism**

One of the main risks in this partnership is tokenism. The practice of doing something, such as youth-adult partnerships only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that young people's opinions are being taken into account.

Some of the signs that can help us identify this practice are:

- ▶ Having young people around with no clear role to play.
- ▶ Assign young people only those tasks that adults do not want to do.
- ▶ Having young people make media appearances without having any voice in shaping the messages, programmes or policies they are expected to talk about.

### **Essential elements for effective youth-adult partnership**

Building effective, sustainable and truly collaborative youth-adult partnerships can be challenging. However, there are some important elements to consider in order to build a successful partnership:

- ▶ **Set clear goals:** Young people and adults need to understand what their roles and responsibilities will be in achieving these goals.
- ▶ **Power-sharing:** If power is not accessible to young people, participation is not a partnership.
- ▶ **Assumptions:** Effective collaboration requires reducing both adults' and young people's assumptions about the strengths of their peers. For example, young people may often think that adults have nothing of value to contribute to a youth programme.
- ▶ **Provide capacity building and training:** Effective partnership does not mean throwing young people into situations for which they are unprepared. They may need training in communication, leadership, emotional skills, interviewing and specific areas of expertise. At the same time, adults may need training in working in partnership with young people and in specific areas of expertise that affect them.

## INCLUSION OF DISADVANTAGE YOUTH

**Disadvantage** can be defined as the lack of access to the instruments that everyone needs to be self-sufficient and have sustainable autonomy. Social disadvantage can include lack of independence, responsibility, respect from others, health, education, information, employment, financial support and participation.

**Disadvantaged neighbourhoods** are areas or communities where residents, including young people, suffer from deprivation, poverty, exclusion, violence, lack of opportunities, marginalisation, a degraded environment and poor living conditions. They often lack important infrastructure and services for young people which is detrimental to their lives and future development.

**Disadvantaged young people** are young people who live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and experience various forms of social disadvantage.

There are multiple groups at risk of experiencing disadvantage. These groups include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Young immigrants and young people with limited language skills.
- Runaway and homeless young people.
- Young people with physical and mental disabilities.
- Young people emancipating from foster care.
- Youth involved in the juvenile justice system.
- Disconnected youth (not in school and not working).

Disadvantaged young people are the most marginalised in society and need special support measures to access the same opportunities as their peers.

### How to enhance vulnerable and disadvantaged youth's inclusion

As leaders and advocates, it is important to think about the different ways in which the inclusion of disadvantaged young people should be promoted. Enhancing social inclusion, participation of disadvantaged youth and ensuring their active role in society.

Disadvantaged young people and those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods often experience isolation and segregation. The following measures could be promoted to foster social inclusion, participation of disadvantaged youth and ensure their active role in society:

- Acknowledge that all young people should have equal access to public services. Ensuring that public transport is comfortable and affordable may include modifying it to be accessible to young people with different disabilities (e.g. young people in wheelchairs).
- Reach the most isolated young people with information, non-formal education and other opportunities for participation.
- Address the specific needs of segregated and isolated disadvantaged communities through cooperation between governments, young people and other stakeholders.
- Develop inclusive and transparent processes that allow young people to participate in the planning of their environment. Youth advisory bodies could be a good example of such action.
- Use popular media among young people (social networks, public spaces they frequent, etc.) to inform and ask them for advice.

## YOUTH CHALLENGES AT GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL

Today's young people face a number of challenges that have a direct impact on their health, growth and well-being. It is essential to understand what these challenges are in order to find solutions. As youth leaders and advocates, the main task will be to engage communities to jointly address these challenges affecting young people.

### Education and employment

According to research conducted by the YMCA, 44% of young people have doubts about their studies. Academic standards are becoming higher and higher, as more and more people are expected to enter higher education each year. This contributes to the sense of competition. In addition to academic excellence, students must demonstrate that they have participated in other extracurricular activities such as a job, volunteering responsibilities or internships.

Although young people obtain high qualifications at universities, there is a perception that they are not prepared for work. This is reflected in the youth unemployment rate, which stands at 14.1% on average for the 27 EU countries according to the OECD (2022, % of the youth labour force). The youth unemployment rate is significantly higher than the overall unemployment rate, which was 6.2% in the same period.

In addition, the wages of young workers are very low. On the other hand, university and housing costs are rising rapidly, which is a challenge for young people's finances. This leads to increased financial instability.

### Mental Health Difficulties

Many young people have mental health difficulties. Mental health issues can affect many areas of their lives, such as school, home, friendships and relationships. According to the YoungMinds survey, 41% of young people said the pandemic had made their mental health worse.

Mental health is even more difficult because of the stigma surrounding it. It is perceived as a weakness, which often leads to it being ignored.

As leaders and advocates, it is important that these issues become viral and normalised. It is also important to remove the negative associations that asking for help can have by encouraging counselling for these cases. Finally, it is essential to be able to identify the signs of mental weakness in the young people around us, so that we can offer them the help they need.



## Social Media

Technological improvements have had an enormous impact on young people's lives. While their moderate and correct use can have a number of benefits, there are also concerns about their impact on self-perception and privacy.

On the one hand, relationships established online must be managed with caution because of the risks involved. Moreover, social media and anonymity in social networks increase the risk of exposure to cyberbullying, privacy issues and fading reality awareness.

On the other hand, technology and social media can pose a risk to relationships. Although they allow us to be more in touch with our friends and family, they considerably reduce the physical time we spend with them. Many young people even cut off their relationships with their peers because they feel more comfortable in the company of technology. This poses an additional risk, as their perception of reality can be strongly influenced by the content they are exposed to.



## Body image

The rise of social media apps, such as Instagram and Snapchat, means that images of bodies are continually being shared. Often, these images are filtered and edited before they are posted on social media. However, this can send confusing messages to young people about what they should look like. Research by the YMCA found that 52% of young people regularly worry about how they look.



## Environmental Issues

Research in recent years is showing the impact of human actions on the environment. Young people, with increasing life expectancy thanks to improvements in technology and medicine, are aware that these actions can have important consequences for their future. Therefore, one of the main focuses of young advocates and leaders is to raise awareness of climate change and other environmental issues, with the intention of reducing human impact in the present.



## Uncertainty

We live in uncertain times: The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on everyone's life, and the war in Ukraine shows different possible scenarios that worry everyone. Many young people feel unprepared to deal with these issues that arise in their current state of youth. It is essential to help young people gain a deeper understanding and help them develop resilience so that they are able to cope with the problems that arise in this changing world.



## SOME YOUTH LEADERS AND ADVOCATES



### **Greta Thunberg**

Greta Thunberg is a 19-year-old Swedish woman. Despite her young age, Greta has been able to unite an entire generation to take responsibility for tackling climate change. In her passion to imagine a better future, Greta has inspired many people to lead a more sustainable lifestyle. She has created a space where responsibilities are shared among those who support the same cause, empowering others to get involved through personal and collective actions.

Greta's type of leadership is transparent, open and collaborative. This makes people feel inspired and ready to take action.

One of Greta's most representative actions was her continuous presence during every school day in front of the Swedish parliament for three weeks, as a protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis. Subsequently, Greta gave a speech at COP24 in December 2018 in Poland. That talk was the fuse that started the "Fridays for future" initiative, through which she encouraged other young people around the world to join her cause. This movement, started by Greta, resonated in international institutions with many students protesting in front of parliaments and city halls. Fridays for the Future aims to create moral pressure on decision-makers to respond firmly to the climate crisis.



### **Malala Yousafzai**

Malala is a 24-year-old Pakistani woman. In 2014, when she was just 17 years old, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for becoming a voice for the voiceless. Malala is an activist for the right of women and girls around the world to go to school.

One of the reasons why Malala is a young woman of reference is her courage and conviction. Her defence of women in a Taliban country even led her to be the target of attacks, causing her serious injuries. Nevertheless, Malala did not give up and continued to fight for those most in need.

She launched a petition for the right to education that was signed by more than two million people, and the National Assembly passed the country's first Right to Free and Compulsory Education.

Malala created the Malala Fund, to which she donated her Nobel Prize money. Through her foundation, Malala challenges systems, policies and practices so that all girls can access free, safe, quality education in countries around the world.

## **Parkland shooting survivors**

David Hogg, Jaclyn Corin, Emma Gonzalez, Cameron Kasky, and Alex Wind are another example of young leaders and advocates inspiring others to fight for a common cause.

In 2018, they survived a massacre in which 17 of their classmates were killed when a gunman entered their school in Parkland, Florida. Since that time, these young people have been in an ongoing struggle to raise awareness of the need for gun regulation.

These young people started the "NeverAgain" initiative, involving hundreds of students in protests and demonstrations for mechanisms to regulate guns and improve youth participation in politics and law. These students have continued their struggle for years, and have led a movement that has inspired many more young people through their participation in online campaigns, press appearances and other awareness-raising events.

## **Salma Belhassine**

Salma Belhassine is a 24-year-old Tunisian woman fighting for equality and women's rights around the world. For years, Salma has participated in events that have allowed her to develop her skills and influence global institutions in favour of her cause. In 2017, she was part of the Youth Leadership Programme, an initiative led by UNDP. In 2018, Salma also participated in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum and spoke about her efforts to end sexual harassment in public spaces.

To this end, Salma developed a mobile application called SafeNes. This app aims to raise awareness about safety issues in public spaces and to promote safety in those areas. The app allows people to report cases of sexual harassment and quickly contact lawyers to deal with the issue. The app also contains self-defence videos and instruction on how to report harassment.





## WHAT CAN I DO?

As young leaders and advocates, there are various ways to participate in society and make the world a better place.

### Learn and get knowledge

To lead or advocate for others, the first thing you need to do is to understand the issues and challenges around you. To do this, educate yourself, read articles, look for the issues that matter most to you and dig more deeply into the issues.

Understanding how public services work, how our actions impact the environment, and what existing organisations are working to find solutions, among other things, can help you generate a more complete picture of your environment. At this point, it is essential to find the purpose and focus on the trends that interest you most, or where you feel the most attention is needed.

### Train your Leadership and Advocacy Skills

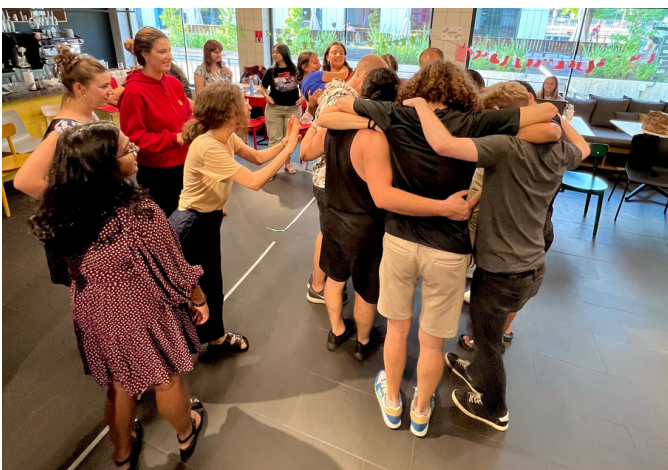
There are many skills that can help you successfully move through the advocacy and leadership process. Some of these skills are acquired during high school and university studies. However, there are many aspects that you can improve through professional learning or other methods. In Chapter 5 of this Toolkit, we describe these main skills and what you can do to improve them.

### Volunteering

Volunteering is the contribution of time, effort and talent to a need, cause or mission without financial purpose.

Volunteering can give you confidence and self-satisfaction, social contact and the possibility to use previously established skills and develop new ones. Volunteering will give you a first-hand insight into certain realities and allow you to better understand what is being done to combat the challenges of our society.

It will allow you to develop your critical capacity and find purpose. You will also feel more involved in society, which will increase your motivation to help the cause.



## **Youth participation activities**

There are activities outside formal education and training that promote, encourage and facilitate youth participation at local, regional, national and even global levels.

In Europe, Erasmus+ supports local, national and transnational participation projects run by informal youth groups and organisations that promote the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe.

## **Engage with youth participation and representation mechanisms**

In order to actively participate in the challenges affecting young people, another possibility is to get involved in youth participation and representation mechanisms.

These mechanisms can be, on the one hand, instruments promoted by governments and institutions. For example, the European Union promotes, within the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, a mechanism called "Youth Dialogue" which promotes a space between young people and EU decision-makers to discuss issues affecting young people's lives. Another example is the ERASMUS+ virtual exchange mechanism, which promotes youth participation events to address issues that affect them. This mechanism has promoted, for example, advocacy programmes or discussion sessions among young people.

On the other hand, participatory mechanisms can also be private. There are small NGOs and other types of organisations that act independently, but work with communities, localities and governments to provide support and feedback on different issues affecting young people.

## **Teach and enhance advocacy among other youth**

Another good way to influence society is to pass on your knowledge and inspire other young people to take action.

In this sense, young people could be contacted and informed about the next steps and learnings they need to take in order to become future leaders and advocates. In addition, making them aware of the challenges they face can help to create commitment among them, leading to greater involvement on their part.

Finally, there are various ways to communicate and educate young audiences: talks at universities, face-to-face communication, debates and other types of conversations, blogs, online trainings, events with experts, etc. Depending on your objectives, choose the form of communication that best suits you and inspires young leaders and advocates.

# chapter 7: YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY TRAINING



**Leadership curriculum** can be found in the following link



**Advocacy curriculum** can be found in the following link

# chapter 8: APPENDIX

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