



# Promoting Active Citizenship by Adult Education (PROMOCITI)

A Curriculum for Educational Managers

An Erasmus+ Project



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#### Authors:

Peter Jungmeier – SPES Zukunftsakademie, AT

Laura Braun – Verband der Bildungszentren im ländlichen Raum, DE

Mats Ehn – Färnebo Folkhögskola, SE

Hanna Plank – SPES Zukunftsakademie, AT

Bianca Baumgartner – ARGE Bildungshäuser Österreich, AT

Maria Zachhalmel – ARGE Bildungshäuser Österreich, AT

María Paz Anderson Madariaga – Federació d'Associacions Culturals i Educatives de Persones Adultes, ES

Jakub Mincewicz – Uniwersytet Ludowy w Radawnicy, PL

Anna-Karin Raphasha Björnberg – Färnebo Folkhögskola, SE

This document was produced for the Erasmus+ project „Promociti - Promoting Active Citizenship“.  
Project number: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000027073

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Layout: vorSprung e.U. – Bianca Baumgartner, [www.vorsprung.online](http://www.vorsprung.online)

January 2024



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**1**

# **Introduction**

# It started with a dream

Imagine that Folk High Schools will become THE engines of Active Citizenship and democracy in the near future. They will be a (virtual) place where people can meet, discuss and act together in the sense of **“We, the people!”**. Folk High Schools and similar educational institutes will act as peacemakers that stand for positivity, diversity, respect and places of hope. Because adult education is a key to reach people’s minds and awareness. So, they won’t stop performing like this until society and living together in their areas has definitely changed...

This is the dream we dared to dream of when PROMOCITI had been developed and finally started at the beginning of 2022. This curriculum describes the steps we made towards this dream, it tells about the different topics and goals, which bothered different actors in the project. It offers information on a conducted survey amongst leaders and pedagogues of adult education centres on Active Citizenship.

Furthermore, it presents experiences that we could collect during a 2-module Train-the-Trainer seminar and we hope it will encourage other people and organisations to give (even) more attention to Active Citizenship based on common European values in the future – which we regard as a main task in adult education. A brief overview of Active Citizenship in the digital realm is provided as well.

Within PROMOCITI we tried to combine existing knowledge and practical know-how of experienced actors with activating impulses for institutions and their pedagogical staff which until now focused perhaps more on designing programmes for interested learners that are offered in the Folk High Schools/in the education centres. Adult education that supports or initiates Active Citizenship though will have to outreach for the citizens, especially in rural areas.



# How to use this curriculum

This paper is not intended as a systematic guideline on how one can initiate or carry out “Active Citizenship”-processes. The interested reader can pick the chapters that address him/her most, which seem most relevant to the own private or professional background and context.

In the following, we aim to provide a concise overview of the curriculum, simplifying navigation and helping readers to discover the most interesting content without prior project involvement.



**After** clarifying our **common picture of “Active Citizenship”** and outlining the goals of PROMOCITI, we give an input on what different Folk High Schools and similar organisations already have achieved in this area. What were their experiences? Why did some organisations not want to engage much in these kinds of projects? What are the attitudes behind their work?



**Chapter 3** provides the results of our **survey** of different approaches among European Folk High Schools.



**Chapter 4** outlines some **basic approaches and didactic principles** that we think are valuable when it comes to civic participation.



**Chapter 5** presents the **train-the-trainer course** for people active in the fields of educational management, training and facilitating participation processes. Within these two modules of training, we tried to integrate all outcomes of this curriculum in a meaningful and supportive way for the participants.



**Chapter 6** presents the **peer group approach**, which we chose for elaborating **pilot activities** performed by the key persons who had joined the training before.



**Chapter 7** offers a great variety of different **methods and tools** when it comes to working with groups. Those methods are a “best-of-collection” from Folk High Schools in different European areas.



**Chapter 8** describes the method of **Digital Storytelling** – a result from a different Erasmus+ project called the same way and led by University of Loughborough (GB). It is a great tool for engaging citizens and raising awareness, which in this case was used for the promotion of Active Citizenship projects.



**Chapter 9** finally gives a quick overview of the concept of Digital Active Citizenship – a topic on which a separate impuls paper was published by the PROMOCITI team. Read about **conclusions and general findings** of PROMOCITI at the very end of this curriculum in **Chapter 10**.

**We wish you a pleasant and inspiring journey through the world of PROMOCITI!**



# What „Active Citizenship“ means to us

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*We adhere to the principle of participatory democracy as a development of representative democracy and Active Citizenship as an intrinsic part of this development.*

*We see democracy not only as freedom from oppression, but also as the possibility to participate.*

*We understand Active Citizenship as the will and the capacity to take active part in shaping society together with others.*

*Local, national and international social movements are foundations and laboratories for Active Citizenship.*

*We see the development of various forms of economic democracy as a way of strengthening civil society and therethrough the foundations for Active Citizenship.*





**2**

# **Goals and Target Groups**

# Content and objectives



**The main goal is to enhance civic engagement and participation by adult education based on common European values.**

**Adult education that supports or initiates Active Citizenship will have to outreach to the citizens. Folk High Schools and similar adult education institutes (that are often located in the countryside) could and should be more and more an open space for those parts of the population who are willing to engage in meaningful projects and initiatives.**

They can provide expertise, informal education and advice for people who want to support local projects and activities concerning topics like environmental protection, parental issues, social inclusion, local supply of daily goods, strengthening democracy, rural-urban relationship and others. They can help those engaged people to unfold potentials and handle projects in a professional way. In order to do so, education institutes have to build capacities and address local/regional actors proactively – which currently is not part of the “genetic code” of most adult education institutes (as a lot of their programs show).

On the other hand, some institutions in non-formal adult education already contribute to the task of building up and strengthening civic participation in their regions. They offer courses and other education activities relating to topics like “active democracy” and “social cohesion” and are often engaged in local or regional boards/groups/associations that try to enhance regional development and quality of life (such as Local Action Groups, cultural associations and others). To collect the wisdom of those, an exchange of cross-border good practice examples is crucial. Therefore we initiated this task right at the project’s start.

However, we not only tried to provide a solid analysis. Through engaging with these institutions and conducting the interviews, we aimed to promote the significance of Active Citizenship. These interactions prompted the involved actors to contemplate their own roles, sparking internal discussions on whether and how to serve as promoters in the region.

After sparking interest in increasing the engagement in Active Citizenship activities, the question about required competences arises:

## **What can support staff members to start and guide such projects?**

We invited 15 key persons to join a common Train-the-Trainer seminar on Active Citizenship. Special emphasis was laid on the methodologies of designing and facilitating hybrid workshops and Digital Storytelling. To make sure the curriculum meets real-life needs, we sought 3-4 people from each partner country willing to test our methods and give feedback to the project team. They received inputs, shared their knowledge, experience and developed pilot activities on the initiation of Active Citizenship activities for their own region within an international peer-group. Read more about these events in section 6.

Finally, we wanted to link engaged people from different countries to strengthen the sense of Active European Citizenship. The pilot activities developed by the key persons had been collected as a sort of „programme“, that interested people from the other countries could join in various ways (online/offline).



# Target groups



## **PEDAGOGICAL STAFF** of Folk High Schools/ Education Institutes

**This target group usually manages the institutes' educational programmes** and/or acts as trainers/teachers in their organisations. Today and perhaps even more in the future those organisations and its pedagogical staff face the challenge of collaborating with thriving active citizens in local communities to tackle various problems. For this they have to be prepared and trained.

**This target group (directors, rectors) is in charge of the institutes overall performance concerning strategy, economical figures, quality and relevant topics.** This target group very often is confronted with setting and arguing the value and core relevance of their organisation to some owner (e.g. diocese, federal government, chamber of agriculture etc.). Balancing economic and mission challenges, numerous adult education institutes are actively seeking effective strategies to navigate this tension. PROMOCITI wants to raise awareness amongst the heads of these institutes about initiating collaboration with local and regional actors. This endeavor should strengthen institution's position as well as its integration in the region. This may lead to higher acceptance and a better economic performance in their struggle of finding a firm position in the context of the owners' expectations.

## **HEADS** of Folk High Schools/ Education Institutes

## **Local/regional people** engaged in community development

This target group includes politics, social work and volunteers. **It has a high intrinsic motivation to work on the quality of the community they live in as well as on the quality of life in their regions.** Many projects carried out by civil engagement (e.g. in the frame of Agenda 21, LEADER or other programs) are a good evidence of this fact. Nevertheless, those active citizens often feel left alone. Local politicians often lack time and expertise to support them properly. Other official structures like LEADER offices don't have enough human resources to do so either. So, individuals actively involved in such initiatives often require tools and knowledge to effectively engage with diverse interest groups and successfully implement projects aimed at improving the quality of life in their municipality or region. PROMOCITI therefore provides empowerment and know-how for initiating different kinds of activities addressing a various range of relevant topics.



**3**

**Strengthening  
the school's  
work in Active  
Citizenship**



**This chapter is a guide for how Folk High Schools can develop their work on Active Citizenship at institutional level.**

**The findings, recommendations and questions are based on structured interviews with 25 managers and pedagogues of Folk High Schools and adult education centers in five different European countries.**

**In the first section we learn about their different definitions and perspectives of what Active Citizenship is.**

**The second part is focused on 10 successful approaches that we have identified. Real examples of how different schools are applying these approaches are given. To help institutional development on Active Citizenship a set of questions are formulated.**




# Definitions and perspectives

Active Citizenship and learning for Active Citizenship are emphasized in policy documents on global, European, and national levels as important fields of action for adult education institutions. However, there are no universally accepted definitions of Active Citizenship and learning for Active Citizenship.

One definition that might be useful is from UNESCO's „Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education“ (RALE):


*“It empowers people to actively engage with social issues such as poverty, gender, intergenerational solidarity, social mobility, justice, equity, exclusion, violence, unemployment, environmental protection and climate change.*

*It also helps people to lead a decent life, in terms of health and well-being, culture, spirituality and in all other ways that contribute to personal development and dignity.”*

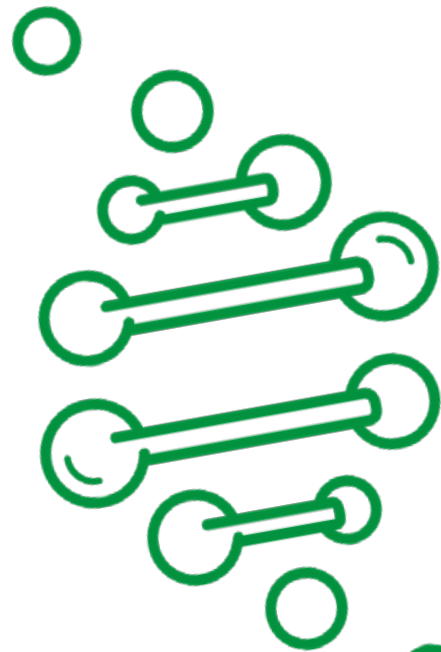


**What would be your school's definition of Active Citizenship and what perspectives on learning for Active Citizenship would be most important for you?**

In our survey with the leaders of 25 European Folk High Schools and adult education institutions, we asked for their definitions of Active Citizenship related to their activities. In the answers, we could discern different perspectives that the schools applied in order to make relevant decisions on how to act.



**Which of these perspectives would be most relevant for you?**



## Active Citizenship as a function of competence

Several school representatives see Active Citizenship as dependent on certain skills, general capacity development, or, in other words, as dependent on citizens acquiring certain competencies. The various courses and other activities offered by the schools allow participants to acquire and practise these competencies.

## Active Citizenship as voluntary engagement

Another perspective highlighted by several school leaders is that Active Citizenship are all the civic engagement and activities citizens participate in between elections in order to influence their own life situation and consequently the society they live in.

Here, it is often emphasised that Active Citizenship tends to take the form of volunteering or voluntary work in associations and movements, or in other more local initiatives to improve and develop life in various ways. The Folk High Schools in the survey are all active in one way or another in supporting local, regional, national and/or international associations and movements.

## Active Citizenship as an issue of justice

Many school representatives highlight the importance of an equity perspective for Active Citizenship. For example, it may be that some schools problematize that they don't reach out very much to more vulnerable groups in society. On the other hand, many schools have a primary focus on organizing courses and activities that help more vulnerable groups to become active citizens. Related to questions of justice is of course the human rights perspective, an ethical perspective that proclaims everybody equal in terms of their humanity and in line with this distributes rights and duties to everyone in relation to the democratic project.

## Active Citizenship in relation to parliamentary politics

Active Citizenship is of course also perceived as linked to local, regional, and national elections. This is why several schools are actively working on facilitating pre-election discussions and other topical discussions linked to the policies handled by elected representatives at different levels of society. Political institutions are also often important financially for the work of Folk High Schools, and they have often, though not always, mandated Folk High Schools to support Active Citizenship locally, regionally or nationally.



## Active Citizenship as a function of subsidiarity

Various school representatives emphasize the significance of the principle of subsidiarity, or decentralising decisions to the lowest and most participatory level possible, as crucial in society for enabling the public to practice Active Citizenship.

## Active Citizenship and cultural work

Cultural work and art have the potential to be an important resource and give people tools for communication and community. It stands out as an important aspect of the work Folk High Schools do to contribute to Active Citizenship.

## Active Citizenship in the economic sphere

Several Folk High Schools have been involved in citizens groups' endeavours in the economic sphere, for example in setting up wind energy cooperatives, local cafés that can serve as meeting places in rural areas, tourism initiatives that have provided local jobs, as well as activities together with trade unions or other actors working for a democratic working life.

## Active Citizenship and internationalism

Finally, there is this perspective on Active Citizenship as something that by its very nature needs to traverse national borders. For example, there is the striving to meet across national borders and learn to build community between people in different countries. There is also the internationalist call of sustainable development for all, in all nations, and the will to be part of a movement able to achieve this in the coming decades.





# Successful approaches

In our survey, we asked the school leaders what they do and how they work to promote Active Citizenship in their institutions and their communities. From the answers we have distilled **10 successful approaches** that we think others can learn from.

## 1 Identify and serve the needs of citizens

To support Active Citizenship effectively, Folk High Schools need to identify the needs of citizens in their area of operation continuously and design activities that respond to these needs. What is needed is to be able to balance the continuity of collaborations on the one hand, and responsiveness to new goals that emerge as society, communities, and social movements develop on the other.

### Example from the survey:

#### Escola d'Adults de la Verneda Sant Martí, ES:

*“The fact that the school works in the district and that the educational and organisational skills of the school are in demand can be seen in the fact that the town council proposed that we participated in a public tender to carry out the Community Action Plan for La Verneda and La Pau. We presented this to the assembly, and it was decided we should do it with a very rigorous philosophy. First, we conducted interviews on the street, with people with different profiles. Then, we conducted interviews with the different organisations in the neighbourhood, as well as desk research of national and international bibliography. This allowed us to identify the needs that existed in the neighbourhood. Thus, we identified the priority areas in which we had to work; we looked for evidence and researched which European projects had been successful in each of the areas. Subsequently, we held a conference to explain everything we had researched, and we presented the evidence. At these conferences, the people of the neighbourhood themselves chose which successful experiences they wanted to recreate, and the commissions were set up. In this sense, the Plan works according to the same principles as the school.”*



#### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

- Do our courses and activities correspond to the needs of our community?
- How do we know what these needs are?
- What instruments or channels do we have to identify the needs?



## 2 Identify your area of activity and engage in networks

A prerequisite for success in listening to needs and designing relevant activities to meet them is presence and participation in relevant networks. It is therefore important to identify the school's area of activity and relevant networks. They can be local, regional, national, or even global. The area of activity can also be thematic. Long-term commitment within networks is key to building trust.

### Examples from the survey:

#### Heimvolkshochschule Seddiner See, DE:

*"We identify other organisations and networks that are also working with Active Citizenship and volunteerism and organise educational activities and participate in common projects with them. We support the exchange of experiences, project ideas, and dissemination of knowledge between different actors. This started in the 90s with workshops on rural development together with local authorities and organisations where democratic participation was central. Around 400 communities participated in this process. This initiative has been followed by several new projects with a similar focus, e.g. the Village/dialogue project and the Forum ländlicher Raum- Netzwerk Brandenburg."*

#### Uniwersytet Ludowy w Radawnicy, PL:

*"We have developed the 'University of Leaders' course aimed at local leaders. This course has in turn led to the creation of the Center for Local Integration for a continuous exchange of experience between local leaders and activists in different fields. We also see it as important to develop our European network and learn from the experiences of other countries on how to strengthen Active Citizenship. One opportunity is to do this through ERASMUS+."*



### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

Which organisations and networks are you already involved in and why?  
Can you identify other organisations and networks that would be important for your work on Active Citizenship?

# 3

## Let your school be a meeting place

Schools have the potential not only to serve as organisers of courses or similar activities. They can also become meeting places where civic groups have their meetings. Courses and other activities should also be designed to facilitate meetings between different groups in society.

### Examples from the survey:

#### Bäckedals folkhögskola, SE:

*“We offer the school as a meeting place for the local community and for social, cultural, and political events. This way we become an intrinsic part of our community’s cultural infrastructure.”*

#### Bildungshaus Kloster St. Ulrich, DE:

*“For our school being involved in local development work is important. We have been active in initiating Agenda 21 locally, as well as in a project called ‚Dorf im Dialog‘. We also invite local people to a Nachtcafé with panel discussions and lectures to discuss agriculture and society once a year. We also facilitate local discussions when requested, for example we have facilitated a discussion on wolves in Baden-Württemberg. We always try to be attentive to issues that concern local people and „keep our finger on the pulse“, for example at Nachtcafé we always look for topics that are ‚burning‘ at the moment, e.g. ‚The cow is not a climate killer‘, ‚Can organic food feed the world?‘ or ‚Oat milk is not the solution either‘. We also work as a partner in vocational training for farmers and wine growers. At our school, they participate in two weeks of personal development where they practise communication, self-awareness, etc., which is a basis for becoming active later in life.”*



### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

- Is your school perceived as a meeting point by the general public?
- What possibilities do you see for your school to become a more attractive meeting place?
- What activities and facilities can you offer?
- What can you get in return?

# 4

## Be visible leaders and facilitators for Active Citizenship

To function as a facilitator and multiplier of Active Citizenship, schools and their staff need to be visible in the public sphere. They need to focus efforts on communication besides only arranging courses. There are various ways to do this.

### Examples from the survey:

#### Zachodniopomorski Uniwersytet Ludowy, PL:

*“Our school engages in activities to solve contemporary social problems, thus showing its audiences that these are important topics and that we should not be indifferent to such things as supporting each other during the COVID-19 pandemic or helping refugees from Ukraine.”*

#### Heimvolkshochschule Seddiner See, DE:

*“We strive to be a recognized practice-oriented and competent partner for education and Active Citizenship locally and nationally. We offer ourselves as moderators in communities where conflicts have arisen.”*



### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

How are you as an institution and as persons considered in your community?

Are there important roles in your community where you could play an important part?





# 5

## The whole school should be on board

Working to promote Active Citizenship should involve everybody at the school, from teachers, course participants to administrative and service staff. This way the school can develop a participatory and democratic culture promoting Active Citizenship.

### Examples from the survey:

#### **Bildungshaus Schloss Puchberg, AT:**

*“We have given ourselves the task of working on learning for Active Citizenship and democracy and of planning and implementing events in this area. It is important that there is both an institutional and an individual commitment to this.”*

#### **EICASCANTIC, ES:**

*“We see participation as essential, and Active Citizenship is transversal in all our activities. At the organisational level we stress member participation in our activities and teamwork to avoid creating hierarchies, hence fostering horizontality.”*



### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

How is dialogue between board, management and staff organized?  
What mechanisms to ensure participation of staff and students do you have?



# 6

## Let Active Citizenship permeate all your activities

Learning for Active Citizenship does not have to be specific activities. It can permeate all school activities as an aspect of the activity being carried out, as an approach of school staff and as part of the design of school environments. In this way, crafts courses, vocational training, language courses or various aesthetic activities can be part of the school's work on Active Citizenship.

### Examples from the survey:

#### Kazubski Uniwersytet Ludowy, PL:

*"We use the expression 'from a community of participants to the building and development of local communities'. This means that the aim of teaching at the school is, on the one hand, to build a sense of community among the participants, and on the other hand, to encourage students to start or continue local activities through their acquired competencies, knowledge, skills, awareness, and relationships. In the beginning, students learn to be active citizens in the community of listeners and lecturers. Later, they share it with others."*

#### Bäckedals folkhögskola, SE:

*"We do not have specific courses on Active Citizenship. However, learning for Active Citizenship should permeate all our courses. You must feel and see that you can have an impact. Therefore, we have a participant's council with real influence and participant representatives in the management group and in various bodies at the school. We also involve our participants and their creative crafting in designing our facilities."*

#### Uniwersytet Ludowy Rzemiosła Artystycznego, PL:

*"Our observations over the years have shown that vocational training in a variety of handicraft techniques gives graduates of the two-year course many tools for working with people. This 'know how' is then used to serve the community in a variety of ways, including for educational purposes, therapeutic purposes or as an active leisure activity. Beyond this, education at the school is about creating a community based on partnership, democracy, relationship building and shared responsibility for where and when we meet. We create a micro-community where we 'train' civic activities."*



### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

What role does learning for Active Citizenship play in your different courses? How can this be strengthened?

# 7

## Provide participants with the necessary tools for Active Citizenship

In order to serve society through Active Citizenship, one needs an ethical compass, personal qualities and practical skills. Folk High Schools have great potential to contribute to the development of these capacities. This can include working in groups, developing leadership, supporting volunteering, learning about specific issues, etc.

### Examples from the survey:

#### Röda Korsets folkhögskola, SE:

*“We do a lot of work to create structures for how participants’ joint influence will be organised in the school. We do this in order to develop the school and to ensure that the participants take these skills with them into their future lives. It’s about being able to make agendas, take minutes, make your voice heard, and chair meetings.”*

#### Katolische Landvolkochschule Oesede, DE:

*“Our take on Active Citizenship is focused on voluntarism as a resource for a better society. We not only encourage volunteering, but we help develop the skills needed to take on that role. This can include board work, lobbying, marketing, writing, public speaking, fundraising, project development, school partnerships etc. Volunteering permeates all our course activities.”*

#### Bildungshaus Schloss Puchberg, AT:

*“We think it is equally important to focus on social and emotional skills as on expertise to foster Active Citizenship. We try to instil courage so that our participants dare to speak out. We invite interesting speakers on current political issues and themes to provide knowledge and information but also to encourage engagement.”*



### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

How do you work to strengthen the participants’ capacities as active citizens? How do you address ethical issues, how do you encourage engagement and what practical skills for Active Citizenship do you offer?



## 8

# Be good listeners and creative didactic designers

Working with adult learning and Active Citizenship means constantly listening to the needs of participants and partners and adapting content and methods accordingly. Learning can take place in many different ways and in many different contexts and settings. Digitalisation offers many new opportunities and challenges.

### Examples from the survey:

#### SPES Zukunftsakademie, AT:

*„Learning by doing‘ - We pay attention that our participants on a personal level understand the importance of engagement for themselves and for society and we link social and economic needs and create civic engagement on that basis. We try to focus on the pleasures of civic engagement as opposed to just looking at all the problems and musts. We point to positive examples. A concrete example is the ‚Nah Da‘ project where SPES works with local development groups and through civic engagement creates local development centres to meet identified social and economic needs. This can be done through the formation of cooperatives such as in St. Stephen’s Afjiesl where citizens in the cooperative form now run a cafe, a pub, a shop, and a gathering and meeting place.“*

#### Bildungshaus Schloss Retzhof, AT:

*“In addition to on-site courses at the house, we work with something that we call Mobile Retzhof which is an initiative to organise courses in other locations to reach more people with our activities. We also organise city walks and other outdoor educational activities, for example on the border with Slovenia.“*

#### Bona folkhögskola, SE:

*“We are making extensive use of the opportunities offered by hybrid working methods and digital tools to reach more people who need to combine family and work life with further studies. Working extensively with digitalisation has helped us to evolve during the pandemic and has led to a shift in the balance between on-site and distance learning towards more distance learning especially for those studying at secondary school level in the Second chance course.*

*We also experience that with greater openness to using the digital world as a source, we are also entering the digital realm where a lot of communication and debate takes place in today’s society.“*



### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

What opportunities for learning for Active Citizenship in unconventional settings can you identify in your context?

What is the impact of digitalisation for learning for Active Citizenship in your school? Possibilities and challenges?

## 9 Have steering documents that support your work

Many schools have it as a founding principle to support learning and development for the citizens of their area or for citizens more broadly. When this is written in the statutes or bylaws of the school it gives legitimacy to all such work being carried out in the school.

### Examples from the survey:

#### KBW Treffpunkt Bildung, AT:

*“The organisation’s statutes state that it should ,provide a place for different kinds of development, participation, and co-creation, which includes courageous and experimental activities that can both fail and succeed, even failures should be seen as an opportunity to learn.”*

#### Heimvolkshochschule Seddiner See, DE:

*“We see our Folk High School pedagogy as central to Active Citizenship. It can be summarised in five principles: Living and learning under one roof, teachers always seeing themselves as learners as well, education through dialogue, orientation towards the common good, and learning with heart, hand, and mind.”*



#### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

What does your school’s own steering document state about learning for Active Citizenship?

Is there a need for strengthening the status of learning for Active Citizenship?

What does regional or national regulations on adult education and learning say about Active Citizenship?

Can you find support there?





10

## Lobby for adult education and Active Citizenship

Despite the support for adult learning and the link to Active Citizenship in international agreements, the adult learning sector is severely underfunded. It is therefore important to demonstrate to policy makers that the defence and development of democracy depends on active and engaged citizens who understand the value of human rights and that adult education organisations have a unique competence in developing learning for Active Citizenship. It is also important to highlight the potential of adult learning for local development.

Individual Folk High Schools have the opportunity to be in continuous contact with local decision makers and demonstrate the importance of school activities for the local community. In order to influence the long-term funding conditions, the umbrella organisations of Folk High Schools, such as VBLR, OSUL, ARGE BHÖ, and FSO, need to be proactive at the national level in demonstrating the needs that schools can meet in terms of democratic participation, working life, health, and social welfare and that continuous and sufficient funding is needed for this. In lobbying, cooperation with other civil society organisations should be sought.

### Examples from the survey:

#### **Volkshochschule Oberösterreich, AT:**

*„We are well networked, for example through the EB Forum Upper Austria. This is a voluntary association of the major adult education providers in Upper Austria, which is committed to ensuring that general education has the same value as vocational education and training and that socio-political issues are addressed.“*

#### **Kazubski Uniwersytet Ludowy, PL:**

*„For us, national and international networks are important to develop our work, that is why we have been involved in the formation of OSUL and why we participate in international projects together with Folk High Schools from many parts of Europe.“*

#### **Evangelisches Bildungs- und Tagungszentrum Bad Alexandersbad, DE:**

*„We bring together political leaders for unbiased conversations about the region's challenges without media coverage or an audience. We try to maintain close contact with local politicians, authorities, and civil society organizations. Local issues and needs are central to our work on Active Citizenship. These can be energy issues, nuclear fuel storage, or motorways.“*



### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

How can you strengthen your contacts with political representatives and civil society organizations at the local, regional, and national level? How can you advocate the link between adult education and active citizenship?



**4**

# **Basic Didactic Attitudes**



For the interested reader of this paper, we regard it as useful to reveal the attitudes of the participating organisations within PROMOCITI.

Perhaps one can understand the approach towards Active Citizenship better by knowing which map of values and principles is laid behind.





# Association of Folk High Schools in Germany



The association represents the interests and educational work of 45 Folk High Schools throughout Germany and one associate member in Denmark. It is committed to the development and strengthening of rural areas through educational programs that are tailored to the specific characteristics of each region. The aim of the Folk High Schools is to strengthen personalities and promote the common good.

The Association of Folk High Schools in Germany promotes networking, exchange of experience and transfer of know-how between the Folk High Schools and thus ensures an equally high level of quality in all areas. In this way, individual schools with a regional sphere of influence develop into a network of continuing education institutions on a national and European level.

In this context, the promotion of volunteer structures plays a major role - volunteering strengthens rural areas and allows those involved to perceive themselves as political citizens.

Encourage, motivate, enable: our Folk High Schools in rural areas are places of exchange, learning and knowledge transfer.

They do this in the spirit of the Danish educator **NIKOLAI FREDERIK SEVERIN GRUNDTVIG**, who gave birth to the idea of the Folk High School in 1844. Against the background of the border disputes between Denmark and Prussia and the democratization of Denmark in the 19th century, Grundtvig founded so-called „folkehøjskoler“ to politically edu-

cate farmers and people from the rural areas of Denmark. This happened in „long courses“. The participants „lived and learned under one roof“ and learned practical tools in the four-month courses, but also received lessons in philosophy and politics. Even at that time, they were educated to become „active citizens“ who work for their community.

Folk High Schools were also founded in Germany and are still active here. Under the slogan „living and learning under one roof“, various groups from the region around the schools or beyond meet here and engage in conversation.

Conversation is always at the centre of our work and that of our member institutions. We invite you to enter into a dialogue, to engage in dialogue and to let action emerge from it. Ideas are born in the Folk High Schools and carried into the region; the necessary know-how for implementation is also learnt in the schools.

”  
Living and learning  
under one roof“

- N.F.S. Grundtvig

In Grundtvig’s sense, the teacher is always also a student and the students can take on the role of a teacher. The knowledge of each guest is valued and can be useful in shaping the Folk High School itself or the region. Active Citizenship is thus deeply anchored in the DNA of the German Folk High Schools and almost all activities of the schools pay off on this goal.

# ARGE Bildungshäuser Österreich

The „Arbeitsgemeinschaft Bildungshäuser Österreich“ is an independent, non-profit association whose current 17 members are educational institutions, so called “Bildungshäuser”, under various sponsorships (dioceses, chambers, provinces, religious orders, associations). The Bildungshäuser cover a broad spectrum of ideological positions, ranging from a Christian humanist to a non-denominational view of man.

## Common characteristics and values of the Bildungshäuser are:

- A pedagogical understanding that combines **LEARNING AND LIVING TOGETHER UNDER ONE ROOF** (see the concept of N.F.S. Grundtvig). This didactic concept contributes significantly to deepening the learning experience.
- A commitment to constitutional **DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES**. The Bildungshäuser are committed to the basic ideas of diversity and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The association promotes encounters, exchange of experience, information and **COOPERATION** among its members.
- **DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS AND JOINT PROJECTS** based on educational trends, social changes and cultural challenges.
- Mutual **RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION** and a cooperative working style. Conflicts are addressed and dealt with constructively.
- Ensuring and developing the pedagogical and content-related **QUALITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL OFFER** as well as **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**.

The members have different thematic and content-related orientations. However, many are very involved in the field of political education to promote Active Citizenship. Two of them are Schloss Puchberg and Retzhof, which also participated in the PROMOCITI project.

The **BILDUNGSHAUS SCHLOSS PUCHBERG** sees itself as an open-minded platform for thinkers and visionaries of a courageous future. It wants to be a think tank for social, theological and ecclesiastical developments. Critical thinking and a healthy culture of debate are an integral part of the courses on offer. The aim is to set educational impulses in the society to inspire people to set self-determined and responsible action.

The basis for political adult education to promote social participation is the principle of the German social philosopher Oskar Negt: „Democracy is the only form of government that has to be learned.“ His pedagogical competence model is followed especially at **BILDUNGSHAUS RETZHOF**, where he also acts as a mentor for political education.

His 6 identified competences in the dimensions of life are:

- Identity competence
- Ecological competence
- Technological competence
- Historical competence
- Justice competence
- Economic competence

When people have these competencies, they have the tools to actively participate in a democratic society. The competences are taken into consideration when creating the educational program and offers for the Bildungshaus.

”  
Democracy is the  
only form of  
government that has  
to be learned.“

- Oskar Negt

# Federació d'Associacions Culturals i Educatives de Persones Adultes

**FACEPA is a non-governmental non-profit organization based in Barcelona, Spain, and has been operating since 1996. The main work is to promote associative movements of people without academic degrees who participate in adult education.**

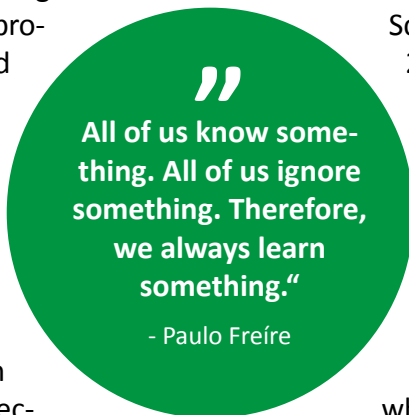
By fostering safe and inclusive spaces for participation, where everyone is respected and heard, we aim to move closer to a democratic, fair, and supportive society. Furthermore, we want to create a space for dialogue to share opinions and develop educational and cultural proposals to generate training opportunities and community promotion. All the activities carried out by FACEPA are based on the [Declaration of the rights of participants \(1999\)](#).

**FACEPA's core values are democracy, dialogue, justice, participation and equality.** Everyone's opinion is equally valued and respected, as long as it guarantees human rights, and decisions are taken as a group without having any hierarchy. FACEPA works in a dialogical manner with the participants, always taking into account their opinions. The participants take an active role in decision making processes. We believe that we learn the best by exchanging ideas and experiences with others, or as put by Paulo Freire "All of us know something. All of us ignore something. Therefore, we always learn something".

While following an egalitarian approach, all work by FACEPA relies on the Communicative Methodology (Flecha & Soler, 2014). Through dialogue between the scientific community

and end-users, knowledge is constructed. When dialogue is being exchanged between people with scientific knowledge with the experiences of social actors, the ideal conditions will be created for both parties to share their knowledge and be able to identify actions that overcome exclusionary elements, as put by Ramon Flecha (2015).

**With this in mind, FACEPA believes in creating spaces for all participants to exchange ideas.** These actions are based on Successful Educational Actions (SEA), evidence based solutions recognized by the international Science Community (Flecha, 2015).



Key activities include Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG), Dialogic Scientific Gathering (DSG), and Interactive Groups, all recognized as SEA. DLGs involve reading and discussing classical literature, while DSGs focus on impactful scientific articles, aiming to make significant work accessible to those with limited education and democratize knowledge. All people are included and knowledge is created through co-creation. Through this they will acquire enough confidence and knowledge to be able to actively participate in different areas of the society.

Another SEA is Family Education, which is based on training for success and responds to the interests and needs of families. Family members become more involved in their children's education (Bonell Garcia & Ríos, 2016). FACEPA is thus promoting Active Citizenship that has direct results.

# SPES Zukunftsakademie



**SPES is an “academy for the future” as well as a kind of Folk High School. We are privately managed, non-profit oriented and operate regionally and internationally. Our activities serve the common quality of life of present and future generations.**

For us, being an “academy for the future” means empowering and encouraging people and organisations to deal with changing conditions and social developments in a solution-oriented, life-strengthening way.

We are convinced that we can shape the future and envision a world in which local people are committed to a good life for all.

That’s why we always try to develop a strong and multidisciplinary team that offers process support, education and consulting. We create and implement models that can be multiplied.

Our love for people and our aspiration to work in bottleneck situations are what set us apart. That is why we are able to stimulate people’s self-efficacy, to strengthen, empower and encourage them.

**We will not stop, because we are convinced that the future can be shaped!**

## Färnebo Folk High School



**Our school adheres to the principle of participatory democracy as a development of representative democracy and Active Citizenship as an intrinsic part of this development. We see democracy not only as freedom from oppression and the right to vote but also as the possibility and capacity to participate. We understand Active Citizenship as the will and the capacity to take active part in shaping society together with others. Local, national and international social movements are foundations and laboratories for Active Citizenship.**

**Färnebo folkhögskola shall run courses whose aims are to:**

- develop the participants in the direction of independent and active people who feel responsibility for and solidarity with others.
- give participants the opportunity to acquire knowledge of their social, political, cultural and ecological situation together.

- develop the participants’ ability to work with others towards common goals.
- inspire the participants to become involved in social movements

**The pedagogy of the Folk High School has the following basic principles:**

- The course and activities are based on the major issues of our time, in our statutes we have defined them as global justice, environmental sustainability, fair and lasting peace, gender equity, democracy and human rights.
- The activities are based on the strength of collective action.
- The courses integrate interaction between theory, practice and outreach activities.
- Participants are given co-responsibility as individuals and as a group for the aims and the activities of our courses.



# Ogólnopolska Sieć Uniwersytetów Ludowych (OSUL)

**The Polish Network of Folk High Schools (PNFHS, Polish: OSUL) is a federation – a union of associations, foundations, and other entities connected with the activities of Folk High Schools.**

Established in 2018 in Grzybów, it is headquartered in Radawnica, home to Poland's oldest continuously operating Folk High School since 1946. Initially founded by six organizations, it has since grown to a current count of 18.

It was founded in order to create a platform for cooperation and integration of Folk High Schools (FHS) in Poland. Its focus is placed on the reinforcement of significance of FHSs in Poland. As an umbrella organisation the PNFHS fosters the sense of identity of the entire FHS community and facilitates partnerships of FHSs with the public administration, representing at the same time the organisations in the public sector and in other communities.

It is a fast growing community of Folk High Schools actively operating in Poland. The schools united under the PNFHS share similar values that correspond directly to the **Grundtvigian methodology:**

- long and short courses
- holistic approach
- partnership and teamwork
- shared accommodation
- location

The Polish Network of Folk High Schools was established to develop the movement of Folk High Schools in Poland and to support the development of civil society. The PNFHS also aims to create conditions conducive to active intergenerational cooperation in rural communities and small towns and to improve the quality of life of people at risk of exclusion, including people with disabilities, the unemployed and seniors.





**5**

# **Train-the- Trainer Course**



## Overall Training Goals

Main goal of the project PROMOCITI was to enhance civic engagement and participation by adult education. We wanted to inspire adult education institutions like Folk High Schools to integrate Active Citizenship into their portfolios and education programmes by offering a Train-the-Trainer (TTT) course for their pedagogical staff.

This chapter contains ideas and suggestions on how such a course could look like. As part of the project PROMOCITI, the course was carried out in 2 modules of 3 days each (schedules can be found in the appendix). Between the modules, peer groups, which the participants of the TTT formed to support each other, worked independently on their pilot workshops. As part of the second module, a timetable was drawn up as to when which pilot workshops would take place and how they would be linked together.

More information on the peer groups and the pilot workshops can be found in section 6.

## General attitude

- a. **„The wisdom of the many“:** The TTT should be designed in a way that allows all participants to come up with their knowledge, experiences and good practices. Everyone is invited to act both as learner and teacher.
- b. **The daily schedule may not be followed strictly** – important issues that arise during the training may create a new timetable or even new contents.
- c. **Everyone will be invited to produce exercises, short games and other inputs of creativity during the training.**
- d. **No tension – no change:** Different points of view and diversity in the group are welcomed elements, for those are the soil for development and change.

# Module 1

## Learning goals



### Key goal

The participants will be able to adopt and use the knowledge, the methods and settings introduced in the training (see section 7). They know how to handle the basic hard- and software for carrying out hybrid meetings with groups and sites in the other partner countries.



### Side goals

- Participants exchange ideas with participants from other education centers.
- Participants gain a comprehensive understanding of what „Active Citizenship“ is.



## Training contents

- Become aware of the **significance of Active Citizenship** in adult education
- Get to know **good practices and results of an engrossed survey** done amongst adult education institutions
- Get a picture of the **current situation** concerning Active Citizenship and adult education in the partner countries
- Get to know **useful methods** for working in the context of civil participation
- Get a first **introduction** in designing and facilitating **hybrid meetings**
- Form international digital **peer groups** for preparing ideas of how to get involved with Active Citizenship in the home region.



# Module 2

## Learning goals



### Key goals

Participants should be able to design and direct local workshops as hybrid meetings. They will be able to document these events as a kind of Digital Story (simple video format). They leave the module with a concrete idea of what project to start in their home regions and how they can do it.



### Side goals

- Participants will link their pilot activity to another one's.
- Participants gather experience and inspiration through the field trips (e.g. how to produce a simple radio show or podcast)



## Training contents

- Learn about core principles and attitudes of **promoting Active Citizenship**
- Learn how to **facilitate a hybrid meeting** technically and skilfully
- Learn how to create a **Digital Story**
- Learn to **exchange ideas** about the activities in the home regions as result of the first phase of peer group working
- Get to know **more useful methods** for working in the context of civil participation
- **Design templates** for various formats/ settings of local/regional workshops



# Learnings from the TTT

The TTT in the PROMOCITI project was international in its scope. The participants came from 5 different countries.

This created challenges and benefits:

## Administration

With an international TTT, it is important to plan and time the arrival and departure of the participants well, as the distances they have to travel vary greatly.

Additionally, prepare a Fact Sheet containing essential addresses (locations), phone numbers, public transport details, and even suggestions for leisure activities.

Ensure the availability of a designated central contact person in case any issues arise upon arrival or during the meeting.

## Communication

Different mother tongues led to the use of English as the common language. The translations necessitated revisiting specific terms repeatedly, as not everyone interpreted the respective term in the same way. However, this also meant that the meaning of terms was looked at very carefully and a common project language developed.

Providing a safe space for participants with limited English proficiency was essential, enabling them to acclimate to the language and make progress. This improvement was indeed evident, thanks to the increased frequency of English usage due to the project.

## Cultural exchange

The meeting of many different people from varying cultural backgrounds created the opportunity to exchange ideas and learn about various practices and experiences.

Also, the participants gained a deeper understanding of different cultures, fostering tolerance and appreciation for diversity.

It's crucial to bear in mind that practices, priorities and work habits may differ across various countries and cultures, implying that what works or holds significance in one context may not necessarily translate in the same manner elsewhere.

The cross-cultural collaboration may help learning to work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, which can be a valuable skill in a globalised world.

The international networking may also lead to new collaborations.

## Didactics

When arranging a course for diverse participants, particularly pedagogues with varying backgrounds, it is advisable to assess their current knowledge and expectations beforehand. This way, the content of the TTT modules can be tailored to the needs of the participants.

Consequently, the evaluation at the end of the course is crucial and will provide significant information on what to improve in the future.



## QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

Think about which participants are coming to your TTT and what their needs are.

What language should be spoken?  
How well do the participants know each other?

How do they travel to and from the event?



**6**

**Peer Groups  
& Pilot  
Workshops**



# The idea of introducing Peer Groups

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The Erasmus+ project on Active Citizenship within adult education has emerged as a beacon of innovation and empowerment, aiming to equip participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to be actively engaged citizens in their local communities.

This section explores the investigation conducted by the project group on Active Citizenship and delves into the practical aspect of the initiative, specifically the peer groups tasked with developing pilot workshops on Active Citizenship within local communities.

The main goal of the PROMOCITI project is to bring Active Citizenship into educational centres. In order to test whether and how well it works to offer such programs, pilot workshops were conducted by various participating educational centres. This chapter describes the background to this and how the implementation was planned. Finally the lessons learned are presented. The information provided here can assist you in formulating your own workshops focused on Active Citizenship. The workshops carried out during the project are given as examples. Brief videos for some of them are available on the [project's Facebook page](#).

## Investigation of Active Citizenship

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Before delving into the practical aspects of the project, it's crucial to understand the investigative phase that laid the foundation for this Erasmus+ initiative. The project group consisting of representatives of adult education centres from Austria, Germany, Poland, Spain and Sweden conducted a comprehensive exploration of the concept of Active Citizenship, analysing its various dimensions, challenges, and opportunities. This investigation involved an examination of global and local perspectives on citizenship, encompassing political, social, and cultural aspects.

Through workshops, seminars, and expert lectures, participants gained insights into the historical evolution of Active Citizenship and the role it plays in shaping democratic societies. The investigation also focused on the diverse forms of civic engagement, including community organising, advocacy, and

social entrepreneurship. This comprehensive approach enabled participants to develop a nuanced understanding of Active Citizenship as a multifaceted concept.

Furthermore, in order to conduct the practical phase of the project a group of practitioners, teachers and workers from different organisations was formed and met twice in order to create peer groups whose responsibility was to speak about the actions their organisations take within the topic of Active Citizenship, exchange good practices on it and plan activities that could successfully be conducted in all participating countries. During the TTT meetings (Train the Trainer modules, see also section 5) participants discussed different examples of Active Citizenship actions and formed above-mentioned peer groups - people of similar interests and experiences within the field of Active Citizenship.

# Practical Aspect:

## Peer Groups and Pilot-Workshop

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A cornerstone of the Erasmus+ project was the practical application of knowledge through peer groups tasked with developing pilot workshops on Active Citizenship within their local communities. This hands-on approach aimed to translate theoretical concepts into tangible actions, fostering a sense of agency among participants.

The formation of peer groups was a strategic move, creating a collaborative environment where participants could share ideas, pool resources, and leverage diverse skills. Each peer group was assigned the task of identifying a specific issue within their community that required Active Citizenship intervention. The topics ranged from environmental sustainability and social inclusion to education and civic participation.

The pilot workshops were designed to be community-driven, addressing real challenges faced by the participants in their respective locations. This approach not only enhanced the relevance of the initiatives but also encouraged a sense of ownership and responsibility among participants.

As the peer groups embarked on the development of their pilot workshops, they encountered both anticipated and unforeseen challenges. The diversity within the groups, comprising individuals with different backgrounds and perspectives, contributed to a rich tapestry of ideas but also required effective communication and conflict resolution. Through this process, participants not only honed their project management skills but also gained a deeper understanding of

the complexities inherent in Active Citizenship.

Communication was crucial in order to create valuable projects as opinions of others (more experienced peers) were very much expected. In order to assure information flow without restriction, communication was diverted to one of the social platforms called “Discord” where several “rooms” were created to talk about different projects in small groups. Apart from that medium emails were also used on a regular basis, however, to provide very precise feedback and speak about particular aspects of interest discord channels were used.

Within the international peer groups several projects were discussed and planned. Barcelona based FACEPA prepared (within the peer group together with representatives of organisations from Germany, Poland Spain and Austria) and conducted an activity on preventing violence against women. Despite the fact that the activity was conducted in Spain, participants from other countries were able to join in via internet platforms.

Other organisations, in various projects focusing on sustainability, empowerment, public dialogue, and self-development, also established similar opportunities for others to participate.

Poland based Uniwersytet Ludowy w Radawicy e.g. was the organiser of a public debate between NGOs, local businesses and local authorities. During this conference several important issues were raised and a better

path of cooperation between the three bodies was developed. Prior to this event, a long exchange of ideas and suggestions from the peer group (Poland, Spain, Sweden) was taken into account which resulted in a very interesting and valuable meeting.

Above, are only two examples out of many activities conducted within this project and under the guidance of participants in peer groups.



### QUESTIONS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

Which other educational centres could your educational centre get in touch with to exchange information about Active Citizenship programs?  
Which topics are relevant for citizens in your region?  
What offers could your education centre create to address these topics?

## Impact and Lessons Learned

The Erasmus+ project's emphasis on practical application through pilot workshops yielded tangible outcomes within local communities.

From organising awareness campaigns to implementing sustainable practices, participants became catalysts for positive change. The impact was not limited to the immediate results of the pilot workshops; it extended to the participants' personal growth, as they developed leadership skills, resilience, and an enduring commitment to Active Citizenship.

Additionally, the project facilitated a cross-cultural exchange of ideas and practices among participants, fostering a global network of active citizens.

The sharing of experiences, successes, and challenges became a valuable aspect of the learning process, highlighting the interconnectedness of civic engagement efforts Europe-wide.



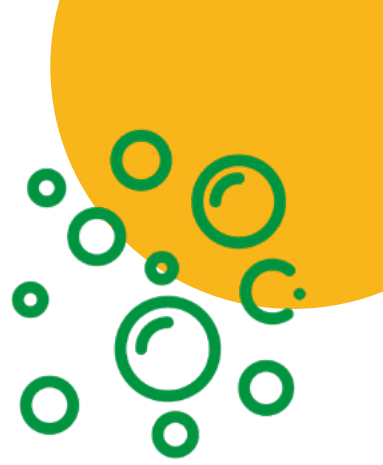




# Examples for Pilot Workshops

No.	Activity
1	<b>Online Market of Opportunities:</b> Folk High School teachers from different countries present projects or initiatives during an online get-together.
2	<b>Workshop on local energy transition:</b> Energy Communities are a dynamic movement in Europe today. The workshop will look at experiences and examples in different European countries and ask what the participants can do in their region. Think global, act local.
3	<b>Teachers-Artists workshop:</b> Bringing together different target groups and sharing knowledge is important. In this case you can bring together teachers and artists from your region. How does the other group look at different issues and the work of artists in the region? How can art help the region develop?
4	<b>Rural Artists Network:</b> In sparsely populated areas, there are often no opportunities for certain target groups to find out about their work, funding conditions and other issues. Establishing a network for them in Folk High Schools can help to develop the art scene (or others) in rural areas.
5	<b>Checklist on inclusive adult education:</b> Is your Folk High School inclusive and accessible for all people? Create a checklist (or take one from the Internet) and check with local people.
6	<b>Exchange about adult literacy empowerment:</b> How do literacy teachers in other countries work? How are the structures different?
7	<b>Border walk:</b> People from both sides of a country border walk along the border together, sharing their knowledge, experiences and adventures at certain points along the hike.
8	<b>Women's literacy-training:</b> An online forum created to discuss the importance of getting more participants involved in literacy groups to promote Active Citizenship.
9	<b>A debate on women's activities:</b> Effectively mixed discussion, insights, and future prospects for women's roles in family and society. With active participation from guests in both formal and informal settings.
10	<b>Attracting you people to Active Citizenship:</b> For increasing the participation of young people (aged 18-35) in the social life, local organizations are invited to collaborate - e.g. Women's Rural Association, Volunteer Fire Brigade, Village Council. Meetings with organizational leaders and youth to discuss young people's needs and expectations are organized. A variety of activities are planned e.g. a dance party and sports activities, to attract young individuals and encouraged them to actively participate and take initiatives in their community.
11	<b>Local leaders forum:</b> An event where representatives from local authorities, NGOs, and folk high schools come together to discuss strategies for enhancing collaboration between public bodies and non-governmental organisations. This gathering is a platform for exchanging ideas, sharing best practices, and exploring innovative approaches to tackle shared challenges, ultimately aimed at benefiting the wider community through strengthened public-NGO relations.
12	<b>Gender violence forum:</b> The importance of highlighting gender violence and the devastating consequences to society. By bringing impactful slogans and active participation of citizens to this monthly demonstration we want to raise awareness.

# Impressions from the Pilot Workshop



What can we learn from Europe about  
to do Energy Communities?

December 12, 2023 online and at Fårnebo Folk Hø

Erasmus+ project Promociti - Promoti



**7**

# **Tools and Methods**

This toolbox aims to provide creative ideas that have been tested in practice to show how European Folk High Schools can promote Active Citizenship. It offers ways to adapt the curriculum to the individual needs of your participants.

The presented methods are different techniques recognized by the participating schools in the Promociti project, recommended for their efficacy in this type of endeavor. Most of the methods were also integrated in the train-the-trainer-course of the project (see more on that in section 5).

For the integration of Active Citizenship in your institution and region, an integrated concept is necessary. The implementation of individual tools will not lead to success. That is why the collection should only be a source of ideas. You can pick some methods and make it usable for your own institution.

*However, a method is only as valuable as the concept in which it is embedded.*







# Coming together with active citizens

This part of the toolbox includes all kinds of methods and games for getting together with groups. Icebreakers or goodbye games and little warm ups help you to get to know your group better, to make knowledge and opini-

ons visible or just to loosen up your seminar a bit. The methods also help introduce the chosen topic. Team building methods can be found here as well.

## Keychain – key experience



**Group size:** up to 20 people



**Time:** 20 minutes



**Approach:**

Participants introduce themselves using their keychain. Keys as well as the key rings can tell us a lot about a person. Maybe they are even linked to a key experience in life.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Visual method to getting to know the group
- Establish personal connection and trust



**Materials & space needed:** Circle of chairs



**Tip:** Give the participants some minutes to find their keys.



# The story of my name



**Group size:** 10 – 15 people



**Time:** 5 minutes explanation, 2 – 3 minutes per person



**Approach:**

Participants will be asked in turn to tell something about their name (first name and/or last name, as they wish). Not all questions need to be answered. The participants should choose the questions that are appropriate for them.



**Aims and objectives:**

This biographical exercise is well suited for the beginning of a seminar so that the participants get to know each other and learn each other's names. Furthermore, it allows for an exploration of differences/markers in terms of class, gender and other affiliations that can show up in names and trigger discrimination and exclusion. It creates a familiar atmosphere.



**Materials & space needed:**

Flipchart paper with the following questions:

- What is your name and who gave you this name? Why?
- What is the meaning of your name?
- What meaning does the name have for you personally?
- Is there a story to your name? If yes, which one?
- Do you have a nickname?
- Do you like your name?
- What pronouns do you use?



**Tip:** Create a safe space, there should be no mocking or racist statements against a name.





## I send a ship loaded with...



**Group size:** up to 15 people



**Time:** 20 minutes



**Approach:**

In the beginning of the meeting every participant introduces him- or herself and sends another person a ship with a symbolic object / condition that the participant brings from his or her home region / city / country.

The first person makes eye contact with any person in the room and sends the symbolic item with the words (for example) „My name is Ole, I live close to the Baltic Sea and I send a ship loaded with waves and wind to you.“



**Aims and objectives:**

- Getting to know each other
- Learning the names



**Materials & space needed:** Circle of chairs



**Tip:** If names are forgotten during the seminar, remind participants of the symbolic items.



# Klick, Klack, Boom



**Group size:** min. 5, max. 25 people



**Time:** max. 15 minutes



## Approach:

The group stands in a circle. The facilitator begins by turning to anyone of the participants and saying Klick, Klack or Boom while „transferring“ or „passing the energy“ to another player with both hands. What he or she says depends on where the participant is standing in relation to whom he or she is passing the energy to:

Klick: the player is standing to the left of him/her  
Klack: the player is standing to the right of him/her  
Boom: the player stands at another place of the circle (e.g. opposite him/her, as the 2nd from the left,...)

The participant who received the energy now gives it to another person in the circle as fast as possible.



**Aims and objectives:** Activating the participants



**Materials & space needed:** No special conditions required



**Tip:** Tell your participants to be very fast without thinking too much.



## Airplane secrets



**Group size:** up to 16 people



**Time:** 30 minutes



### **Approach:**

All participants think about a „secret“ no one in the group knows about them, e.g., „I have a pet toad called Elias“. They now write it on a piece of paper and fold it into a paper airplane.

When everyone is ready, the whole group let's their airplanes fly on the facilitators „Go“. Every participant now picks up one airplane. One person starts by reading the secret written on the picked up airplane aloud. The rest of the group then tries to guess whose secret it is. Once the person has been guessed, it's their turn to read aloud next.



**Aims and objectives:** Getting to know the group better



**Materials & space needed:** Paper, pen

You can play it indoors or outdoors. The bigger the space, the better for the airplanes.



**Tip:** Learn an easy variation of a paper airplane, so you can help the participants when folding theirs.



## Gossiping in presence



**Group size:** up to 30 people



**Time:** 30 minutes



### **Approach:**

Divide the group into small groups of 3-4 people.

Each group now talks about one person in their group. They are guided by the questions below. The person being discussed turns his or her back to the group. Allow 5-7 minutes per person, then rotate. Rotate until everyone has had a turn.

The questions are suggestions; participants should focus on what they feel is important about the person. Talk about the person in the third person, i.e., do not address each other directly.

### Questions:

This is how I experience ( ) in our project / during our voluntary work:

( ) is particularly successful in...

( ) brings ... into the group.

I appreciate ... very much about ( ).

That would be noticeably different, if ( ) were not in our group: ...

I have seen ( ) struggle with this: ...

That's what I wish for ( ): ...

If I could give ( ) some advice, it would be: ...

I would also like to have this characteristic of ( ): ...

This is what we can do or what I can do for ( ): ...



### **Aims and objectives:**

- Strengthening the sense of belonging in a group
- Valuing the work of the individual engaged
- Motivate the participants



**Materials & space needed:** Sheets with the questions written on it.  
Method can be performed indoors or outdoors.



**Debriefing and evaluation:** Afterwards come into a conversation about how the participants felt during the exercise.



**Tip:** There should be no room for unfair treatment or mobbing in your group. If you are not sure that your group is nice to each other (e.g., teenagers), don't use this method.



## Flash!



**Group size:** up to 25 people



**Time:** 15 minutes



### Approach:

The group forms a circle. One participant stands within the circle and tries integrate into the circle (again). He or she points to one person in the circle and gives a verbal signal, to which the chosen person must respond. If the person addressed is too slow or makes a mistake, the places are swapped with the person in the middle.

The signals are the following (including the thing the other person has to say or do):

- **Flash!** Address one person with your hand outstretched and he/she has to react in the same way.
- **Bibilibilibop!** The person has to say „Bop“ before the person in the middle finished the signal.
- **Bop!** The person has to remain silent
- **Toaster!** The person left and right to the chosen person “build” a toaster around him/her. The chosen persons bounces up and down like a toast.
- **James Bond!** The person in the middle poses as James Bond, the participants on the left and right imitate „Bondgirls“ saying “Oh James!”.
- **Mixer!** The chosen person stretches his/her hands to the left and to the right above his/her neighbours’ heads, and the two adjacent participants rotate around their own axis.
- **Elefant!** The person addressed grabs his/her nose with the left hand and puts the right arm through the bowed left one. Neighbours on the left and right have to form elephant ears.



**Aims and objectives:** Activating the participants



**Materials & space needed:** No special conditions required



**Tip:** If the group stays for a longer time in your school, you can ask them to come up with new signals.

## Walk & Talk



**Group size:** any group size is possible



**Time:** max. up to 1 hour



**Approach:**

Use your environment and send your group on a walk in pairs of two or three. This method can be used to reflect on joint projects or collaborations. The walk with a small assignment (two to three questions maximum) lets the participants themselves determine the direction of the conversation.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Being inspired by nature
- Getting out of the seminar setting and move
- Participants can talk freely



**Debriefing and evaluation:** Make sure that the knowledge gained is now collected using a different method.





# 10 things in common



**Group size:** up to 20 people



**Time:** 40 minutes



**Approach:**

This method is about finding things that you and another person have in common. First, all the people are divided into pairs. Each pair gets a piece of paper and a pen. After a start signal, all pairs have 15 minutes to find 10 things in common. At the end, each pair tells the group the things they have found in common.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Identifying similarities
- Connecting through similarities



**Materials & space needed:** Paper, pen



**Debriefing and evaluation:** Is there a point even more people have in common?



## ABC lists



**Group size:** up to 30 people



**Time:** 35 minutes



**Approach:**

Each participant (or in small groups, if it's a big group) takes a DIN A4 sheet of paper or a flipchart paper and writes down a list: each line begins with a letter from A to Z. Then they spend 15 minutes writing behind each letter what they know about the current topic. Afterwards the facilitator and the group compare what they collected, how often a term was listed. What does it say about the group that some words popped up more often and some words were forgotten?



**Aims and objectives:**

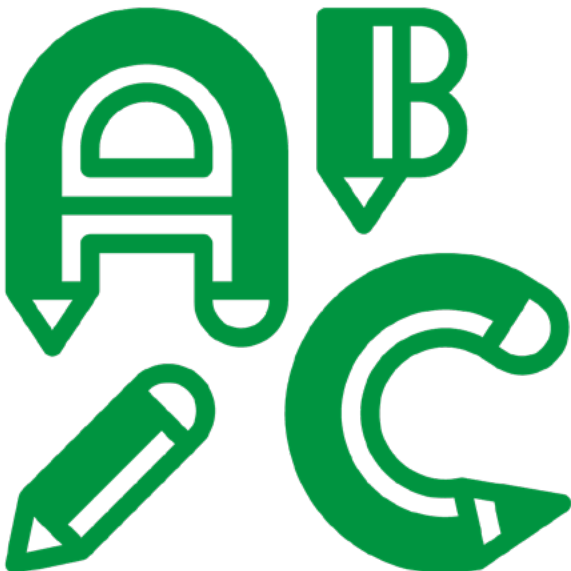
- Collecting the existing knowledge
- Getting creative
- Activation of associative thinking



**Materials & space needed:** Paper, pen



**Tip:** It is normal that you don't find a word for all letters.



# Utopian Charge



**Group size:** flexible



**Time:** 10 minutes



## **Approach:**

In Utopian Charging („Utopian Charge“) a group explores utopian potentials together. This happens through ideas that build on each other. The participants „throw“ their ideas into the room in quick succession. The key is to keep the process going without thinking too long. The exercise always starts with the question about the greatest utopian potential of something: „What is the greatest utopian potential of ... (e.g., our meeting, this building, our situation, our organization, etc.)?“ Based on this, ideas are generated spontaneously. The ideas do not have to be realistic; the point is to uncover utopian potential, for which fantastic ideas can be helpful. The ideas can build on each other, but they don't have to. Each sentence begins with „Yes, and...“ followed by an individual addition.



## **Aims and objectives:**

- Feeling inspired
- Grow a group spirit



**Materials & space needed:** No special conditions required



**Tip:** The method could also be recorded (e.g. by smartphone). In further methods or group work you can remind your group of their utopian potential.



# The one-word game



**Group size:** up to 30 people



**Time:** 15 minutes



**Approach:**

This method is ideal for brainstorming. The facilitator asks the participants to think of a word that describes your topic best. Examples of topics would be “myself as an active citizen”, “what do I want to change”, “what do we need for a good project?”. When all participants have thought about it for one minute, everyone shares their word with the group. As a facilitator you can use these words to start a deeper discussion about your topics.



**Aims and objectives:**

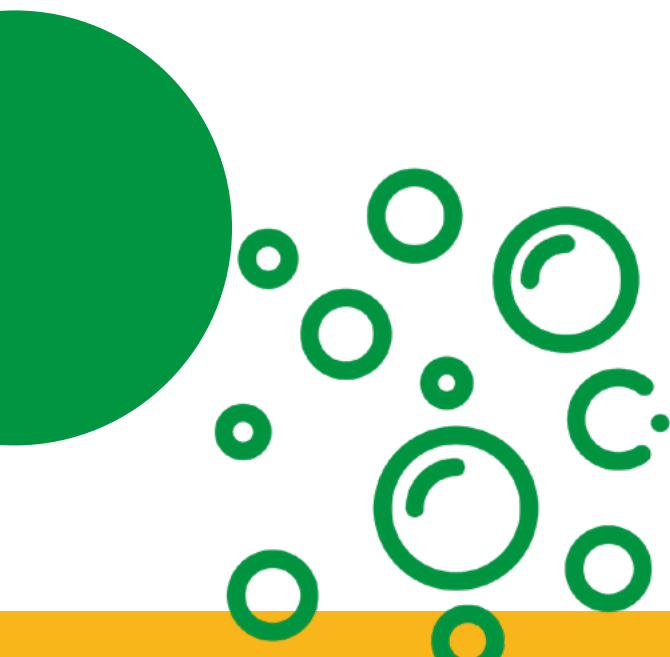
- Introduction to the topic
- Querying the existing knowledge
- Quieter participants also have their say

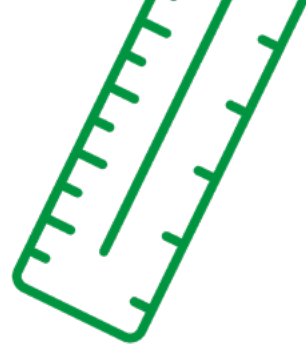


**Materials & space needed:** No special conditions required



**Tip:** This method is also helpful during online meetings. Use the collected words later on.





## Barometer



**Group size:** even really big groups can be handled, thus less people can say their opinion



**Time:** 30-60 minutes depending on group size and number of theses



**Approach:**

Facilitator presents successively theses or questions on the topic of the seminar (approx. 5-10 theses). After each thesis/question, each person positions himself/herself in the room along the barometer line. Subsequently, the facilitator asks for reasons e.g., in the case of extreme positioning. If someone chooses not to speak, they may remain silent.

The facilitator opens the space for a differentiated discussion. He/she can ask if someone wants to change his/her position due to convincing arguments. This is made clear by changing positions along the barometer line. When everyone has expressed their opinion/changed position, the facilitator ends the round and moves on to the next question/position.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Getting to know theses to start the seminar
- Getting to know the position of others
- Accepting other positions
- The possibility of changing one's own position based on arguments
- Staying in motion



**Materials & space needed:**

Indoors or outdoors, space for movement in the room so that all participants have space to position themselves on an (imaginary) line between YES and NO or 0-100%. PowerPoint or Flipchart showing the questions.



**Debriefing and evaluation:** As facilitator summarise the overall result briefly.



**Tip:** Especially in large groups the facilitator could only allow some feedback.

Particular attention should be paid to this:

Clarify at the beginning that it is not a question of „right“ or „wrong,“ but rather of becoming aware of one's own position and advocating for it.

It's important that the facilitator moderates, ensures attention and does not judge positions.

# Picture Association



**Group size:** up to 15 people



**Time:** 30 minutes



**Approach:**

As facilitator you should prepare/organise at least twice as many pictures as participants. The pictures can show acts of help, community events and all sorts of aspects in Active Citizenship (positive and negative).

The group sits in a circle of chairs, the pictures are in the middle. Now everyone is asked to choose a picture that most appeals to them right away. The participants should not think twice. One after the other now talks about his or her picture and why they chose it.

The method is a good seminar opener and helps you to get into conversation.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Warm up and getting into conversation about the topic
- Learning about the emotions of your group
- Getting to know the group better



**Materials & space needed:** Big variation of pictures/postcards fitting your theme



**Tip:** Collect pictures on the long run.





## Goodbye: Create a gift with your hands



**Group size:** up to 20 people



**Time:** 20 minutes



**Approach:**

Standing in a circle. At the end of the meeting every participant gives his or her neighbour a farewell gift: an important learning, an emotion or wishes that they will take with them into everyday life. The first person forms a learning/emotion/wish with their hands and body and gives it to the next person. It goes around in a circle.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Learning to be grateful
- Reflecting what participants want to take with them



**Materials & space needed:** No special conditions required



# Developing ideas for action

In this section of the toolbox, methods are presented that are intended to **strengthen the participation of the active citizens** and to properly focus their energy. For this purpose, you will also find many options on how to find common topics and goals in a group.

## “Mess up completely!” or Reverse Brainstorming



**Group size:** up to 15 people



**Time:** 30 – 40 minutes



**Approach:**

“What can we do to completely mess up our project?” is the question we ask in this method. The point of view will change completely and the fact to think about the opposite of our approach will set creativity free.

The participants write down their „negative ideas“ in individual work. After 10 minutes, the suggestions are collected on a pin board and clustered into categories. Finally, the noted suggestions are reversed again to provide a basis for solving the initial problem.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Getting creative
- Talking about worst-case and best-case scenarios of our project
- Finding common ground on desired behaviours in group work



**Materials & space needed:** Pin board, notes, pens



**Debriefing and evaluation:** Record the positive ideas and develop them in a next method.



**Tip:** This method works online as well.

# Art of Hosting



**Group size:** no limit



**Time:** flexible



**Approach:**

“Art of Hosting“ is not only a method, but also an attitude, how one approaches a process in the first place. For example, at the beginning there is always a „purpose“ i.e. what is the meaning of the meeting in the first place. There is always an initial question or a challenge. You then open the topic very wide to allow for many different ideas and starting points, and then close it again. This is called a „breath.“ During a process there are always several breaths - in the „Art of Hosting“ we speak of eight breaths.

At the end there is a „harvest“ where all results are collected.

Learn more about it at <https://artofhosting.org>.



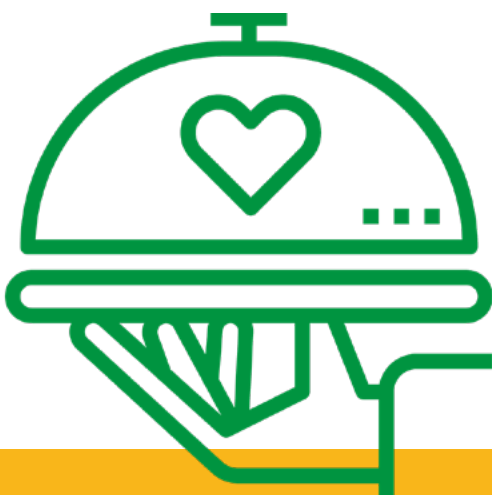
**Aims and objectives:** Creates the right conditions for ideas, opinions and skills of a group of people to emerge in a creative way



**Materials & space needed:** No special conditions required



**Tip:** There are extensive workshops to learn the method as a facilitator





## World Café



**Group size:** flexible



**Time:** min. 90 minutes



### **Approach:**

In a World Café, the focus is on the exchange of opinions on a specific topic or on concrete issues. The space in which the World Café takes place should convey an ambience similar to that of a café. The participants gathered at the various tables discuss a key question for a set period of time. They then change tables two or three times to discuss further key questions in new group constellations.

The facilitator welcomes the World Café guests and explains the World Café format to all participants. In addition, the exact procedure and the topic to be discussed or the concrete questions are presented. The café participants can discuss a single question or several questions that build on each other.

There is one permanent host per table who moderates the conversation. The discussion groups at the individual tables should generally not exceed four to five people so that all group members can contribute to the discussion. Three successive rounds of discussion should develop, lasting approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

Participants redistribute to tables following a round of discussion, while the person who moderated remains at the table. Groups should regroup and not move from table to table in the same group constellation. At the beginning of a new round of discussions, the ideas and topics from the previous round are briefly summarised by the host.

During the discussion rounds, participants are encouraged to either write the most important ideas on the paper tablecloth (typical of a World Café) with which the tables should be covered, or to use cards and pens provided on the tables instead.

Following the discussion rounds, the facilitators briefly summarise the ideas/topics/results of each table in plenary. This can be supported visually by either pinning the cards on a flipchart or by hanging up the paper tablecloths for all to see, thus forming a kind of gallery.

The final round helps to identify patterns from the discussion rounds or to outline possible solutions.

The World Café method is flexible in terms of, for example, the length of the discussion rounds, the number of participants, or the type of final presentation. Experiment and improvise. The most important thing is the contact and exchange among the participants.

**Aims and objectives:**

- Engage with the opinions and ideas of others
- Develop new ideas or points of view

**Materials & space needed:**

Paper, pens, coffee and tea, big room, paper tablecloths



**Debriefing and evaluation:** After the World Café come together with the hosts of the different tables and give each other feedback.

## Participant's Council



**Group size:** up to 15 people



**Time:** during the whole course/semester

**Approach:**

Depending on the pedagogical concept of your Folk High School, a participant's council makes sense. A lot of Folk High Schools have them and had good experiences with it. The council represents the interests of the participants towards the school's staff and sponsors. It can introduce and implement its own ideas in the school. Of course, the council has to have real influence and is also allowed on specific board meetings etc.

**Aims and objectives:**

- Self-determined student body
- Teachers, staff and students at eye level

**Materials & space needed:**

Rooms for meetings, possibility of supervision by the staff



**Debriefing and evaluation:** Feedback to school and staff on a regular basis

# BarCamp



**Group size:** flexible



**Time:** min. 90 minutes to one day



## **Approach:**

A BarCamp allows a group to work on different topics and questions on their own conditions. There are no participants or speakers, only creators: people listening and asking questions, facilitators of a session or to the expert and knowledge provider.

In a first kick off, the group creates the program together. Together they search for topics and subgroups - called sessions - are formed.

What the BarCamp will look like - depth and quality of questions and discussions - is determined by the participants. So no one should be afraid to get actively involved.

The following rules should be known by all participants:

### **1. Everyone talks about the BarCamp**

The BarCamp lives on communication. So everyone should share the information about the event in advance and report about it afterwards (blog, tweet, etc.)

### **2. No spectators, only participants**

There is no sitting back and listening. It's all about discussing and sharing. The sessions are as exciting as the participants make them. The format thrives on the activity and interest of the participants. Therefore, all participants are expected to actively participate and not passively consume. You can contribute by offering your own contribution, by helping with the organization or with the event. The minimum form of contribution is active participation in the offered sessions or sharing one's own knowledge and experience with other participants.

### **3. Planned unplanned**

There is no fixed agenda (apart from the social program). The conference schedule is created by the participants. The schedule for all sessions is created on the day itself. The participants determine the content by contributing information, moderating discussions or raising questions. Which content is used is determined at the event itself. Participants in attendance choose which session they want to participate in.





#### 4. Equality

Presenters/session leaders and participants meet on an equal footing. Everyone can have a say in the topics and contribute to the discussions.

#### 5. Flexibility

If you realise during a session that it doesn't offer the topic you are interested in, you can leave the room at any time and switch to another session. There are always several sessions running in parallel. No one will be angry with you if you change rooms.

#### 6. Don't be shy

Even immature ideas, concepts and thought-provoking ideas can be worth a session. Take advantage of the networking at the BarCamp and use the discussion panels.

#### 7. Participate

Everyone contributes to the success of the BarCamp. Get involved and be in the middle of it, not just there!



#### Aims and objectives:

- Knowledge exchange
- Creating creative visions and plans
- Focus on the topics of the participants



#### Materials & space needed:

Flipcharts, pen, paper, different rooms for different sessions



#### Debriefing and evaluation:

At the end there will be a short summary of all sessions in plenary.



**Tip:** Make sure a written session plan is visible at a central place of your location.

# Pro Action Café



**Group size:** flexible



**Time:** min. 120 minutes up to a day



## **Approach:**

The Pro Action Café combines elements of the methods BarCamp and World Café. The method borrows the principle of free choice of topics from the BarCamp: What is discussed is what is relevant to the participants. From the World Café, the method adopts the setting of small table rounds. In addition, the method incorporates collegial consultation and casework: some participants work on specific concerns or projects; the remaining participants take on the role of consultants. Together, they explore what the discussed topic or concern is actually about, what gaps or challenges exist, and what next implementation steps can be taken.

A Pro Action Café starts in a large circle. Here, the facilitator or host explains the setting and the rules. Then the participants can bring up topics or concerns that they would like to work on within the framework of the Pro Action Café. Each person who brings up a topic sits down at a free table. The hosts then explain the process in three alternating rounds:

The Pro Action Café runs in three rounds. Four people sit at each table to discuss an intention or issue brought up by someone at the table. Each round begins with a question that is intended to orient and inspire the exchange at the tables. After 20-30 minutes, the participants change, except for the person who introduced the topic, who remains at the table and summarises the findings from the discussions for the newcomers. The role of the remaining participants is to support the topic presenter at their table with input and advice.

The goal of the first round is to understand the topic or the question(s) hidden within it more deeply.

The second round is about exploring the gaps or blind spots in the project.

In the third round, the person introducing the topic discusses what he or she has learned about the project or the issue from the discussions.

At the end, everyone meets in a circle. Here, the topic contributors bring in the insights from the discussions and reflect together with the other participants on how they have further developed their project, what they have learned and how they have been helped by the advice of the others.

**Aims and objectives:**

- Knowledge exchange
- Creating creative visions and plans
- Focus on the topics of the participants
- Engage with the opinions and ideas of others
- Develop new ideas or points of view



**Materials & space needed:** Flipchart, pen, paper, different tables to work in groups

## 4-Mat System (according to Kolb & McCarthy)



**Group size:** depending on the subject



**Time:** depending on the subject

**Approach:**

This method consists of four areas, which you go through one after the other. In the first area, it is clarified WHY the topic is relevant. The second area is about providing information, facts and data about the topic - the associated question is „WHAT?“. The third area deals with HOW to apply what was previously learned. Finally, in the fourth area, you transfer what you have learned into your own practice - you ask yourself what you can USE it for in your everyday or professional life.

These four learning areas ensure that participants not only receive theoretical input, but also understand why you need the content presented and how to apply it. It also appeals to different learning styles, so that even if you have a heterogeneous group, you can reach all participants.

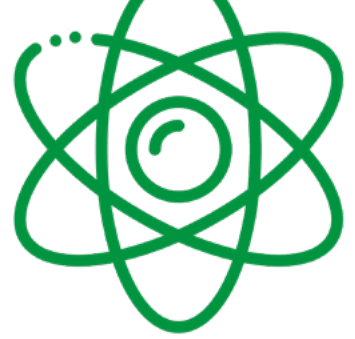
One can use this method to work on individual content or to plan an entire seminar. When you use it to plan a seminar, you can reuse the 4-Mat for each block of content on a small scale.



**Aims and objectives:** Transferring theoretical input into practical action



**Materials & space needed:** Flipchart, pen



## Dynamic Facilitation



**Group size:** up to 20 people



**Time:** min. 180 minutes



### **Approach:**

Dynamic Facilitation was developed by Jim Rough. In order to be able to use the method adequately, it is recommended to attend a course on it.

Dynamic Facilitation is suitable for solving a problem in a group of up to 20 people. The problem may contain conflict potential, evoke emotions and/or seem unsolvable. For a DF session one should allow at least 3 hours, often this method is used over several days. The participants speak during the execution of the method exclusively with the facilitator and also always only one person after the other speaks. As a facilitator it is important to listen carefully, not to introduce your own opinions and to ensure that the person speaking has enough time and space to finish his or her thoughts. The facilitator can assist with this by reflecting back what was said before. In addition to the task of listening honestly and holding the space, it is also the facilitator's responsibility to write down what has been said. Four flip charts are used for this purpose, organised by topic: Issues, Solutions, Concerns, and Perspectives/Info. The facilitator divides what has been heard among the various flipcharts. It may well happen that contradictory statements stand next to each other - that is okay and can help to get closer to the solution. The solution emerges in the process and can be recognized by the fact that it is accepted by the entire group.



### **Aims and objectives:**

- Finding solutions successfully
- Helpful when emotions in the group are conflicting, opposing views prevail and joint problem solving seems almost impossible



**Materials & space needed:** Flipcharts, paper, pens



**Debriefing and evaluation:** At the end, it is important to show the path the group has taken once again and to record what has been agreed upon.

# Networking and staying involved

An important aspect of working with Active Citizens is building lasting loyalty with your Folk High School. The following methods have been designed to show how people will remain loyal to you in the long term and want to stay involved with great pleasure.

## Field trips



**Group size:** flexible



**Time:** flexible



**Approach:**

A field trip is a nice change from long seminar days or working as an active citizen. It is sociable, you can exchange ideas and learn something new or experience a different perspective.

It is also often considered a „reward“, so make sure your active citizens can lean back and you organise everything for them. Inspiring field trips could go to a local organisation working with active citizens as well, to museums or places, concerning our topics or to places, where the participants can experience teamwork.



**Aims and objectives:**

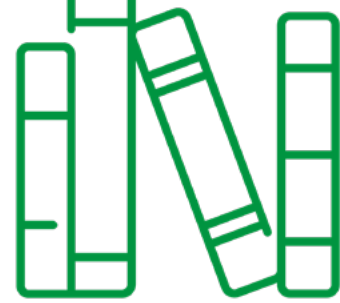
- Appreciating the commitment of the active citizens
- Offering new thoughts and perspectives



**Materials & space needed:** Transportation, catering and overnight stay (if needed)



**Debriefing and evaluation:** Give space in your next meeting for an exchange about the field trip. How can you use the gained knowledge in your work as an active citizen?



## Human library



**Group size:** up to 30 people / depends on the number of “books”



**Time:** approximately 3 to 6 hours



### **Approach:**

The Human Library is an innovative method designed to promote dialogue, reduce prejudices and encourage understanding amongst people. In its initial form the Human Library is a mobile library set up as a space for dialogue and interaction. Visitors of a Human Library are given the opportunity to speak informally with “people on loan” - this latter group being varied in age, sex and cultural background.

The Human Library works like a traditional library: there are books, a librarian, and, of course, readers. Every reader can borrow a book for some limited time under some specific conditions. The biggest difference between a traditional library and the Human Library is that “books” here are human beings who want to share their stories with readers. You can invite active citizens, activists, volunteers etc.



### **Aims and objectives:**

- Engaging former participants / other active citizens as role models
- Inspiring your participants
- Hearing about opportunities and challenges
- Raising awareness of the difficulties people are confronted with



**Materials & space needed:** Overview of your books/stories, one room per book is best to create trusting conversation atmospheres



**Debriefing and evaluation:** Ask your group afterwards which book they found most inspiring / interesting etc.



**Tip:** You can also invite people talking about their volunteer work or approaches in society.





## Capabilities pinboard



**Group size:** applicable for all group sizes



**Time:** several months



**Approach:**

Members, volunteers, students, teachers or staff offer their skills on a voluntary basis for others and the institution. Place a large, beautifully designed bulletin board in the entryway of your institution. Next to it, place postcards on which your guests can write down what they are particularly good at and what they could help others with, for example „I’m Robin, I’m a big TikTok enthusiast and would be happy to help NGOs with their TikTok account.“ In the following months, your pinboard should fill up with special talents and offers of help. You can now use the offers yourself as an organisation or other guests can use the offers.

As a second pinboard you could also design a wall of “help needed”. Your guests or your organisation can actively seek help. (We are the local Folk High School and for our summer festival we are looking for people who want to help in the kitchen, garden...)

Talk about the board and present it in your courses, so people understand what it’s good for.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Connect and empower the neighbourhood and your guests
- Motivate people to think about what they like to do in their free time and associate this with voluntary work



**Materials & space needed:** Pinboard, pre-printed response cards



**Tip:** Please respect the privacy laws in your country e.g. don’t let participants write their contact address on the cards, rather collect it somewhere and give it out only on demand. Make sure guests and other institutions or even companies don’t use it as a marketing-tool.

## Treasure chests



**Group size:** applicable for all group sizes



**Time:** 60 minutes



**Approach:**

At the end of the seminar each participant receives a treasure chest. Each participant has the opportunity to write to every other participant a letter with kind words or dear memories.

The method can be done within a 60-minute timeframe, or participants may choose to allocate time between sessions.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Effective conclusion
- Networking of the participants
- Reflection of the seminar
- Reminder of your aims in stressful daily routine



**Materials & space needed:** Treasure chests (or envelopes as a low cost alternative), colourful paper, pens



**Tip:** The method is especially suitable for groups that have known each other for a longer time. Especially in the case of children and young adolescents, it is important to check whether the group will not use such a method for bullying.



## Postcard reminder to stay motivated



**Group size:** applicable for all group sizes



**Time:** 30 minutes



**Approach:**

At the end of the event, each participant writes a postcard, which is sent approximately four weeks after the seminar to their addresses. On this postcard, they record which points/contents they want to implement in the weeks following the seminar.



**Aims and objectives:**

- Setting goals for your work as an active citizen in the near future
- Reminder of the seminar and your aims in stressful everyday life



**Materials & space needed:** Postcards, stamps



**Tip:** The facilitator can openly address how intentions and reality often diverge.





**8**

**Digital**

**Storytelling**



In this chapter, we take a detailed look at the „Digital Storytelling“ method. This method is particularly suitable for reaching people and getting them excited about topics and projects. It can be used to promote Active Citizenship, but also to attract more citizens to already existing initiatives.

At PROMOCITI, we used the method to promote the pilot workshops and show what happened during them. Some of the videos produced during PROMOCITI can be viewed on the project's [Facebook page](#).

## Objectives

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Our main objective is to use the technique of digital narration to express our inner world, as well as our desires and aspirations, and the main conflicts that our current society has. Recreation and exchange, in the last phase, with digital media at our disposal.

We believe that we must teach others how to use ICT not only to access the great library of knowledge available on the Internet, or to administer daily procedures such as online banking or requesting an appointment with the doctor, etc., but also to become producers of learning content.

One of the main objectives of this project is to use information technology as a tool to think and reflect on our European history.

**To make a script, design and recreate images, edit and finally share with all the participants of the educational community is a process of personal and human enrichment of enormous formative value.**

This educational process includes computer learning contents, such as word processing, presentations, creation of tables or design of images with editing programs and the creation of videos, images and voice, in order to produce and create our own stories and share them with others in a climate of constant dialogue and interaction with the interlocutors.

# What is a Digital Story?



## The main elements

A digital story can be a number of different things, but it has **TWO main elements**:

- A personal story
- Uses Digital Technology

It is within the reach of EVERYBODY.

## The procedure

1. **Story Circle** – Share Stories
2. **Writing** – create scripts in groups
3. Create a **map** of your story
4. **Editing** – Use digital technology to create
5. **Watching** a group screening

## The components

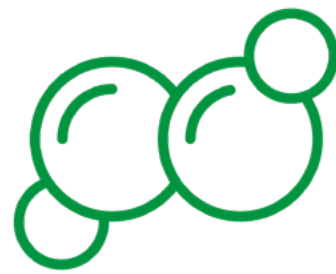
Digital Stories usually have **TWO or more of the following components**:

- **Short**: 2 – 3 minutes
- Combination of **VOICE and IMAGE**
- Presented as a short **film**
- Told by the person whose story it is
- **Images** – still or moving, from own collection or taken for the story
- Decisions and editing made by the storyteller themselves
- May use **MUSIC or sound effects** to emphasise emotion

Tell me your story!







# Step 1: Story Circle

## Sharing stories as a group

This session is designed to bond storytellers as a group and to tease out their innate powers of storytelling.

Often it starts with a **briefing on the Digital Storytelling** process and some examples of digital stories are shared.

The **atmosphere should be collaborative and informal**, efforts must be made to allay any storyteller's fears about what lies ahead, and they should have the space to ask any questions about what is required of them.

The actual story circle can be tailored to suit variable time slots between **1 and 2 hours**,

depending on the number of participants. We recommend giving each participant at least 5 minutes to **verbally share their story-idea** and leave some time at the end to facilitate discussions and mutual feedback.

### THE 3 UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THE STORY CIRCLE:

- everybody gets involved (including trainers, technicians, observers etc.)
- nobody should apologise for their lack of understanding, ability or confidence
- what is said in the storytelling circle, stays in the room i.e. it is confidential

# Step 2: Writing

## Creating a 250 word script for your story

At the end of the story circle, every storyteller should know the subject of their story. During this second phase – the writing – storytellers should be able to type up a first draft ready

to read. In the case of any storyteller having difficulty reading, there are alternative options to consider, like producing an interview-generated narrative.

### ADVICE FROM GILLY ADAMS (from BBC Online)

- Remember that, ideally, the story will only last two minutes and be **no more than 250 or 300 words** long, so if you have the material for a three-hour television documentary (e.g. the complete history of the place where you live), or a long novel (e.g. complicated ins and outs of your family history), it will not be suitable for this medium.
- Don't be put off by having to be brief. It seems daunting at first, but your story will benefit by being **boiled down to its essence**.
- Remember that grammar and spelling are not important. This is a spoken story and not a homework exercise. The crucial thing is to **speak normally and sound like yourself**.
- If you are stuck for a topic, think about something that makes you feel passionate or focus on **an event in your life which provoked a strong emotion** - happiness or anger or sadness.

# Step 3: Storyboarding

## Planning what your story will look like

Think about what you would like to include in your story and fill in each box on the storyboard template with a section of the narrative.

### WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR STORY?

- Objects
- Images
- Sounds
- Video

### REMEMBER

- Check you own the copyright of images
- Check the materials are good quality
- Do not use too many things

# Step 4: Editing

## Finding, editing and recording audio and visual materials before putting them together

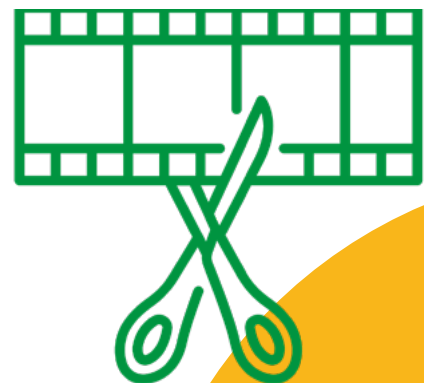
This is the point at which the technical aspects of a Digital Story begin. Both the technical quality and the „feel“ of the voice recording are vital to the success of a Digital Story. Included in the „recording“ phase is the capturing of images and the gathering of any music track or sound effects.

The effort required for editing is often underestimated. It's predominantly a technical process, but the creative aspects are crucial to the production of a successful story.

There are some magnificent moments during a Digital Story edit, when the elements start to come together and tiny changes make massive improvements. Once the edit is finished, the story is exported as a movie file, for sharing.

### THERE ARE SEVERAL FORMS OF EDITING REQUIRED TO PRODUCE A DIGITAL STORY:

- the recorded voiceover track needs to be gapped and mistakes removed
- photographs need to be edited, especially if they have been scanned
- the edited soundtrack, edited photos and titles are combined to create an edit of the Digital Story





## Step 5: Watching

### Sharing your story with the rest of the group

Watching and sharing stories is a great way to learn more about each other, explore topical issues and see how stories can help us to recognise ourselves in others.

#### WHAT TO DO:

- Set up a comfortable space
- Ask each storyteller to introduce their video
- Watch each one in turn
- Listen closely

#### GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS:

- What words were chosen?  
How were they spoken?
- What images were used?  
What did they show?
- What was said?  
Why did the storyteller share this?
- Was there music?  
What was the effect?

#### For Teachers/trainers:

If necessary, watch each story more than once to make sure you get active engagement for each story from the group. It is important that everyone is respected when they share. Give everyone a round of applause and time to reflect on their own story.





**9**

**Excursus:**

**Digital Active**

**Citizenship**

The world has arrived in the digital revolution and the so-called digitalization touches probably all aspects of life. Active Citizenship is no exception. It brings forth a multitude of new opportunities for Active Citizenship. Many questions arise in connection to this development:

- **What is Digital Active Citizenship?**
- **What can it look like?**
- **Where to draw a line between Digital Active Citizenship and private action?**
- **Can there be real empowerment on the internet?**
- **In what way does using digital tools and platforms matter?**
- **Which civic groups benefit from digitalization, opening up new opportunities for Active Citizenship?**
- **What skills are needed to be a digital active citizen and how can Folk High Schools contribute to that?**
- **What is the situation in Folk High Schools regarding Digital Active Citizenship and what possibilities and challenges come with it?**
- **What are the cons and dangers of Digital Active Citizenship? Which regulations are needed to face them?**

To answer these questions the **Impuls Paper “Digital Active Citizenship in the context of Folk High Schools”** has been compiled as a side result of the PROMOCITI project. In the following you will find some excerpts of it. For the full paper, please visit the [Project Website](#) or the [Erasmus+ Project Results Platform](#).



# Definition of Digital Active Citizenship

A definition of the term “Digital Active Citizen” was formulated by the PROMOCITI project team based on the learnings and experiences during the project:

*Digital active citizens have the knowledge and skills to responsibly use and work with digital tools, both online and offline, to perform civic action, participation and engagement in order to make a difference in society.*

*Their actions are based on the values of human rights and democratic principles.*

The concept description of Frau-Meigs et al. (2017) in EEPN (2020) is a valuable addition to our definition.

In there, digital citizenship is defined as:

- the ability to **engage competently and positively with digital technologies** (creating, working, sharing, socializing, investigating, playing, communicating and learning)
- **participating actively and responsibly** (values, skills, attitudes, knowledge and critical understanding) in communities (local, national, global) at all levels (political, economic, social, cultural and intercultural);
- being involved in a **double process of life-long learning** (in formal, informal and non-formal settings); and seamlessly **defending human rights and dignity**. (Frau-Meigs et al., 2017, p. 11–12)

## Types of Digital Active Citizenship

### ACTIONS OF DIGITAL ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

- From analogue to digital
- Pure digital actions

### THEY CAN FURTHER BE CLASSIFIED AS:

- Formal / top down / public
- Informal
- Bottom up / community-based



It's noteworthy that while in the past individuals contributed money and/or time to Active Citizenship activities, in the digital age, they can also contribute data.



## From analogue to digital

The main tasks in Active Citizenship did not change over the years: communicating, planning, organising, funding, campaigning, voting – all this still needs to be done.

However, the way, and often also the speed with which these activities are done have changed. **Actions that were previously carried out in an analogue manner are now done by using digital and/or online tools.**

### Examples:

- Register to vote or voting online
- Communication via E-Mail or chat services
- Creating and designing documents in software programmes
- Donating money online
- Organising or joining a protest online
- Signing a petition/Gathering signatures for ballot initiatives online
- Researching and sharing information online

## Pure digital actions

These actions derived from the digital world and were not possible/existent without it.

### Examples:

- Digital/virtual volunteering e.g. a person voluntarily operates the Social Media Account of an NGO or does software work
- Creating an open source software for everyone to use
- Civic Mapping; e.g. <https://mapping.thecivics.eu> is mapping civic education in Europe
- Connecting people and actions globally via platforms, hence bringing civic actions and volunteers together; e.g. <https://ioby.org/> or <https://www.volunteermatch.org/>

- Reporting hate and cyber bullying and/or working for human rights in the digital space; e.g. <https://iamhereinternational.com>, a non-profit organisation that promotes human rights in the digital space.

## Formal / Top Down / Public

These activities are **initiated by formal authorities** and have an official character.

**Example:** Register to vote, tax information platforms etc.

## Informal

Usually also initiated by formal authorities or policy makers. However, instead of a formal activity, this is more about an **informal exchange of ideas between policy makers and/or authorities and citizens**. The activities are more flexible, open and non-binding.

**Example:** Discussion with the municipality about the re-design of the city center

## Bottom-up / Community based

Civic activities that are **initiated by the citizens themselves** and do not necessarily include the contribution of formal authorities, even though a cooperation might happen. This is also called **“Grassroots Movements”**.

**Example:** Setting up an internet portal for volunteers or a knowledge contribution platform like [Wikipedia](#)



# Importance of digital skills for active citizens

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Nowadays, digitalisation is influencing nearly every part of our lives. The necessity of having digital skills was impressively demonstrated to the world during the Covid-19 period: Having digital knowledge was crucial to stay connected with family, friends, clients etc. The world of work was obliged to set up telework possibilities. Governmental services had to be offered online. The examples are manifold.

Technological development is happening at unprecedented speed. Latest developments in Artificial Intelligence, Virtual and Aug-

mented Reality, robotisation but also misinformation make it even more clear that digitalisation is here to stay. In order to not become excluded from society, work life or even governmental services, the possession of basic digital skills is key.

**Digitalization shapes our lives. Therefore, people must be empowered to not only use digital devices, but to shape the underlying culture that comes with it.**

## New horizons for specific groups

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The internet has democratised access to information and communication, providing a valuable resource for activists across a broad spectrum of causes. Digital Active Citizenship helps certain groups and communities in particular to become visible and politically active.

Here are some groups that in our opinion particularly benefit from leveraging the internet for activism:

### People in rural areas

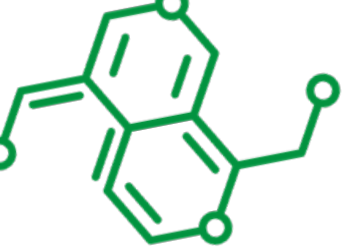
Digital Active Citizenship can present opportunities for people in rural areas and of course for those living in developing countries. There, the mobile phone is a special kind of development engine. Cell phones bridge bad roads and long distances, enabling communication outside the immediate vicinity.

Where there is no bank, people can transfer or receive money, and where there is no hospital within reach, they can receive mobile medical advice.

Digitalisation gives people access to information as well as educational resources that are not available locally. Online education and e-learning platforms can therefore help to bridge the educational gap in rural areas.

Digital Active Citizenship can also facilitate communication and collaboration within rural communities. It allows people to share experiences, discuss local issues, and work together for community development.

Finally, digitalization can serve as a bridge to economic opportunities e.g. via online marketplaces.



## Organisations, activists groups and movements

Especially in countries with anti-democratic forms of government, Digital Active Citizenship is a powerful way to network politically under an oppressive regime. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, X (Twitter), and YouTube, can be instrumental in mobilising and organising people, disseminating information, and amplifying voices during protests.

Social media is very effective with regards to decentralised and quick communication and coordination. These platforms allow activists to quickly share information, discuss strategies, and mobilise supporters on a large scale. Furthermore, social media enables the rapid spread of information and news about protests, government actions or human rights abuses. Activists and ordinary citizens can share videos, images, and firsthand accounts, providing the international community with a real-time view of events on the ground. It can therefore give a voice to people and groups that are often marginalised or suppressed by traditional media.

Finally, activists can use social media to bypass government censorship and control of traditional media outlets – at least unless these platforms get censored by governments.

## Digital Natives

The digitally savvy group of teenagers and young adults in particular would be expected to increase their online activism, because they are largely equipped with digital skills:

While 71 % of 16- to 24-year-olds in Europe have basic digital skills, this figure is only 42 % for 55- to 64-year-olds and just 25 % for

the over-65s. The degree of urbanisation had no effect on achieving at least a basic level of digital literacy.

The high level of online news consumption among young people does not always go hand in hand with media literacy, but young people are interested in the topics of children, youth and human rights, war and peace, environmental, nature and climate protection as well as social justice. As in the physical world, active engagement is anchored in the real world, but is facilitated online by simple participation opportunities such taking part in discussions. Low-threshold online activities can therefore definitely encourage engagement and participation. The role of the smartphone as an ever present tool to connect to the digital world provides great potential here.

### CLICKTIVISM – IS THE SOLUTION JUST A CLICK AWAY?

“Clicktivism” refers to engaging in political or social activism through minimal-effort online actions such as signing online petitions or sharing content on social media.

On the hand, this is criticized as lacking direct confrontation with an issue and being just a quick way to buy oneself a kind of carte blanche to not have to get involved elsewhere.

On the other hand, others rather see it as a complement to participating in street protest or other „real-life“ activities. Contrary to the criticism of clicktivism, some even say that participating in online protest practices has led them to become more involved offline again.

### What do YOU think?

# Digital Active Citizenship in Folk High Schools

Just like the presence of Active Citizenship activities in general may vary quite a lot from Folk High School to Folk High Schools, the same is true for *Digital* Active Citizenship.

The project group gained the impression that especially Swedish Folk High Schools already offer a good amount of activities and courses related to Digital Active Citizenship.

## Chances and Challenges of Digital Active Citizenship for Folk High Schools



### CHANCES

Embracing Digital Active Citizenship can bring many attractive chances for Folk High Schools:

- 1. Ideal Space for (Digital) Active Citizenship:** Folk High Schools, as neutral educational spaces with strong regional networks, are ideal for (Digital) Active Citizenship activities. Let your school be a meeting place!
- 2. Demand for Digitization:** With only 54 % of EU citizens possessing basic digital skills, there is a growing demand for digital education, which implies great potential for Folk High Schools.
- 3. Improved USP and Visibility:** Participating in Digital Active Citizenship provides a Folk High School with the opportunity to enhance its standing and potentially adopt a new role. It is a chance to increase visibility in the public sphere. The efforts in (Digital) Active Citizenship may result in the formation of new collaborations and networks.
- 4. Being a reliable partner to people and organisations:** Instead of relying on individuals to come to the Folk High School, the school proactively engages with the community in its region. It positions itself as a reliable and steady ally, offering assistance and a venue for addressing issues when political support is unavailable or not possible.
- 5. Attract New Target Groups:** Digital Active Citizenship attracts new target groups, including digitally literate younger adults, expanding the reach and relevance of Folk High Schools.

**6. Wide Reach and Inclusiveness:** Digital Active Citizenship enables broader engagement, overcoming geographical barriers and increasing inclusivity, especially for individuals in rural areas or those hesitant to attend in-person meetings.

**7. Maintaining Democracy:** Digital Active Citizenship plays a role in sustaining peace and democracy by providing opportunities for self-efficacy, education, and participation, addressing contemporary societal issues.

**8. Critical Media Literacy:** Digital Active Citizenship contributes to critical media literacy, empowering individuals to make informed political decisions and navigate online content effectively.

**9. Power of Community for Folk High Schools:** Digital Active Citizenship activities foster networking and community building, creating a „Folk High School Community“ that supports the school’s reputation and attracts participants.

**10. Cost Savings:** An issue commonly faced with Active Citizenship is the scarcity of funding. Digital Active Citizenship could potentially provide more economical means for collaboration.

**11. Increased Resilience:** In times of crisis, Digital Active Citizenship allows continued work, immediate contact and idea exchange, which means increasing resilience, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## CHALLENGES



Active Citizenship involves intrinsic motivation, commitment, courage, and passion, but these aspects can act as barriers to engagement. Challenges in implementing (Digital) Active Citizenship in Folk High Schools include:

**1. Fear of the New:** Some schools may be hesitant to embrace new and unfamiliar educational approaches related to Digital Active Citizenship.

**2. Sponsor Support:** The extent of Digital Active Citizenship implementation depends on the school sponsor’s (= financing body) willingness, impacting the alignment with the school’s mission.

**3. Resource and Funding Challenges:** Inconsistent funding and limited resources pose barriers to increased engagement in (Digital) Active Citizenship, impacting time, budget, staff, and overall school operations.



**4. Lack of Motivation:** Difficulty in reaching and motivating people for Active Citizenship, especially in times of misinformation and the necessity of digital skills, poses challenges. It seems challenging to encourage individuals to overcome fear and engage in respectful dialogue with others.

**5. Balance Between Paid and Unpaid Work:** Tensions may arise between volunteers and staff due to the key role of unpaid volunteering in Digital Active Citizenship. While volunteers may feel exploited, the staff is facing an excessive workload.

**6. Fast-Changing Technical Developments:** Rapid technical advancements make it challenging for schools to stay updated on regulations, software, and hardware.

**7. Lack of Digital Skills:** This may especially, but not exclusively, refer to older people, which are often an important target group. Nevertheless, the deficiency in digital skills may extend beyond customers and also affect employees.

**8. Technical Equipment and Internet Infrastructure:** Unequal access to suitable technical equipment and reliable internet, especially in rural areas, may be a problem.

**9. Curriculums & Flexibility:** Creating relevant Digital Active Citizenship curriculums is challenging, requiring flexibility to adapt to the rapidly evolving landscape.

**10. Competences and Skills of Employees:** There's a need for educational programs and ongoing training to address deficiencies in understanding Active Citizenship and digital competencies among employees. PROMOCITI aims to provide assistance in these areas.



# Quick guide to implement Digital Active Citizenship:

1. **Educate yourself** on what Digital Active Citizen is and what it can look like. There are many possibilities available.
2. **Choose the target group** you want to reach e.g. people between 20 and 30 years in rural areas.
3. **Choose an activity** that seems adequate for you and your Folk High School to realise. Start off with something small to begin with and see how it goes. Plan for a small pilot project. Consider your resources.
4. Optional, but ideal: Try to **talk to the target group** first, before starting off and try to find out their needs and preferences. Is there interest? How do they want to interact? Which platforms and/or communication channels do make sense? How much time are they willing to spend? etc.
5. Check which **Active Citizenship skills and digital skills** you need to realise the project. Remember: no need for perfection. Less skills might be needed when starting off small. Continue learning as you go.
6. Be aware of the **Pro's and Con's** that might come along with the chosen activity.
7. Make a **first concept draft** and present it to the Head and/or owner of the school. Be well-prepared and well-informed about chances and challenges. Clearly work out the benefits to the school and the value to the target group. Think about how challenges can be tackled. Here, again, small projects in the beginning might be more likely to be approved. Act strategically!
8. Think about how you want to **evaluate** the activity
9. **TRY IT OUT!**
10. Evaluate and **collect learnings**
11. **Adapt** the offer/activity for the future
12. **Get further training** on Active Citizenship and Digitization. You might even create new offers out of your newly gained knowledge.

# Conclusion on Digital Active Citizenship

The digital revolution has firmly established its presence and is undeniably here to stay, permeating every aspect of our daily lives. Active Citizenship is no exception. The internet has democratised access to information and communication, providing a valuable resource for activists across a broad spectrum of causes.

Folk High Schools are places of encounter and exchange. They act as peacemakers that stand for positivity, diversity, respect and places of hope. Their existence should support a country's democratic education and strengthen its democratic structures.

In order to be able to do so in the future, Folk High Schools and similar institutions may need to broaden their concepts of Active Citizenship to the digital sphere. Digitalization shapes our lives. After all, the digital realm provides great potential to create positive change in society and allows people to pursue their goals, engage with others and strengthen their sense of self. Therefore, people must be empowered to not only use digital devices, but to shape the underlying culture that comes with it.

It is no question of „Offline Active Citizenship“ against „Online Active Citizenship“. It is rather a matter of offline AND online. Both aspects complement and strengthen each other.

Digital Active Citizenship helps certain groups and communities in particular to become visible and (politically) active. One such group are people in rural areas - who are often an important target group of Folk High Schools.

To be able to provide professional support and educate society in this regard, the staff

of Folk High Schools, especially pedagogues, need to constantly stay informed about developments in both areas, Active Citizenship and digitalization. Adequate training is crucial. In this regard, PROMOCITI aims to provide impulses and orientation on how and where to start.

The numerous opportunities for Folk High Schools when engaging in (Digital) Active Citizenship have been mentioned earlier. At this point we would like to highlight again the fact that Folk High Schools as neutral spaces are just THE ideal place for it.

**We encourage our readers: use the potential and have fun getting started with your journey in Digital Active Citizenship!**

For a more in-depth exploration on Digital Active Citizenship, refer to the dedicated document titled „Digital Active Citizenship in the context of Folk High Schools.“ This paper delves into the information mentioned above with greater detail. Additionally, it examines individuals' perspectives on the feasibility of empowerment on the internet and highlights the essential skills required for becoming a digital active citizen.







**10**

**Reflections**

**and**

**Conclusions**

# Reflections

The project „PROMOCITI - Promoting Active Citizenship“ had the extraordinary opportunity to collect diverse opinions, challenges and best-practice examples of Active Citizenship in Folk High Schools over a period of two years.

For many Folk High Schools and their staff, Active Citizenship is an integral part of their work. The promotion of active citizens is taken into account as a matter of course through the regular program, but also through special projects. Learning and training always means learning for Active Citizenship and democracy. In our study on Folk High School and Active Citizenship published in 2023, we identified exciting examples as well as challenges for the work. Ten approaches are intended to help us tackle the work for Active Citizenship in a very concrete way. The curriculum presented in this publication is also intended to help with this.

How do I manage to empower my own employees, but also citizens in my region, to actively contribute to their interests and to society? In addition to self-efficacy, analyzing problems, forming a network and taking action are crucial. The curriculum and the toolbox provide assistance here.

The curriculum was tested together with 15 teachers and pedagogues from Folk High Schools - the interplay between methodological and content-related training and the implementation of this knowledge in pilot workshops demonstrates the effectiveness of the interaction between Folk High Schools and Active Citizenship.

Another important point is the increasing influence of the digital world. Active Citizenship can use digital tools to support actions or even shift people's engagement completely to the digital world. In different countries, Folk High

Schools have varying degrees of willingness to open up to digital tools and online empowerment. In order to tap into new and younger target groups, however, it is essential to engage with them. Folk High Schools must also "take place" online and be visible - as opinion leaders and places of democracy.

As a self-efficacious moment of the project, the 15 participating pedagogues conducted pilot workshops to connect active citizens in their region with other regions in Europe and thus enrich them. The digital approach has worked well for the Pilot Workshops and will hopefully motivate more Folk High Schools to act digitally across regions in the future. Digital tools also help to see Active Citizenship as a story that needs to be told to people.

Successful changes in society can be accompanied particularly well by digital storytelling and thus also be used as a positive narrative for Folk High School pedagogy.

Another concept that was used is that of peer groups. In small groups, the 15 participants of the TTT-course supported each other, developed ideas and thus also connected the students from their Folk High Schools. Small working groups enabled an increased exchange and also a European view of their own challenges.

In all project modules, it was easy to observe how important it is to the employees of Folk High Schools to support Active Citizenship. In many discussions, it became clear that **Folk High School and Active Citizenship are inseparable.**



# Conclusion

The world is changing faster and faster, people feel less and less empowered and democratic values are faltering across Europe. Folk High Schools are called upon to create a positive counterbalance and pursue Active Citizenship with great ambition. They are the ideal places to promote communities and strengthen democracy through Active Citizenship.

Specialist knowledge of Digital Active Citizenship, new methods and networking among committed individuals are the cornerstones for this.

The „PROMOCITI - Promoting Active Citizenship“ project is proof of the transformative power of education in fostering engaged and

responsible citizens. By combining theoretical exploration with practical application through pilot workshops, the initiative not only empowered participants with knowledge, but also enabled them to effect positive change in their local communities.

**When we reflect on the success of this project, it becomes clear that Active Citizenship is not just a concept to be understood, but a force to be unleashed for the collective good of society. Folk High Schools can be an important enzyme to support this.**





# Annex

# Design of Training – TTT Module 1

Day 1: Exploring the ground				
Time	What	Why	Setting, Material	Comment
10:00	Welcome & organisational things	Start, introduction of host, getting familiar with the facilities		Venue: Centre Civic Bon Pastor, Plaça de Robert Gerhard, 3, 08030 Barcelona
10:30	Framing (context of the training)	Getting familiar with the context of the training, overview of schedule planned		
10:40	<b>Check-in &amp; Warm-up</b> Opening questions combined with speed-dating, games etc.	Building relationship		
11:10	<b>My expectations for TTT 1</b>	Matching the participants' expectations with the planned schedule	Pinboard, Cards	
11:30	<b>Coffee break</b>			
12:00	<b>World Cafe</b>  Active Citizenship – what does that mean to me?  My personal experiences?  Why should our organisation (not) focus more on AC?	Exploring the personal status quo's in the field of AC	4-5 tables with 4 chairs each, Flips as „table cloth“, markers;  Each round 15-20´  Additional 5´ for deciding on the „TOP 3 messages“	Conversation „rules“ on flip
13:15	Harvesting: Collecting the main results	Common awareness for the TTT's topic	Pin board	

<b>13:45</b>	Short introduction to the field trip			
<b>14:00</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>			
<b>16:00</b>	<b>Field trip</b> Paying a visit to 1-2 bottom-up initiatives  Half-day field trip <b>incl. harvesting</b> (lessons learned)	Getting to know good AC in practice; get opportunities to talk to initiators and grass-root-level actors		Adults School La Verneda-Sant Martí. Carrer de la Selva de Mar 215, 08020, Barcelona.
<b>19:00</b>	<b>End of Day 1</b>			
<b>20:00</b>	Common Dinner			

## Day 2: From „Know-Why“ to „Know-How“

<b>Time</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Setting, Material</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>09:00</b>	<b>Activating Intro</b>	Starting the day		Venue: Casa del Mar Carrer d'Albareda, 1, 13, 08004 Barcelona
<b>09:15</b>	Most important <b>Principles and successful approaches</b> of AC incl. reflection of field trip	Learning about some important do's and don'ts	Card Collection, Pin board	All participants
<b>10:00</b>	<b>The Power of Active Citizenship</b> Motivating and inspiring input on AC	The „Know-Why“	Beamer	
<b>11:30</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>			

<b>11:00</b>	<b>Bar Camp „Relevant topics and questions concerning AC“</b>  Collecting topics and hosts (15')  Conversation in groups (2x30')  Harvesting (15')	Exploring participants' important concerns	Flip charts  2 time slots with 3 topics each	Conversation „rules“ on flip
<b>12:45</b>	Group exercise			
<b>13:00</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>			
<b>15:00</b>	<b>Group work on Pilot WS</b> a. How to get started? What has to be taken care of? How to attract volunteers? Working out a feasible checklist. b. How to design a first meeting? Developing a case example. Framework. c. How to facilitate a meeting (phases, attitude, tools and methods)? Producing a brief facilitation guideline.	Being conscious about and aware of the beginning of an AC activity (=how to make a good first impression) since the start is always extremely important...	3 different groups á 45 min	
<b>16:00</b>	<b>Harvesting of results</b>			
<b>16:30</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>			
<b>17:00</b>	<b>Online and hybrid participation</b> Tools and how to use them			
<b>18:40</b>	<b>Feedback, preview of Day 3 and Check-out</b>			
<b>19:00</b>	<b>End of Day 2</b>			
<b>20:00</b>	Common Dinner			



## Day 3: Preparing for action

Time	What	Why	Setting, Material	Comment
09:00	Check in and Warm-up			Could be performed by participant
09:15	<b>Relevant topics in our regions</b> a. Collecting topics and table hosts b. Three conversation rounds c. Harvesting	Getting known to what people concerns and which topics could be used for the pilot event	Pro Action Café	3 questions: a. What is the problem behind the problem? b. What is missing? c. What could be the next elegant step towards realization?
10:40	<b>Coffee break</b>			
11:00	<b>Building peer-groups:</b> the idea behind	Introduction of meaning & expected output		
11:15	Building peer-groups in practice	Finding peer group partners	First get-together in the peer groups; ideas for pilot WS	Possible criteria: topics, questions, kind of event; ways of communication in-between the peer groups
13:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>			
15:00	<b>Digital communication and collaboration</b> within the peer groups	Getting familiar with facilitating online meetings	Zoom, Padlet, Miro, google-tools	Interactive session
16:30	<b>Coffee break</b>			
16:50	<b>Reflexion of TTT 1 &amp; learnings for TTT 2</b>	Evaluating TTT 1, getting input for the design of TTT 2	Triple conversations	
	Harvesting			
17:20	<b>Final check-out &amp; closure</b>		The taste of TTT 1	
19:00	<b>End of Day 3</b>			

## Design of Training – TTT Module 2

Day 1: Peer groups and active digital citizenship				
Time	What	Why	Setting, Material	Comment
09:30	Welcome, warm-up, framing, topics and expectations Info about SPES	Start, introduction of host, getting familiar with the facilities & with each other again		
10:30	<b>Peer-group-activities</b> Short presentation of every group	Common picture of peer group approaches and pilot activities planned		
11:00	<b>Coffee break</b>			
11:20	<b>Peer-group-activities</b> Exchange of experiences and discussion of important questions	Getting confident and motivated to take the next step forward		
12:30	<b>Lunch break</b>			
14:00	<b>Possible designs of pilot activities</b> Methods, exercises, settings	Getting known to a variety of useful tools		
15:30	<b>Coffee break</b>			
15:50	<b>Being a “digital citizen”</b> Creating a picture of active digital citizenship. How to be proactive on social media & other channels?	From technical to human issues...		
17:45	Closure			
18:15	<b>Dinner</b>			
19:30	<b>„Bar discussion“</b> on digital citizenship			

## Day 2: Digital Storytelling and Independent Broadcasting as tools for Active Citizenship

Time	What	Why	Setting, Material	Comment
09:00	<b>Activating Intro</b>	Starting the day		
09:15	<b>Digital Storytelling</b> Meaning and approaches	Getting familiar with the tool		Including coffee break
12:30	<b>Lunch break</b>			
13:45	<b>Field trip</b> <b>Independent Radio B 138</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction and discussion</li> <li>Producing a radio show</li> <li>Record video clips for day 3</li> </ul>	Role of independent media within active citizenship		Hosted by Mike Schedlberger, Radio B 138  Location: <a href="https://radiob138.at/">https://radiob138.at/</a> Podcast vs. Radio?
18:15	<b>Dinner</b>			

## Day 2: Video Clips and Pilot Activity-Programme

Time	What	Why	Setting, Material	Comment
09:00	Check in and Warm-up			Could be performed by participant
09:15	<b>Producing my own digital story</b> Practice: video creating	Getting familiar to produce short video stories		
10:45	<b>Coffee break</b>			
11:05	<b>"Prime time cinema"</b> Watching the video clips			
12:00	<b>Lunch break</b>			

<b>13:30</b>	<b>Linking of pilot activities</b> • What for? • How? • What to consider?			
<b>14:30</b>	<b>Preview of future peer-group working</b>			
<b>15:00</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>			
<b>15:20</b>	<b>Peer-group discussions</b> Planning of next steps			
<b>16:00</b>	<b>Final reflexion, check-out &amp; closure</b>			
<b>19:00</b>	<b>End of Day 3</b>			

# Infographic

**Erasmus+ Project**  
– KA2 Partnership in Adult Education

## PROMOCITI

### Promoting active citizenship

Project duration: March 2022 - March 2024

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A **main task is to enhance civic engagement and participation by adult education** based on common European values. Adult education that supports or initiates active citizenship will have to outreach for the citizens.

Within PROMOCITI we want to combine existing knowledge and practical know-how of experienced actors with an activating impulse for institutions and their pedagogical staff, which until now focuses more on designing programmes for interested learners.

For the pedagogical staff of folk high schools and similar organisations it is crucial to accept active citizenship as a main challenge for their future work, to gain competence in how to initiate and facilitate processes and/or activities in civic participation and to achieve practical experience by organising and facilitating pilot workshops with local/ regional citizens.

Expected impacts are not only allocated to organisational or local level (gaining competence in the field of active citizenship, building local networks for grassroot level activities) but shall extend nationally by **inspiring more and more AE institutes to integrate active citizenship** into their portfolios and education programmes.

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Lead partner of this project is the Verband der Bildungszentren im ländlichen Raum, an organization that represents the interests and educational work of 44 Heimvolkshochschulen throughout Germany.

The project partners are:

- SPES Zukunftsakademie, A
- ARGE Bildungshäuser Österreich, A
- Federació d'Associacions Culturals i Educatives de Persones Adultes, ES
- Färnebo folkhögskola, SWE
- Ogólnopolska Sieć Uniwersytetów Ludowych, POL

- **5 Transnational Meetings** in Germany, Sweden, Spain, Austria and Poland
- Engrossed **survey** on the specific role of adult education institutes in active citizenship: key issues, success factors and perspectives
- Development and testing of a **Train-the-Trainer curriculum** for pedagogical staff: Enhancing active citizenship through adult education and digital storytelling
- **2 Train-the-Trainer modules** in Spain and Austria with 3-4 participants of each partner country + **online peer groups** to collaborate in the development of regional pilot workshops with more than 200 participants
- **5 Multiplier Events** in Germany, Austria, Sweden and Poland

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**Funded by the European Union**  
The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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Co-funded by  
the European Union