



Edition for students



Co-creation Manual

Youth-Led Development for Schools'
Participatory Management



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This manual is generated by the team behind the “BePart” project —an Erasmus+ project that supports teachers and students in different European countries in developing Youth Participation in their schools.

In this document you will find the tools and tips to implement real participatory processes in your school and be the protagonists of change!



Other versions

Edition for teachers at bepart.platoniq.net/pages/cocreation-manual



How to print

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Youth participation

a **process where young people, as active citizens, take part in, express views on, and have decision-making power** about issues that affect them.

Key elements

Motivation: want to participate

Reasons that motivate participation are many and diverse: subjective ideological interests, socio-affective satisfaction needs, need to communicate and be part of a group, to obtain results perceiving the usefulness of participation, personal growth and self-realization.

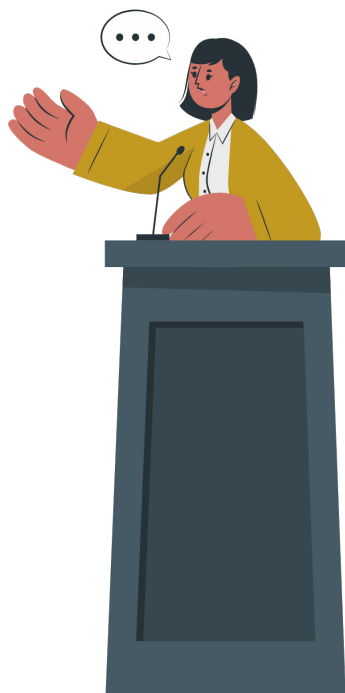
Training: know how to participate

Participation requires the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate and relate with others, to think and act collectively, and to allow yourself to be transformed.

Just remember: you learn to participate by participating. Learn from your mistakes, celebrate your successes and move on.

Organization: be able to participate

Participation implies the collective action of a group of people, therefore it requires structures to allow and facilitate communication, debate, decision making and common action.



Key-concepts



Youth-led development

an **approach to development driven and guided by young people** that draws upon their creativity and skills to create positive change valuing them as an asset for society.



Youth empowerment

an **ongoing process of increasing personal, interpersonal or political power** to take action in order to improve life situations.

Students, through their self-empowerment, can increase their personal, social, economic, and political control over their lives, participate democratically in their school life and, at the same time, create a personal and critical view of their school environment.

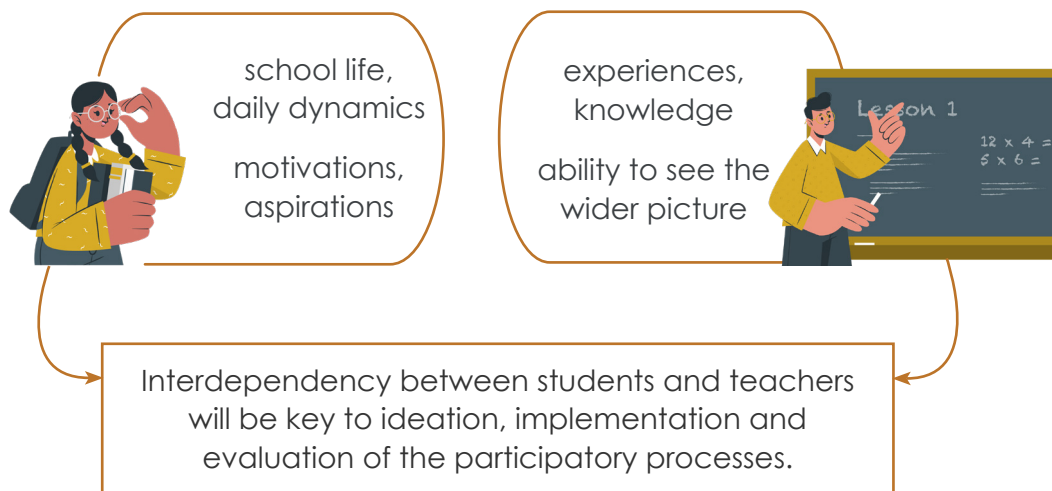
Youth-led development and youth empowerment are interconnected processes.

Key-concepts

Co-creation

a way to activate and channel creative processes based on the relationship and interaction of different perspectives, values, experiences, and expertise.

Such collaborative endeavour will only be possible if all actors can shape the definition of the problem, of the activities and of the outcomes. No one actor has the power to solve all problems.



Co-creating will mean shaping together action plans, evaluation procedures, engagement processes of the wider student community and much more. This will only be possible if the parts involved (students and teachers) have a deep understanding and awareness of the power that each of them holds and if all participants operate with clarity of their roles and responsibilities.

Model of Youth Participation (MYP)

a **framework that guides the participatory process** in the design, implementation and evaluation of school daily activities. The framework reinforces vision, quality and impact of the intervention.

In the [Models of Youth Participation Handbook](#), you will find more information about MYP and a description of a set of 28 MYP.

Project-based learning

a **teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills** by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.

Students become active researchers and assessors of their own learning when teachers guide student learning so that students learn from the project making processes.

It involves students developing and demonstrating all **four C's** of modern learning:

- ✓ Critical thinking and problem-solving,
- ✓ Creativity and imagination,
- ✓ Collaboration,
- ✓ Communication.



Actors

Students and teachers are the protagonists of these participatory processes, but there are more actors on stage that must be taken into account.

Involving some of these actors in the process by asking for their support can make the process more participatory and sustainable over time.

These actors may vary according to the location and characteristics of the school. In general terms, we have identified the following ones:



Management team

The **Director** or the **Management team** deals with issues concerning the understanding and handling of administrative processes and the handling of official and administrative issues.

School board

School board is the governing body of the school with representatives of the entire educational community.

Pedagogical council

Education coordinators offer scientific and pedagogical support of school units, support of the implementation of the Curricula and the implementation of educational innovations in educational structures and organize informative training meetings with teachers.

Actors



Families

Families have consistent participation in many of the decisions. There are some activities made by parents and activities parents give permission for.

Parents' Association aims to cooperate with the school for the better development and education of students.



Local and national actors

The **school committee of the municipality** or city council takes care of the school's infrastructure and the funding.

The **Director of Education** has the general responsibility of administering and controlling the operation of the school units in their area of responsibility, provides instructions to the directors of the schools regarding the administration and operation of the school and takes initiatives for innovative actions and use of new technologies in education.

The **Ministry of Education** legislates for the operation of schools (syllabus, teachers assignment, exams, curriculum, etc).

External actors

External experts participate in specific projects.

Actors

Students

Students participate directly or by joining one of the school's participation structures (legacy team, sustainability commissions, solidarity and others).

The **Student Council** works with the director, the teachers' association, the parents' association and other educational institutions to submit suggestions for the promotion and resolution of issues concerning students and the improvement of their conditions.

Students' and class representative(s) meet regularly with the school management team to receive the demands or requests of the classes or to discuss the functioning and management of the school.

Teachers

Teachers are organised in working groups (level, area, others for projects) facilitating participation.

Teachers' Association set directions for the better functioning of the school.



Actors



Teachers and students responsibilities

Teachers Responsibilities

Students Responsibilities

Teachers will access the BePart handbook and will make a first selection of MYP that they consider interesting or important to their school development.

Teachers will select a group of students, called the "Fellowship" that will be the "early adopters" of the participatory processes.

Teachers will create proper spaces at school to present and discuss those MYP with students selected.

From the models selected by teachers, students will select 2 MYP to implement.

Teachers and students, based on a co-creation process, will design MYP action plans, documents that guide the MYP implementation.

Teachers will mobilize the selected students and promote their engagement in the implementation and testing of the MYP in their schools.

Students will develop several Guides of the MYP implementation, as a strategy and tool to support the adoption and deployment of the MYP in other classes or schools.

Students and teachers will prepare small-scale events.

The process of implementing

What Steps?

1

INCEPTION SESSION
Defining the objectives

2

PREPARATION SESSION
Designing the activities

3

COOPERATION SESSION
Looking for support

4

IMPLEMENTATION SESSION
Action planning and monitoring

5

EVALUATION SESSION
Assessment and rescheduling



The process of implementing



1

INCEPTION SESSION Defining the objectives

Creation of
fellowships

The Schools' Fellowships will gather the team of students who will work on implementing and developing a model of youth participation (MYP) in their school.

MYP selection

The students will prepare the selection process of the most relevant models of youth participation (MYP) to them.

Motivation and
mobilisation of
the students

The fellowship will then have to be mobilised and develop their interest in working for the project.



2

PREPARATION SESSION Designing the activities

MYP action
plan
design and
development

The project team of students and teachers will organise meetings in every school context among students in order to design specific actions and activities to implement their models of youth participation (MYP).



The process of implementing

3

COOPERATION SESSION Looking for support

School
community

Students will then invite others in their school context to support their project and to cooperate actively with them, so that they can change the school culture. They will present the project, present the models that they have chosen, explain what they want to find and what are the needs, ask for help, promise ways to support their partners' aims.

Local
community

Students will then invite people and organisations outside their school context to support their project and to cooperate actively with them so that they can change the community culture.

4

IMPLEMENTATION SESSION Action planning and monitoring

Action plan
implemen-
tation and
monitoring

Students need to select a smaller team who will be responsible for following and monitoring the project's activities ("Who does what when?") and report back in every meeting of the Team.

The process of implementing



5

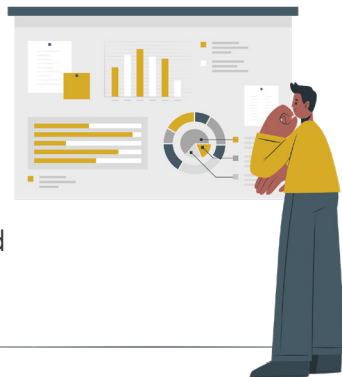
EVALUATION SESSION Assessment and rescheduling

Evaluation

Students need to select a smaller team who will be responsible for following and assessing the project's activities, propose possible changes or corrective actions to the Team and help the Team understand where they stand and what to do in order to complete their goals. This Evaluation team will be working since the beginning of the project and follow all activities in a horizontal way.

Impact measurement

Students need to also measure the impact that their project has on individuals, on the school community and possibly on the larger local community.



Model adaptability

It is good for the project to check whether the Model of youth participation (MYP) that the Team of students have chosen is applicable to different schools or to different contexts where youth lives, i.e. a sports team, a theatre group, a smaller education group etc. It can also be measured against its capability to be adapted to other people's groups, adults, smaller children, etc.

How to select a MYP

There is not a super MYP, without weaknesses or limitations. So, to select a MYP, teachers and students may start to reflect on questions such as the following ones:

To define the purpose of the participatory initiative:

- ? What does the action plan aim to achieve? What are students' concerns about school living?
- ? What contribution do you want to make?
- ? What opportunities can be constructed to enable students to play an active role in shaping the objectives?

To position all participants as contributors and ensure that students have an active role in each project's phase, including evaluation:

- ? How will students contribute?
- ? What processes might work to interrupt limiting assumptions about the capacity of students?
- ? What methods will be used to invite diverse perspectives from the participants?
- ? Whose perspectives and voices are included, excluded or privileged in the programme?



How to select a MYP



To recognize that power is relational and know-how participants are positioned in relation to each other:

- ? How are roles and responsibilities assigned, adopted and enacted in the programme?
- ? How are relationships managed to ensure equity and respect is enacted between all parties?
- ? How power relations, structures and surrounding physical and social environments impact on possibilities for engagement?

To acknowledge that participation is a 'right' which is in itself in need of protection:

- ? How can young people themselves play an active role in ensuring the safety of their peers and those affected by their action plans?

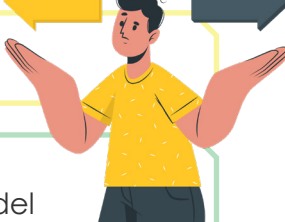
To draw attention to the physical and relational nature of participatory space:

- ? What are the social, physical and virtual spaces in which participation can take place?
- ? How does place or context affect what is possible or desirable in relation to participation?
- ? What mediates access to particular spaces and places?
- ? What strategies might be needed to create reach and access to the spaces of participation?

How to select a MYP

After this exercise, take a look at the following scheme, and try to select a cluster of models. You will find more information and a description of each model in the [BePart MYP Handbook](#).

What would you like to include or to focus on?



Visual and performing arts?	SEDIN model EAR model
Behaviors and/or self-evaluation?	Behavior grid CLEAR participation model
Community and social inclusion?	SEDIN model yMind model Three-Lens approach to participation Key dimensions of participation RMSOS Framework Youth engagement continuum Collaborative on youth organizing Seven realms of participation Strategic approach to participation
Institutional inclusion?	Key dimensions of participation
Policy, advocacy?	Yin-yang model of youth participation Six principles of online participation Youth participation in Finland CLEAR participation model E-Participation framework Youth engagement continuum Seven realms of participation

How to select a MYP



Voluntary work?

Ladder of volunteer participation

Digital technologies and Internet?

Six principles of online participation
Ladder of online participation
Four L engagement model
4C's of online participation
E-Participation Framework
5 stages model of online participation

Tools?

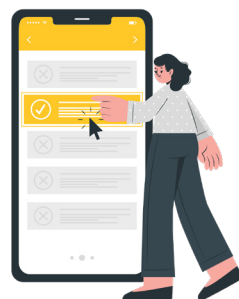
Curiosity-meter
Behavior grid
Pathway to participation

Level of participation?

Ladder of online participation
The participation tree
Ladder of volunteer participation
Pathway to participation
Trilla and Novella participation model
Matrix of participation
5 stages model of online participation
Degrees of participation
Ladder of children participation

Afterwards, check if:

- ✓ The MYP is in line with the participatory purpose and able to answer the problem identified.
- ✓ It is easy to linkage the MYP selected to young people's individual life-trajectories.
- ✓ The activities and tasks predicted in the purpose of the participatory initiative can be fitted in the selected MYP.



Safe Spaces

The necessity of feeling safe, comfortable and welcomed in a group is quite likely to be a widespread human experience.

The extent to which one feels like they can be part of a group and actively participate in it can be interpreted according to many factors. Nonetheless, safety is not a neutral concept and talking about “safe spaces” is probably something different for every person we speak to. Safety is a concept that varies culturally, spatially and temporally, it's socially produced and context-dependent.



Feeling able or legitimised to express opinions, show emotions or vulnerability, tell one's story, gather the self-esteem necessary to muster up the courage and speak or simply not feel endangered are not a given for everyone at all times.

The feeling of power and the feeling of safety are two key factors to take into consideration.

Exploring the connections of power and safety in groups could help us ground our facilitation into the awareness of systems of oppression that might be active at any given time between participants but also in connection to broader dynamics of power.



Safe Spaces



The way we refer to “safety” in this manual involves:

RECEIVING NO HARM

refers to the care of each participant's mental health and well-being as collaborators within a group.



ACCESSIBILITY

with regards to making the spaces where the participatory process takes place free of material and immaterial barriers.

SELF-ORGANISATION

when participants/students take initiative to develop their own dynamics and goals outside of the parameters set by the facilitators/teachers and when they can reshape a project or space to fit their needs.



Real Participation

What do you need to be aware of?

The following section sketches out some of the issues that might need to be made visible when planning a participatory process:

POWER

Participation is closely linked to decision making. Being able to participate in decision-making has a lot to do with feeling empowered to do so. Understanding how power dynamics work in your school and in your classroom is key to open up possibilities for changing how things are run.

DIVERSITY

Young people are not a homogenous group. Their involvement in decision making is more likely to succeed when the diversity of their circumstances, ethnicity, background, interests, skills and needs is recognised and respected.



STUDENTS' BASIC NEEDS

Context greatly influences participation, and every student will have a fairly different context. Finding a way for participation processes to speak to what moves students is key for these to have an impact in their lives.

Real Participation



COMMITMENT FROM THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Real commitment from the school management and the governing board is key for participation processes to be successful.

BLOCKAGES TO ALLOWING PARTICIPATION

It is necessary to acknowledge in what areas of school management and of school life students are allowed to participate.

TIME FOR PARTICIPATION

Although participation from students should be voluntary, creating spaces where all students can freely attend is a proactive step towards making such processes more inclusive.

MOTIVATION AND REAL IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION

Reducing the level of abstraction and really influencing what is decided (and that will impact life at school) is key to motivating students' participation.

HONESTY, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Treating young people honestly is key to engaging them. There needs to be clarity on the purpose of the process, the level of influence and responsibilities.



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