

HANDBOOK

HOW DO YOUTH SUSTAIN THE
RURAL WORLD?

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING

ULLDEMOLINS
9-15 OCT 2023



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INTRODUCTION

How do youth sustain the rural world?

International training course in Ulldemolins, Catalonia

This is a question we often ask ourselves in **La Bastida Participació**, a small cooperative working on youth participation in Catalonia, specifically in the province of Tarragona. We used this question to plan the Erasmus+ training course that took place from **9 to 15 October in Ulldemolins**, in the Montsant Natural Park and the rural region of Priorat, in Catalonia.

We were interested in exploring the impact of youth depopulation in rural areas and how to transform it from the perspective of different European youth organizations. We looked at the importance of **youth empowerment** to sustain the rural world, because without youth there won't be a possible future in these areas. We focused on participation as a tool for young people to put down their roots and become active agents to transform their realities and **keep rural areas alive and liveable**.

During the training, we shared challenges, proposals and good practices, while getting to know the local context that hosted us, the Priorat. The participants came from **youth organizations from different European countries**: Young Professionals Network (Albania), Social and Youth workers (Armenia), Umbrella (Georgia), Helix - Social Innovation Hub (Greece), Eurosud (Italy), Donum Animus (Latvia), Centre for Intercultural Dialogue (North Macedonia), Youth for Tomorrow's Europe Association (Romania), Antalya Metropolitan Municipality (Türkiye), Resilience Earth and Service Civil International Catalunya (Spain).

It was an intense week that greatly enriched us both as organizations and as people. We are very grateful for the motivation and contributions from the group that made this experience so rewarding. This **handbook** is the result of the work carried out with the group of participants and which collects the collective reflections and expertise gathered during the sessions, developed through non formal education methodology and based on horizontal exchange and teamwork.



1. RURALITY

RURAL

We begin this handbook with a selection of quotes that help us to think about what rural and rurality mean:

“Rurality” is not a uniform concept. In general, “rural” refers to locations away from urban areas. Many of these locations are situated in agricultural, farming or fishing areas. Over 53% of the world’s population live in rural localities and more than 70% of the poor population reside in rural areas. (Hazelman 2010)

In 2015, almost a third of Europe’s population lived in rural areas. Eurostat data showed that in at least 15 of the EU Member States, the highest proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion was recorded in rural areas. Rural areas were defined as local administrative communities outside urban agglomerations, mostly characterised by lower population density, specific socio-geographical and cultural image, proximity to natural resources and therefore different economic prospects, but also with identified needs for further improvement of specific services targeted at youth as well as the general population. (CE, 2019).

Let’s imagine that the attack on the “countryside” comes from the “countryside”, which is well understood as the greatest confrontation with capitalism. There is a source of self-organization, they know how to solve their own vital needs, they don’t depend exclusively on what can be bought... (Gustavo Duch)

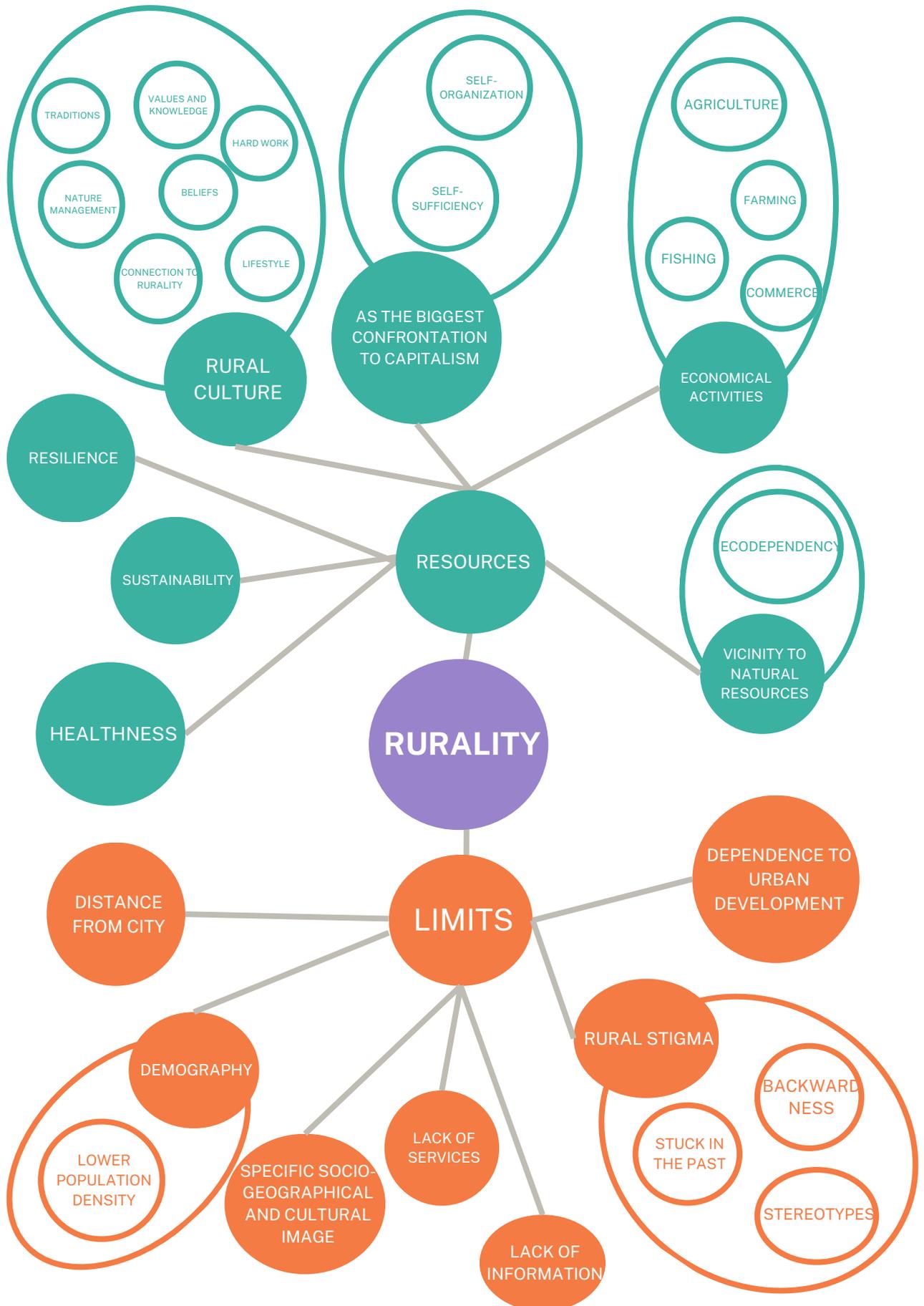
Rurality is often seen as an stereotypical expression of forms of life that are far removed from modernity. (Gemma Carbó)

The boundaries between rural and urban, country and city, have become thinner. The improvement of the communications, the delocalisation of industry, the double dwelling and rural tourism are facts that have led to processes of urbanisation of the countryside, not through the agglomeration of people, but through the interconnection between both realities and the people who live in them. (Jaume Moya)



WHAT IS RURALITY?

Participants draw a concept map of what rurality means to them, based on their experiences in their local context (this page). Afterwards, they discuss the challenges faced by young people in rural areas (next page).



CHALLENGES IN RURAL AREAS

Lack of information

Transport issues

Economical issues

Closed-mindedness

Rural stygma

- Fear of being judged
- Stereotypes of prestigious regions on educational field
- Shyness

The modern way of socialization affects the participation

Lack of places to socialize

Language and cultural barriers

PARTICIPATION AND SOCIALIZATION

There is no good connection between education and the job market..

Plenty of youngsters with higher education degree and lack of technicians and workers.

Too few children

- Aged mixed classrooms
- Empty buildings

Difficulties in digital acces to digital tools

Need to go to other towns to school or kindergarden

Amortized educational facilities

Low quality education

Not enough work spaces

Good salary is not enough

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

COMMUNICATION AND INCLUSION

Expensive internet

lack of school buses

Transport communication problems due to weather conditions

Lack of digital infrastructure

- Lack of signal
- Problems to be connected during pandemic

Lack of media literacy (i.e. fake news)

- Older people from rural areas usually don't know how to use PC and Smartphones
- Lack of knowledge in using computee

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Morphopoly

Lack of training and sensibility about diversity

- Cultural differences
- Special needs
- Gender and sexual orientation stereotypes

Lack of facilities and funds to support citizens' activities

IDEAS TO FACE CHALLENGES

Based on the analysis of the challenges in rural areas, the participants developed different ideas to address each challenge and specific issues.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

PARENTS' TRAINING ASSOCIATION

Target group: Parents (especially young parents)

Objectives: Sharing professional technical skills together in a safe and sincere environment.

Project: an association office will be used for the courses. Each member or volunteer parents may give a training course regarding their talents or hobbies. This kind of interaction will also improve the social relations.

HAND TO HAND

Target group: 20-25 years

Objectives: Connecting and combining work competences to the labor market, to give value to local craftsmanship.

Project: Creation of courses: professionals, universities (project management). Entrepreneurship training, to be able to start your own business.

RURAL UNIVERSITY

Target group: 18-25

Objectives: Motivating youth to discover rural areas and value them.

Project: Use empty buildings to create a different kind of university.

In these universities, young people can take courses on local art, how to make typical local food or learn the local language.

In this way, young people can discover, preserve and even move to rural areas. It could also be an opportunity to involve the older local population, creating moments of exchange of skills and experiences between old and young.

These universities can also take part in Erasmus programmes to attract international students and, as a result, value and promote the rural area outside the country.

IDEAS TO FACE CHALLENGES

COMMUNICATION AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

YOUTH WORK ONLINE

Target group: all ages

Objective: To raise awareness of youth work in our organisations through social media. Provide information about opportunities online due to the lack of them.

Project: Short videos about initiatives and cooperating with stakeholders

PARTICIPATION AND SOCIALIZATION

YOUTH THINKING CRITICALLY

Target group: youth

Objective: Develop critical thinking skills in order to open young people's minds.

Project: Organize 5 rounds of debates using non formal education techniques.

SMART objectives:

Specific: one skill - critical thinking

Measurable: using surveys or tests before and after

Achievable: using non-formal techniques - debates

Relevant: scientifically proven

Timed: 5 scheduled rounds of debate

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

DIFFERENT, BUT THE SAME

Target group: all ages

Objective: Raising awareness, Tolerance, Equality through sport

Project: Organize a sports festival, where there are different group of people: sexual orientation, skin color, religion, equality, minorities, social status, disability

2. LOCAL CONTEXT



PRIORAT

The county of Priorat is located in Camp de Tarragona, in the southern part of Catalonia. It is made up of 23 municipalities with a total population of 9,239 inhabitants. It borders the counties of Baix Camp to the southeast and east, Ribera d'Ebre to the west, Garrigues to the north and Conca de Barberà to the northeast. It's a county with a very rugged relief, without any plains and marked by the presence of the Serra del Montsant, to the north, and by the Serra de Llaberia to the south.



This fact, together with the diversity of materials, makes it a very heterogeneous region, both from a natural and human point of view, and makes communication between the municipalities difficult.

Priorat is a place associated with world-famous wines and a living agricultural landscape of outstanding beauty, with Siurana and the Carthusian monastery of Escaladei as its main attractions. On the other hand, it is also a world-famous place for rock climbing, which is mainly practised in Margalef.

The trend of the last hundred years in the Priorat has been a further reduction of the population by half. The maximum population that the county has had was in 1887, with a total of 27,461 inhabitants. Little by little, this population has been reduced to 9,239 inhabitants on 1 January 2021. This recession was caused by various factors, among which we could highlight the beginning of the phylloxera of the vine, which impoverished the production of wine, the non-implementation of industrialisation, the impact of the battle of the Ebro (being the rear) and the loss of the Spanish Civil War. We can define the Priorat as a distinctly rural area, with all the problems that this entails.



YOUTH INITIATIVES IN THE AREA



www.prioratenpersona.cat
@LaPortaDelCongost



La Somereta is a cooperative founded by 4 partners with the aim of managing the Sant Antoni i Santa Bàrbara d'Ulldemolins hermitage. Its aim is to collaborate with organisations in the Priorat in order to boost the economy in a sustainable way, while also offering accommodation and bar services.



www.prioratenpersona.cat
@centrequimsoler



The goal is not to present a stereotypical or clichéd view of our landscape, but to make it visible and explain it through the people who live there. To create literary works that contribute to placing our land and our landscape in the literary imagination of the country. To promote the cultural and literary dynamism of the Priorat.



@montsantjove



Montsant Jove is a joint initiative of the youth associations and town halls of the north of Priorat to promote support for young people and links between the towns in the area. They work with: sport, youth information point, workshops and talks, education, economy, culture and leisure.



@liana_espaideterritori
lianadeterritori@gmail.com

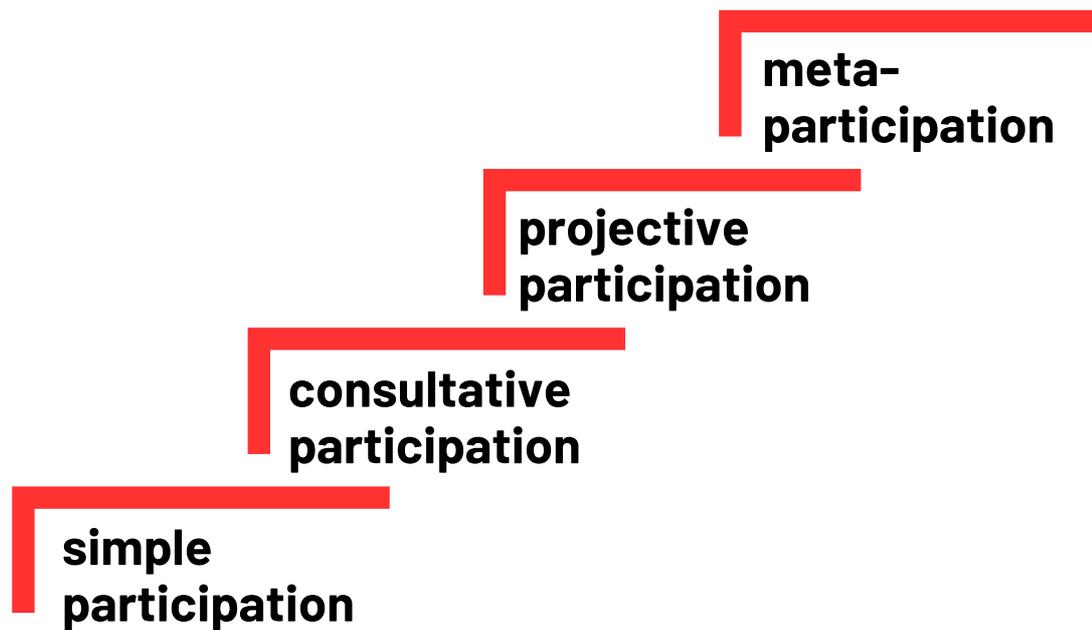


Liana is a project that aims to offer rural, ecological and handmade products around the local context, in order to make the local projects known. Their work is strongly linked to the values of the circular economy and promotes the dynamisation of their rural area.

3. THEORETICAL FRAME



PARTICIPATION STEPS



Trilla, J i Novella, A., (2001)

Participation is the act of taking part in something that has a positive impact on society. Participation can be at different levels depending on the way it is done. There are many theories and ladders of participation. Here is an example.

1. Simple participation - at this level you are informed about what is going on, but you cannot make a decision or express your opinion. For example, once a year all the employees of the company go to volunteer because the company decides it is good for them. The initiation and decision was made by the company, not the workers, and they were not even asked what kind of volunteering they wanted to do, or if they wanted to do it at all.

2. Consultative participation - at this stage you are consulted about some decisions, but you cannot make final or global decisions. For example, I am an actor in the amateur theatre group in my neighbourhood. The director asks the actors for ideas and suggestions, but he is the only one who makes decisions.

3. Projective participation - In this stage you are not the initiator, but the decision is shared with you. For example, I am in charge of a summer camp organised by the local government. The local government was the initiator of the summer camp, but it is managed by me, so we work together.

4. Meta-participation - at this stage you are the initiator, a decision is made by you or shared with others. For example, with my friend we organise a volleyball competition every year. My friends and I are the initiators and we do everything ourselves.

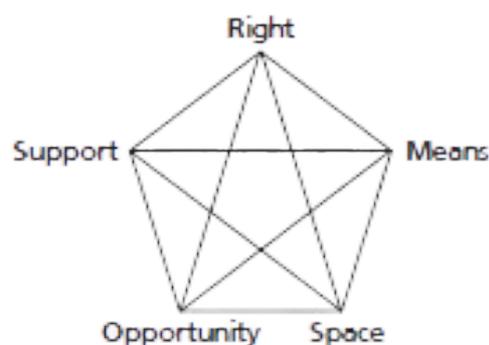
RMSOS ANALYSIS

“Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.”

Preamble of the **Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life** (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 2015)

RMSOS is a model that includes 5 aspects to analyse participation and active citizenship.

- **RIGHT:** Young people have the right to participate. Guaranteeing this right doesn't depend on local or regional authorities, because it is a fundamental right that all young people have and should demand.
- **MEANS:** In order to encourage young people to participate, we need to ensure that their basic needs are met, then we can encourage their participation. These needs include adequate social security, education, housing, health, transport, know-how and access to technology.
- **SPACE:** Physical space, but also the space to participate in decision-making processes on aspects of life that affect young people (institutional or organisational level).
- **OPPORTUNITY:** Youth need easy access to information on how to get involved, what opportunities are available and where they are located.
- **SUPPORT:** Young people have a lot of talent and potential to participate, but without the necessary support their involvement may not be as effective as it could be.



RMSOS approach to young
people's participation

PROVENTION

Burton 1990

Provention is described as "the promotion of an environment conducive to harmonious relationships". Provention is a process consisting of various elements that include an interactive and problem-solving attitude with an emphasis on improving human relationships by creating a conducive environment.

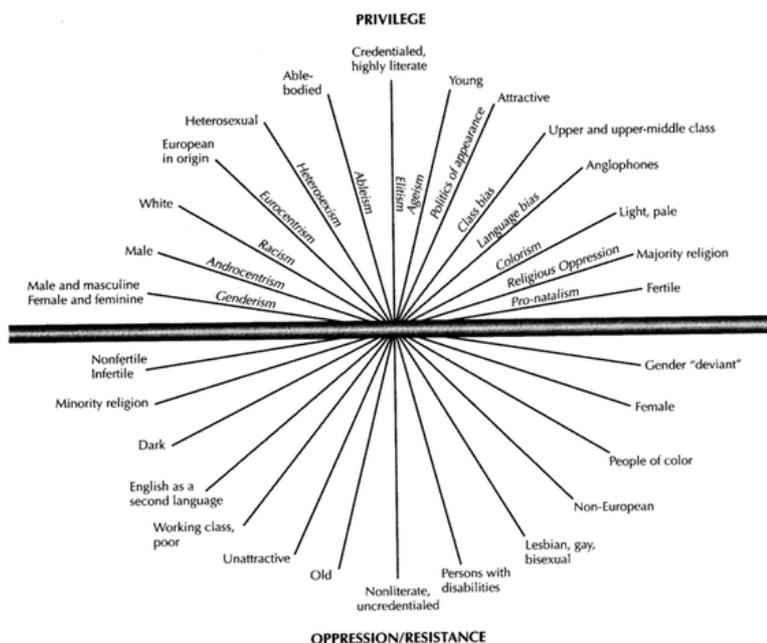


<https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7863&context=etd>

INTERSECTIONALITY

Crenshaw, 1998. Pheonix, 2008

The theory of intersectionality acts as a "zipper", "it provides a conceptual language for recognising that everyone is simultaneously positioned within social categories such as gender, social class, sexuality and 'race'. It reminds us that we cannot understand these categories in isolation. A full understanding of any social category requires the analysis of differences as well as similarities within groups.



CLEAR MODEL

Lawndes & Pratchett (2006)

The C.L.E.A.R is a participation model, which concentrates on factors that can motivate and drive individuals to participate. The C.L.E.A.R tool exists to better understand social participation. It is a diagnostic tool: one which helps to identify particular strengths and problems with participation.

This model consist of fine elements:

Can do

According to this element, when people have the appropriate skills and resources, they are more able to participate.

Like to do

There is an idea that If you feel a part of something, then you are more willing to engage and do it.

Enable to

According to the third element, participation is high when individuals are able to take part, so with this element can be measured accessibility of opportunities to individuals.

Asked to

This element emphasizes participation when individuals and target groups are asked and consulted about their ideas and opinions about the issue or the project. When people are asked to share their ideas there are more possibilities that they are going to be involved.

Responded to

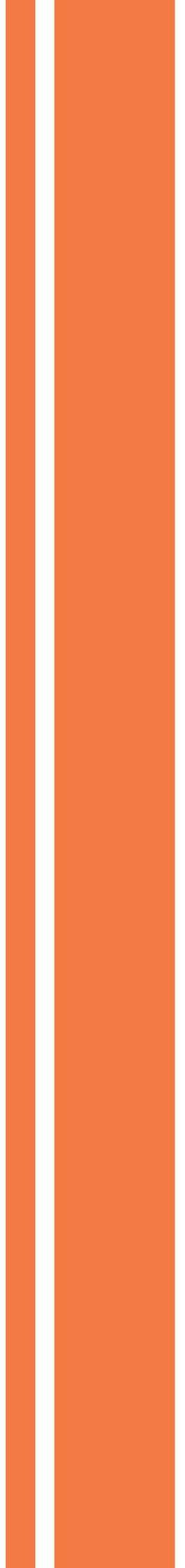
According to this element, individuals are more motivated to participate when their feedback and needs are responded to and when they see that their opinions were taken into account.

As engaging citizens in social participation is a complex task, this model can be used to at least raise their involvement and participation by analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of current ways of working.

Find this and other participation models in the following link:

https://www.nonformality.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Participation_Models_20121118.pdf

4. GOOD PRACTICES



GOOD PRACTICES

Finally, participants share their experiences of good practice in their local contexts.



DISCOVER EU INCLUSION PROJECT

The Discover EU project gives people with disabilities the opportunity to get involved and feel free to ask their own questions, have more space, choose their own topics to discuss and try them out, all while travelling around EU countries, giving them the chance not only to look around cities and get to know different cultures, but also to gain some knowledge in a specific subject.

Coordinator: Asociația "Tineri Pentru Europa de Maine" (Romania)

Target group: 18-year-old young people with fewer opportunities

Aim: To develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes of disadvantaged young people for a better professional and social life.

Results: 15 young people and 3 group leaders participating in an educational and eco-friendly trip across Europe in 11 months.

Impact: Key competences of disadvantaged young people were developed: communication in their mother tongue and in a foreign language; digital competences; intercultural dialogue competences; soft skills for travelling abroad.

RMSOS analysis

Rights: suitable for young people with fewer opportunities, funding is helpful, not all countries can apply

Means: participants have the means to have a successful trip

Space: location is chosen with participants

Opportunity: new ways of informal education for disadvantaged young people

Support: participants have good support

WITH THE EYES OF WOMEN, WITH THE POWER OF CINEMA

With the eyes of women, With the Power of Cinema (April 2021 - March 2023) definitely helps young women to acquire new skills and knowledge, being able to feel safer, freer and braver. Such kinds of projects will boost women's freedom, enable them to discuss their issues, and be more confident.

Coordinator: Embassy of the Netherlands

Project Owner: Antalya Metropolitan Municipality (Turkey)

Target Group: women students.

Aim: To enable young women, in particular, to showcase their abilities and gain confidence and support as it can be difficult to find such support. To continue to inspire young women and broaden their perspectives.

Results: 23 women participated.

Impact: They had the opportunity to feel that they were supported, they could realise even a small education or action could bring something valuable to their life, and to work as a team, have to continue to have their desired results. They worked with professionals, had technical courses, and received feedback about their work.

RMSOS analysis

Rights: women were able to apply online through the university announcements and social media.

Means: courses were online, but everything for shooting was arranged.

Shooting of the films took place in 5 different cities and a private studio.

Opportunity: Information was sent to universities in Turkey for every female university student. It was spread amongst students.

Support: Mentors, financial support from the Embassy of the Netherlands, and equipment were provided.

CHANGEMAKERS

Changemakers is a training course with a duration of 6 sessions, covering various topics but with a focus on human rights. The course provides children with the opportunity to create their own projects, gain knowledge about human rights, improve their communication skills, and discover each other's opinions on human rights.

Coordinator: Umbrella (Georgia)

Target Group: Young people aged 13-24 from rural areas with limited opportunities.

Aim: To develop the competencies of young people to write and implement projects. Another goal was to educate, motivate, and activate young people to participate in youth work.

Results: 10 projects, with 110 people involved.

Impact: developed competences, awareness of what youth work is, involvement in youth work, engaged in social life, big impact on society and other young people, and some became youth workers and mentors in the future.

RMSOS analysis

Rights: right to actively participate, take action and make a difference, all in a safe environment.

Means: With the financial support, the project garnered all of the most important needs of the participants were met in order to create a more diverse and productive group.

Space: The physical space for the project is the youth centre. The space where the participants are involved in the decision-making is in the process of creating and implementing the 10 projects.

Opportunity: opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction for youths from rural areas, the opportunity to make their projects with their initiatives, and get involved in the field of youth work.

Support: support from the funding organisation, the organisers and the mentors of each group.

YOUTH CENTER KVARTALS

Multifunctional youth initiative centre "Kvartals" (April 2023) provides space and all facilities for people to express themselves, utilise a lot of things which provides space where they can broaden their skills and mind, play various kinds of sports, and concentrate on who they want to become.

Coordinator: the Latvian Government in the figure of Maria (the head of the youth centre)

Target Group: Youths from rural areas and towns aged 13-19.

Aim: To get the youth to gather information about the things that they want in the region. To share visual information on the wall (digitally) about the possibilities for the youngsters in the region.

Results: Youngsters found out a lot of information about the possibilities around them and connected with other youngsters in the region.

Impact: Politicians were moved by the youngsters and saw the needs and wants.

Website: www.kvartals.lv - <https://failiem.lv/u/z24n9r4kkj>

KAMAVOR.ORG

Kamavor.org (kamavor=volunteers) (July 2023 - ongoing), through this website, youngsters not only join and create their own certificates for what they have already done, which will take an opportunity to apply for various volunteering and job positions. They will have more opportunities after having more certificates where those certificates are needed and will be a good advantage for their CV.

Coordinator: Federation of Youth Clubs of Armenia (NGO)

Target Group: Everyone, but specifically for people from rural areas.

Aim: To provide the opportunity to create and download their own certificates after participating in projects.

Impact: People have the opportunity to find volunteer positions and jobs using their specialised and certified skills.

Website: www.kamavor.org.

RMSOS analysis

Rights: Everyone can participate.

Means: the tool is really good, but is only available online. It could be more inclusive by providing an office for people who don't have technology or an internet connection.

Space: the youth population is not sufficiently involved in the decision-making process.

Opportunity: the certification doesn't guarantee a job, but it's still a plus.

Probably, people who aren't already involved in volunteering don't know about these types of tools.

THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

Theatre of the oppressed is a broad area of action that presents methods of social theatre. It can be used to signal social exclusion or oppressive situations in different communities. Here, we focus on forum theatre, although the domain contains more methods like image theatre, invisible theatre, the rainbow of desires and others.

Forum theatre:

It presents a clearly defined situation of oppression, when people who are threatened by social exclusion become victims and nobody reacts.

Characters:

Usually, a forum theatre play is created and performed by volunteers who are not professional actors. They identify the oppression situation from their communities and put it on stage by using improvisation to create the lines.

In this case, we need to have representative characters for the real-life situation to create a play. At least five characters are needed.

- **The oppressed (the victim):** a person who struggles for various reasons but doesn't have the power to stand up for themselves (a young person from a rural area in a big city, a young person from a low-income family, LGBTQ+ person, Roma and others);
- **The oppressor (the aggressor):** the person who causes the problem and affects the oppressed's life. This person has a lot of power and negative influence on everybody;
- **The neutral-positive (the oppressed's ally):** this person doesn't have the power or the courage to intervene and change the situation
- **The neutral-negative (the oppressor's ally):** this person supports the aggressor, but doesn't have much personality
- **The totally neutral (absolute):** the bystander represents the society and people who witness an aggression or oppression situation, but don't react.

These characters are created according to reality. What they do and say on stage will have to motivate the public to find a solution for the problem. In the second part of the show, the public can substitute the characters (but not the oppressor's one) to simulate a different (and better) situation.