

# Youth Leaders Empowerment

TRAINING METHODOLOGY



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Authors of the training methodology: Katja Kolenc, M.A., Samanta Hadžić Žavski, Helmut Kronika, Lachezar Afrikanov, Yonko Bushnyashki, Demian Burgenik, Frédérique te Dorsthorst – de Muij and Martijn Meima

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# Introduction

The objective of the publication is to support youth workers in providing empowerment training to current and future youth leaders. Youth workers using current methodology will have access to two strands of know-how:

- Theoretical (informational): the methodology provides a synthesis of several recent concepts in the field of leadership development and summary of the findings of partnership research in Slovenia, Bulgaria, Austria and Netherlands.
- Practical (experiential): following each theoretical part, there are practical activities that can be implemented in training or used separately as support activities to other trainings.

The methodology is interlinked with one other key outcome of the work delivered by APEL consortium, more specifically the YOCO cards. These cards are an interactive instrument for engaging youth leaders in deep self-reflection on their leadership journey, strategy setting and goals. In some of the practical activities mentioned, youth workers will find ideas for hands-on processes using the YOCO cards. The cards are available for download from the APEL project's website.

In the process of designing the methodology's content a series of meetings was conducted with youth workers and youth leaders in the countries of our partnership (Austria, Bulgaria, Slovenia and the Netherlands). The aim of these activities was to understand the profile of the modern youth leader and the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes underpinning this profile as well as to provide youth workers with concrete activities that are addressing the enhancement of key youth leadership qualities.

The list of key youth leadership qualities (Chapter: "Key Youth Leadership Qualities") can be used by youth leaders to self-evaluate their strengths and map their learning goals, and by youth workers to design their training offer specifically for this target group. The list of methodological tips and tricks (Chapter: "Tips and Tricks for Trainers") can be used as a checklist of youth workers, when planning and implementing their planned activities with youth leaders.

# 2

## Theoretical background and activities

On the following pages you will find seven main chapters addressing different topics, such as: Empowering Youth Leadership, Fostering Self-Awareness, Fostering Systems Awareness, Enhancing Active Listening, Nurturing Creative Experimentation, Boosting Proactivity and Structuring Dialogue with Policy-Makers. Each of the subchapters is designed to provide a short theoretical overview of the topic in the beginning, followed by concrete practical activities to be implemented in training. Each of the activities is written in the same format with the aim of making the activity user-friendly and concrete with instructions on its implementation.

For youth workers it is of a value, that each activity description provides a list of competencies that the activity is addressing. Moreover, the activities descriptions provide information on concrete goals of the activity, conditions to be met for a successful implementation, estimated time of the activity, concrete steps of the implementation process as well as risk and recommendations for trainers and resources for further reading.

We propose that a youth leader first does the self-evaluation based on the List of “Key Youth Leadership Qualities”, which can be found in the manual on page 43. Based on the self-evaluation the youth leader together with the youth worker identify those competencies that would need improvement and implement activities that are addressing those specific competencies. After the implementation of activities, we also propose to go back to the List of “Key Youth Leadership Qualities” and re-assess again, giving the young leader the option to see if any learning progress and impact was achieved.

## 2.1. Empowering Youth Leadership

Empowerment is defined in the context of youth leaders as fostering active youth participation in dialogue processes with policy makers on youth-relevant issues. By applying the knowledge presented in this methodology, youth workers will contribute to enhancing youth leaders' capacity to proactive engagement of young people in policy development processes.

The organizations behind current publication would like to encourage a shift from the traditional model of strategic decision making, in which adult policy-makers hold the initiative of formulating, shaping and implementing the idea for a given important policy measure. We would like to encourage youth leaders and youth organizations to be more active in initiating and conducting policy-driving initiatives themselves.

We envision that a youth leader should be proactive and initiate dialogue with policy-makers, not wait to be invited. We see the leader as a mediator, bridge between the voices of young people and the political agendas. Fostering leadership skills is important, but it is further important to foster the appropriate leadership mind-set. The youth leader is an inspiration. The youth leader is a good youth representative who knows what it is to represent the interests of the community, to speak on behalf of the community, to respect and advocate for community decisions, even if he did not vote in favour, for example.



## 2.2. Fostering Self Awareness

One of the important competencies of an excellent leader is self-awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to reflect and learn. A leader who is self-aware has a wider objective idea and image of himself. He can observe himself and reflect upon his actions, thoughts and beliefs.

Different research papers conclude that self-awareness helps to:

- Become more proactive, boost acceptance and encourage positive self-development (Sutton, 2016);
- See things from different perspectives, practice self-control, work creatively and productively and experience pride in oneself and one's work as well as general self-esteem (Silvia & O'Brien, 2004);
- Make better decisions (Ridley, Schutz, Glanz, & Weinstein, 1992);
- Communicate better and enhance self-confidence and job-related wellbeing (Sutton, Williams, & Allinson, 2015).

According to Tasha Eurich (2018) at the Harvard Business Review, self-awareness can be divided into two categories or types: internal self-awareness and external self-awareness. Internal self-awareness is about how well we see ourselves and our strengths, weaknesses, values, etc., while external self-awareness is understanding how others view us with those same factors (Eurich, 2018).





To become more self-aware a leader should be able to take a pause, distance himself from the day-to-day routines and reflect. In these reflections there are different aspects a current or prospective youth leader could focus on to become more self-aware. We can refer to this process as self-reflection on three layers (Eurich, 2018).



- **Layer 1:** Leadership qualities. Every empowered leader has a set of leader qualities that supports him or her in manifesting one's leadership. By reflecting on these qualities one is able to become aware of the qualities one already has and at the same time can formulate an intention to further development of others in order to grow as a youth leader. As mentioned in the previous chapter, we have compiled a list of youth leadership qualities that can be used to enable the described self-awareness process (see, Chapter: "List of Key Youth Leadership Qualities) (Eurich, 2018).
- **Layer 2:** Emotions, thoughts and assumptions, which are components of the results leaders achieve. Exploring one's current being makes one become aware of how and when emotions, thoughts and assumptions influence one's behaviour and therefore the outcome of a situation. Pausing during a situation or conversation or reflecting afterwards on these influencers helps to unravel the knot some situations can bring (Eurich, 2018).
- **Layer 3:** Deep dive. The third layer to explore on becoming more self-aware is the archetypal or metaphorical layer of the inner self. Every situation contains archetypal or metaphorical information that even without realizing it, influences us in the things we do or say. Archetypes connect us to a deep layer of knowing and feeling within ourselves, but also towards others. There are thousands of archetypes and the good news is that they are all already active within us. We 'only' have to recognize them when they are dominant in a situation or when we need them to be dominant in a certain situation. Getting to know some of the leadership archetypes and understanding in which direction they support you is an extra boost in empowering the youth leader. In the YoCo cards mentioned above, there is a special blue subset of cards with some of the main archetypes that can help leaders in this more deeper self-reflection journey (Eurich, 2018).



There are three key areas of activities that you can embed in your trainings that foster self-awareness of youth leaders: *Observing; Reflecting and Changing* (Eurich, 2018).

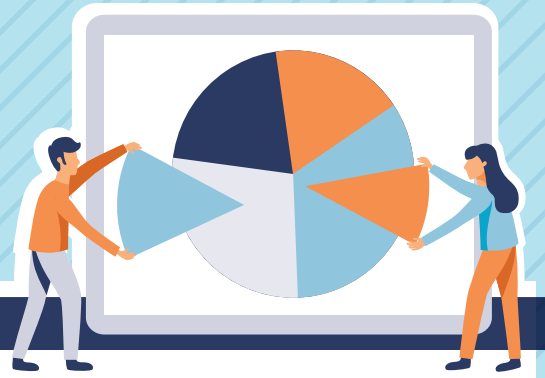
**Observing activities** all relate to becoming aware of oneself. Teaching the youth leaders to take a moment to stand still is an attitude of big importance nowadays. In our day-to-day lives, there is not so much time to stop and stand still. It requires a dedicated action to plan time for self-awareness to be able to observe the context where we are and the actions we make. Self-awareness starts with just observing without wanting to change or judge anything. Mindfulness techniques are a very helpful first step in this process. Furthermore, when inviting learners to join observing activities you can encourage them to take a different position, so they look at themselves from a different angle to become the observer of their own thoughts, emotions and feelings in their bodies (Eurich, 2018).

**Reflecting activities** focus on creating meaning on what you observed. You can train this by offering the youth leader's questions that they can ask in order to reflect on what they observe. These questions are intended to help the youth leader to find the triggers, acknowledge their own role, recognize patterns and create more space for other perspectives. It is important in this phase to focus on the 'relations', 'contexts and 'results' and less on which actions should be done. This supports the youth leaders to take a deeper dive in their self-awareness and helps them to break patterns that hold them back for a long time.

By doing so, one avoids that the youth leader keeps on doing what he or she always has done. The changing activities help youth leaders to explore new ways of doing things, create new beliefs and install feedback loops in their lives for continuous learning (Eurich, 2018).



## 2.2.1. Activity – Self-reflection



### Name of the Activity

Self-reflection

### Addressing competencies



Fostering self-awareness



Leadership skills



Active listening



Asking questions

### Goals of the activity

To encourage self-reflection.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

- Room with a table and enough chairs;
- YOCO cards or any other deck of coaching cards;
- 2 persons (youth worker + youth leader).

### Timeline

15 - 45 minutes.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Think of a concrete situation you were in recently
2. Pick out three cards of the leadership deck (yellow), the emotion deck (red) and the finding your direction deck (blue). Pick out those cards, which were, in your point of view, relevant in that situation.
3. Put the nine cards on the table.
4. Start to reflect on the questions on the blue cards. What do they tell you?
5. From there go to the emotions and thoughts. Were they helpful and supportive, or appeared to be pitfalls?
6. End with the leadership qualities. Every quality has a light side and a dark side. Reflect on how these qualities empowered your leadership skills or disempowered them.

Variations:

7. Instead of a situation, you can also focus on a concrete topic. For example: "How am I preparing for an appointment with a policy-maker?" Again, invite the learner to pick cards and reflect on their influence in finding a reply to the questions.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

-

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

Support and encourage the learner to deepen his/her reflections and not to be satisfied too easily with the first answers and insights that come up in their minds. Stay with them through active listening and ask open questions. Either keep on asking questions or you can leave space to the learner to have an autonomous self-reflection process by only giving initial instructions.

## 2.2.2. Activity – Becoming aware of yourself



### Name of the Activity

Becoming aware of yourself

### Addressing competencies



Active listening to  
your inner voices



Fostering self-awareness

### Goals of the activity

To guide the youth leader in observing him or herself. This activity is all about observing without judging yourself. It is about observing, recognizing and acknowledging the different parts of yourself.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

- YOCO cards (blue cards), or any other deck of coaching cards that have representations of inner parts, like archetype decks, inner child cards, etc.;
- room with a table and two chairs;
- notebook + pen;
- pencils or markers.

### Timeline

15 - 30 minutes every day for at least 7 days in a row.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Ask the youth leaders to observe during the day their inner voices. What are they saying? What are they thinking about others? What reactions do they have in their head? What are their sensations in their body?
2. Ask them to sit down at the end of the day for at least 15 minutes and write down these inner voices. Let them focus on the most important or dominant ones. The ones that disturbed them or supported them at any moment.
3. After 7 days look together at their notes and see if you can recognize any patterns, clusters or a red thread in them. Write down these clusters or give them a same colour.
4. Let the youth leader choose those blue cards of the YOCO deck that represent these clusters of inner voices.
5. Ask questions about what in the selected cards relates to the clustered inner voices. Let the youth leader discover and explore their inner voices a bit more.
6. If the youth leader wants to he or she can reflect on the questions on the cards, but that is not necessary. It is all about discovering different parts of yourself.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

Myss, C. (2013): Archetypes. A beginner's guide to your inner-net. Hay House, Inc.

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

It is recommended that the trainers do this activity themselves first, before they accompany the youth leaders in exploring their clusters. Then they will recognize their own inner voices too, so there is less change that their own inner voices will interfere with the ones of the youth leaders.

## 2.2.3. Activity - Turn plan into actions



### Name of the Activity

Turn plan into actions

### Addressing competencies



Fostering self-awareness



Observing activities



Reflecting activities

### Goals of the activity

To empower a youth leader to take concrete actions.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

- YOCO cards or any other card deck;
- notebooks or paper;
- pens.

### Timeline

30 - 60 minutes (depending on the size of the project task).

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Let the youth leader think of a task or project that needs to be fulfilled.
2. Reflect on this project: focus on the actions taken or not taken.
3. Let the youth leader write down 3 - 5 insights/learning points that he/she takes from this task or project. These can be both strengths and weaknesses of the youth leader.
4. Take a total of 4 blind cards from the yellow and the blue decks of the YOCO cards. Choose intuitively how many from which deck. It does not have to be equal.
5. Choose 2 cards from the red deck.
6. Look at the list of learning points and look at the cards you have taken. Place one card on one point from your list that you think most suits for what reason so ever (some points might not have a card).
7. Have a look at the 2 red cards in your hand and talk about all the learning points from the perspective of the emotions.
8. Take your notebook or a white sheet of paper and answer the following questions for each of your learning points. Take the meaning for you from the chosen YOCO-cards into account:
  - What could you implement this time differently than what you did last time?
  - What is not yet done that you can try?
  - Who can you ask for support or help?
9. Now use the emotions on the 2 red cards to share what you expect the situation to be when you do things differently.
10. Take an extra card and share how you relate this emotion to the points on the list without a card.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

-

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

-

## 2.3. Fostering Systems awareness

We live and work in a more and more complex and changing world. To be a successful leader these days means that you need to be able to grasp the interconnectedness of everything. System awareness is the understanding how the parts fit into the whole and how they are connected and influencing each other. You cannot see an organization, policy area or citizen as a separate unit. They are all interconnected and interdependent parts that form a system. Every system is part of a larger system. Just like in a hologram, every part of the system consists of properties of the whole. This way you will be able to know about the whole by looking at one element of it and vice versa.

There are many different systems a person is part of. First, there is the family system you were born in. This is a system that you will always be part of, whether you like it or not. At the same time, you are part of a country system, a religious system, an ethnic system. Just by being born. Then there are systems you (more or less) choose to be part of like a sports club, school or work. All systems have their own dynamics, rules, norms and values.

Finding solutions from a systemic perspective means that a leader will not look for a quick fix, but that he/she will start searching for the root cause of the symptoms the organization is facing.

System awareness is the ability to look at situations, people and challenges as related to the whole system. Instead of seeing a separate issue or person, you see the interconnectedness and interdependencies. You sense the different layers and not only the facts, figures and observations that are on the surface. Finally, system awareness is about taking the world as it is through observing reality without judgment.



System awareness has 4 components that you can focus on in your trainings: *Knowing; Sensing; Asking; Doing.*

**Knowing** is about understanding the basic theory that underlies the systemic approach. The most important elements of the theory are: under- and over-current; the three consciences; the three systemic principles.

The world as we see it is what we call the overcurrent. This is the layer where we experience symptoms at the surface. These can be problems, or unwanted behaviour, but also success and positive results. Solutions in the overcurrent are mostly interventions in contents or procedures. Sometimes this is enough to solve the problem. Most of the time it is a bit more complicated. An intervention in the overcurrent does not always have the desired effect. A leader can recognize this when symptoms or problems keep coming back or after an intervention people pick up their old habits again. When faced with repetitive problems, a leader should be able to look at the root causes of a problem.

Interventions in the undercurrent always relate to the three systemic principles or life-giving forces that we mention below. If you take this systemic approach, a problem or symptom in the overcurrent is always a result of something in the undercurrent. This way you can see the problem as a solution of the system conscience to deal with unresolved issues in the system.

Bert Hellinger and Gunthard Weber have found out that there are three types of consciences influencing systems. Jan Jacob Stam (2018) has renamed them survival mechanisms because they are mechanisms that are focused on survival of the individual, the system and the whole:

1. The unit consciousness ensures the survival of the individual in a group. It works just like your sense of balance. You are continuously being told by your sense of balance to move a little to the right, a little to the front and so on. This works the same for being able to survive in a group. Each individual or part of a system is continuously sensing what he or she needs to do or not do to belong to the group. This is a conscious process. People can tell you what the 'rules' of the group are.
2. The system conscience ensures the survival of the system as a whole. This conscience works subconsciously and surpasses the boundaries of space and time. It is neither tangible, nor audible. It also transcends right and wrong and does not consider what or who is affected. It acts like a memory of the system. People can show a certain behaviour because the system conscience wants to express that someone is excluded in the system or that something in the past

should not be forgotten. There is no rational explanation for the behaviour of this person and when for example by coaching or therapy this person changes, someone else in the system will show the behaviour, until it is acknowledged. Leaders should be aware of this force in their organization.

3. The evolutionary conscience ensures the development of society as a whole. It reaches far beyond the other two consciences. It will create and destroy without judgment. It creates light and dark, good and evil, peace and war, crisis and prosperity. It is an impulse with a focus and direction that affects all systems. Leaders should be aware of this larger force that will always affect their organization.

Besides these survival mechanisms/consciences, there are three important systemic principles. Siets Bakker and Leanne Steeghs (2019) call them life-giving forces: *Inclusion; Order; Exchange*.

1. Systems want to be complete and include all parts of the system (inclusion). Everyone connected to a system is entitled to a position. Because systems do not behave linear nor circular, time and space have no influence. This means that persons and events from the past are also entitled a place. As soon as someone or something is being excluded by members of the system, the system conscience will create a way to express this. This will show through all kinds of symptoms in the day to day practice like sick leave, not enough money, tension between teams or someone who is not functioning.
2. Every system has a natural order. Families have a very clear order. There is the order of generations (children, parents, grandparents and so on) and the order of age. In other systems, there can be other orders like seniority, hierarchy, contribution to the product or service. Unlike families in organization you can change your position in the order. As soon as the order is disturbed by for example a child taking the position of a parent or a subordinate taking the place of his/her boss, there will be problems in the system. These problems or symptoms cannot always be easily connected to a disturbance in the order. Sometimes they occur at a different place in the system or they show up in a different form.
3. In order to survive a system needs to exchange with its environment. This exchange needs to be balanced. Giving and taking should be about the same volume over time. The balance will always be disturbed and in a healthy system, there will be actions to restore this balance by giving a bit more or by taking more. When the balance between giving and taking is too much to one side, the system becomes unstable and as a result, the system conscience will create something to balance it again. In the visible world, this shows up as a problem or issue, but actually, it is a solution of the system for the imbalance in exchange.



**Sensing** is a leadership quality that is often forgotten. Our society is focused on knowing and analysing, while sensing and observing without thinking is a very valuable asset to a leader. A large part of system awareness is about sensing. By sensing his/her inside and outside world, a leader will have access to a great amount of information that is not available to the mind.

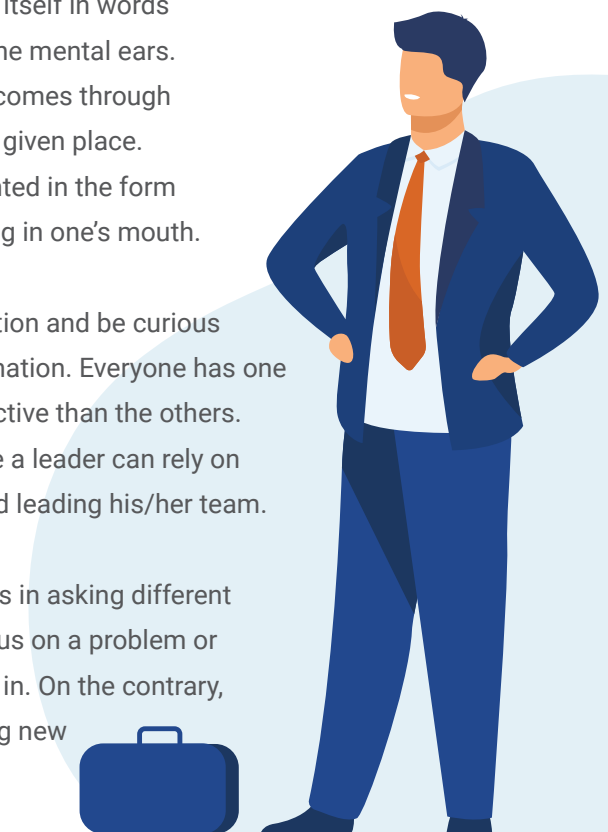
The perception of the body is especially good at picking up signals from the undercurrent (reality that surrounds it and holds it). A knot in your stomach, an ache in your toe, a shiver through your spine, a headache or tension in your chest, these are all signals from your body. They contain information and not only physical information about your health. To become more aware of one's body, a leader should start listening to its signals and signs.

A leader can also use intuition to raise one's system awareness. Intuition is the gateway to the undercurrent and provides the leader with valuable information. Intuition comes through six channels:

- **Vision:** this is information that presents itself in instant images that one can see with one's mental eye.
- **Knowing:** this is information that comes through the brain with instant knowledge.
- **Feeling:** this information comes through a sensation or feeling in the body.
- **Hearing:** this information presents itself in words or sounds that one can hear with the mental ears.
- **Smelling:** This is information that comes through a smell without actual smell at the given place.
- **Tasting:** This is information presented in the form of a taste without having something in one's mouth.

A leader can ask one's intuition a question and be curious to the way intuition presents the information. Everyone has one or two of the channels that are more active than the others. By finding out what channels are active a leader can rely on this information in taking decisions and leading his/her team.

An increased system awareness results in asking different questions. These questions do not focus on a problem or situation in order to analyse it or zoom in. On the contrary, they are designed to zoom out, allowing new possibilities to become visible.



By zooming out a leader can observe the connections that are not visible when you zoom in. Zooming out helps the leader to see the larger picture. It also allows leaders to see connections and interdependencies that supersede their own smaller system.

A leader can zoom out by including the larger system in one's thoughts and actions. For example, by looking at the history of one's team, and especially the history that has been forgotten or hidden, the leader might find a connection with a current problem. By including the future, the leader can use information about the effect in the future of a decision that has to be taken.

The notion of the three consciences and three systemic principles will help the leader to pose questions that reveal what has been hidden. The main principle of systemic questions is that you do not want to reach a goal or influence the other. The leader is truly exploring and is open for every answer. It is also important to listen with more than just one's ears and mind. By using body and intuition, a leader will pick up much more information from the answer than when he only uses one's ears to listen to the answer.

Siets Bakker (2019) has come up with several universal systemic questions:

- **Who or what is not seen?** This question refers to the life force of inclusion. A system wants to be complete. Symptoms in the overcurrent might be caused by people, situations or parts of the history that are not seen.
- **For whom or what is this a good solution?** This question is based on the premise that the symptoms visible at the surface are solutions that the system has come up with to complete itself.
- **To whom or what does this belong?** A common pattern in systems is that people take up responsibilities that are not theirs. They do this subconsciously. This question makes this pattern visible.

## 2.3.1. Activity - System sensing



### Name of the Activity

System sensing

### Addressing competencies



Fostering self-awareness

### Goals of the activity

To encourage self-reflection in a systemic perspective.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

- YOCO cards or any other deck of cards that triggers the below described process.

### Timeline

30 - 60 minutes.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Think of a concrete situation you were recently in.
2. Take the green cards of the YOCO deck (system cards).
3. Go through them one by one and focus on them considering the four components of system awareness: knowing, sensing, asking and doing.
4. Answer the following questions:
  - What is your mind and body telling you?
  - Who or what is not seen?
  - For whom or what is this a good solution?
  - To whom or what does this belong?

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

-

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

Sometimes a youth leader lingers in the chosen emotion. Support him/her to break the pattern if it is holding him/her back in the task or project.

## 2.3.2. Activity - Using your body



### Name of the Activity

Using your body

### Addressing competencies



System awareness

### Goals of the activity

To encourage the youth leader to be more aware of the concrete information your body is giving you.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

- Time and focus;
- Notebooks;
- Pens.

### Timeline

Several moments during the day for several days in a row.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Several times during the day check one's body using the following questions:
  - What is happening in your body?
  - Where exactly is the tension?
  - Where exactly is it calm?
  - What is different from before?

In the beginning, one should not try to understand or explain the signals. Just observe what is there and write it down.

2. Try following this observation phase to connect the observations to certain situations. For example, does the pain in the chest come during a meeting and go away afterwards? Is the pain connected to a person, or to what is being said?

Again in this stage without wanting to explain it! Just connect to the world around you. Write down what you noticed.

3. After practicing for several days check your notes. Do you see any patterns? Give a meaning to the signals. What is in this moment for me to reconsider and change in my behaviour?

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

-

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

Try to demonstrate and practice together the activity during training. Encourage youth leaders to practice regularly.

## 2.4. Enhancing Active Listening

All modern scholars in the field of leadership development agree and postulate that one of the key leadership skills is active listening. There are different frameworks defining the key ingredients of these important leadership capacity.

Among the influential models in the field are the 4-levels of listening, described by Otto Scharmer, who is one of the leading proponents of the concept that contemporary leaders should move one-step forward in their evolution and learn how to sense the emerging trends and events to unfold.

Scharmer's classification of the different types of active listening (Scharmer, 2018) can be summarized as follows:

- **Level 1 – Downloading.** This is our habitual and daily listening. It does not require concentration or additional efforts. It is based on our past experience and knowledge on the matter that is being discussed.
- **Level 2 – Factual listening.** This type of listening is observed when we try to notice new, unexpected and interesting elements in the speech of the other person. It can also be called listening with focus on different opinions and ideas. In order for this listening to be activated, the leader should be aware of one's mental models. In the previous chapters, we have emphasized on the importance of raising one's self- and systems- awareness. Expanding one's awareness helps activating this type of listening.
- **Level 3 – Empathic listening.** This type of listening is also called activating the power of the heart. It goes beyond spotting differences in opinions and moving forward to placing oneself in the other person's shoes. In order to activate this type of listening, the first step is to start intentionally searching for elements and characteristics in the other person that rekindle the energy of our positive appreciation.
- **Level 4 – Generative listening.** There is no concrete recipe, how to activate this type of listening. It calls for listening beyond words and emotions in the world of free associations and unforced registering of deeper images, forms and sensations. It is linked with leader's intuition, capability to be present here, and now, not being distracted by past or future aspects of being.

Knowing the 4-levels of listening provides a useful framework of future leadership training and other support measures. They can be used both for ongoing self-evaluation and as topics for separate training modules (Scharmer, 2018).



## 2.4.1. Activity - The sounds around you



### Name of the Activity

The Sounds Around You

### Addressing competencies



Listening



Observation skills



Focus

### Goals of the activity

The current activity can be implemented individually by every youth leader as part of homework assignments and as part of opening training activities. In the activity, you invite youth leaders to engage in a non-judgmental observation exercise with focus on the surrounding sounds. By fostering youth leaders' ability to connect with different sounds, you lay the foundation for enhancing their active listening.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

The activity can be performed in different settings (indoors and outdoors). It would be recommended to practice it regularly every day. Since it is envisaged as a homework assignment, the trainer can provide a short written instruction with the below described steps.

### Timeline

Up to 5 minutes.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Close your eyes, if you feel comfortable to do it.
2. Start breathing gently. Choose your own style of doing it.
3. For a while check your body by focusing on different parts (e.g., shoulders, stomach, arms, legs, toes).
4. Now, try to focus on a sound that is very far away from you. This can be a car in the street. Bird singing on a tree. Construction work from the other side of the street. Try to focus on this sound only.
5. Now, try to come back, spotting sounds that are between the first sound and yourself.
6. Now, try to focus only of sounds in your body. For example: your breathing, heart rhythm, etc.
7. When you are ready open your eyes. Breathe in, breathe out.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

This activity can be considered part of the category of mindfulness practices. There are numerous open source materials in this field online.

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

Try to demonstrate and practice together the activity during training. Encourage youth leaders to practice regularly. Encourage them to try practicing in different settings.

## 2.4.2. Activity - Listen in silence



### Name of the Activity

Listen in silence

### Addressing competencies



Empathy



Listening



Communi-  
cation



Sensitivity

### Goals of the activity

This activity aims to nurture active listening and empathy.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

For this activity, you can use the YOCO cards, product of the APEL project. You can use any type of metaphoric/ photo cards, you have as trainer in your practice, as well. The training room should be arranged in such a way, so that participants can sit comfortably in pairs with minimum outside noise. You would also need a table to display the cards on.

### Timeline

Up to 15 minutes.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Invite each youth leader to choose a card.
2. Split youth leaders in pairs and invite them to share for 3 minutes their reflections on their card. While one youth leader is sharing the other should be listening with highest attention without the opportunity to react in any way (verbally or non-verbally). This activity can be repeated several times with different partners.
3. Following work in pairs invite youth leaders to have a reflection round in one group, exploring how this exercise has worked for them and what the main learning are.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

You can find the YOCO cards available for free download on APEL project's website: <https://www.apel-project.eu/>

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

You can choose topics for sharing instead of using cards or you can use open questions that stimulate reflections, e.g. What do you want from your leadership journey? What is the change that you would like to see in the world? Some youth leaders might not feel comfortable to talk in a group format. It would be recommended to keep it an open and natural process and not require sharing from each participant in the final reflection round.

## 2.4.3. Activity - Facts, emotions, associations



### Name of the Activity

Fact, Emotions, Associations

### Addressing competencies



Active listening



Observation



Focus

### Goals of the activity

The aim of this activity is to support youth leaders understand the different layers of active listening and integrate them.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

You need to arrange the room (virtual or offline) in such a way that every participant can observe and listen to the speaker clearly. You can provide youth leaders with writing materials to put down their observations. In online format, just instruct them to put down notes.

### Timeline

Up to 30 minutes.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. This is an exercise composed of 3 rounds: Round 1 – Listening for facts; Round 2 – Listening for emotions; Round 3 – Listening for associations.
2. As a facilitator you enter the role of a speaker, who is sharing an interesting and current story that is on your mind. You explain to youth leaders that while you are telling the story they will pass through different modes of listening, as the titles of the rounds suggest.
3. In the first 3 minutes of the story, invite them to write down the main facts they notice in the story. Following, conduct a short reflection session to check which facts have been spotted.
4. In the second round of 3 minutes invite youth leaders to focus on mapping all emotions coming from the story and the speaker. Following, conduct a reflection session to check which emotions have been sensed.
5. In the last 3 minutes of the story, invite youth leaders to try listen beyond facts and emotions and see what free associations as words, images, and body sensations are coming to the surface. Encourage them to select one such association that they think is important to share with the speaker. Following, conduct a reflection session to map what associations have emerged.
6. In the final closing words of the activity, invite them to experiment with the different listening modes in their daily life as leaders.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

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### Risks and recommendations for trainers

You can experiment with longer duration of the different rounds to make it more challenging for youth leaders. You can also invite some of the youth leaders to take the role of the speaker. Furthermore, you can choose a topic to talk about, which is linked to the topic of youth leadership. This will add value to the overall learning process.



## 2.5. Nurturing Creative Experimentation

Creative experimentation is both a state of mind and a methodology for solution generation and implementation. It is linked to two distinct terms – “creativity” and “experimentation”. Creativity stands for the ability to see a certain challenge from different angles and put forward non-standard, alternative ideas for solving it. It is dependent on leader’s level of awareness and active listening/observation skills. Experimentation stands for embracing the principle of learning and growing by doing. Experimentation can be referred to as a continuous process of trying out different solutions, until the most appropriate one has been identified. It is dependent on leader’s mind-set and understanding of mistakes made. The experimentation attitude brings positive meaning to failures, as sources of valuable information for improvement.

One of the methodologies to nurture creative experimentation is design thinking. This methodology evolved from a specific laboratory activity linked to invention of goods for the economy into a global movement for human-centred innovations. There are wide range of variations of its applications and different schools putting emphasis on diverse aspects (e.g., service design, user experience, and education), but in essence, the following universal definition applied to all:

*“...human-centred and based on understanding the needs and motivations of people. It is optimistic; it believes that there is always a solution to be found. Design Thinking is based on an iterative process, accepting uncertainty and failure. Trying again after failing is an inherent part of the process. Design Thinking promotes a collaborative approach. It brings people with different backgrounds, knowledge and expertise together...”*  
(Tschimmel, Loyens, Soares, & Oraviita, 2017).

Working through design thinking with youth leaders will help them embrace the principles listed in the definition in their daily efforts to change the status quo. In the context of education, there is a simplified version of design thinking methodology, which is called Design for Change, developed by Kiran Bir Sethi. The methodology was initially developed to be applied at school education level, but its concise format makes it applicable for other fields such as non-formal education and youth work.

In Design for Change, there are four distinct phases through which learner's pass, which can be summarized as follows:

- **Feel the challenge:** learners are split in teams and asked to identify a challenge they would like to work on with high dedication. In defining the challenge, learners are invited to engage in field interviews with representatives of groups that are affected by the problem explored or have any link to this problem.
- **Imagine the solution:** learners are invited to enter into a creative brainstorming of possible solutions of the problem identified. Initially, they are asked to list extravagant and bold solutions. Eventually, other criteria for selecting a solution to work on are introduced such as viability and desirability by the potential users. In this phase, again, participants are asked to check their ideas with all key target groups.
- **Develop the solution:** learners work on their solutions by developing prototypes. In training context, these prototypes can be visualized through different forms (e.g., sketches, 3d sculptures from art materials, storyboards, etc.). These visualizations are used to conduct interviews with potential users/target groups of the solution to check whether they are in line with users' preferences. Following user's feedback, learners engage in implementation of their ideas.
- **Share your success:** learners summarize all their learnings from the process and engage in communication of their achievements through different means.



## 2.5.1. Activity – Creative vision



### Name of the Activity

Creative vision

### Addressing competencies



Creative thinking



Team-work



Ideation



Strategic thinking

### Goals of the activity

The aim of this activity is to support youth leaders visualise the positive change they would like to achieve. In the process, they enhance their creativity and awareness of the potential, which collective intelligence can bring into the work process.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

You can use YOCO cards, developed by APEL project or any similar tool (metaphoric/photo cards). The room should be arranged in such a way that participants can stand around a table and work on their picture of the vision, built out of cards.

### Timeline

Up to 60 minutes.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Invite youth leaders to choose a challenge they would like to work on. Focus their attention on building a common vision of their desired future with regard to solving the challenge (What do you want to achieve? What is the dream?).
2. Spread the YOCO cards (or some other cards) on the working table with their image side faced up.
3. Ask each youth leader, while thinking of the desired future, to pick one card.
4. Invite youth leaders to use their cards and build a "picture"/vision of the future they would aspire for.
5. Ask representative of the group to present the outcome of their work and conduct a final reflection round.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

YOCO cards can be downloaded from APEL project's website: <https://www.apel-project.eu/>

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

You can ask participants to create their own cards or artistic visualisations of their ideas and try to create a picture out of these items. Some youth leaders might not be willing to actively contribute to this activity. Try to be present around and in the process, and gently encourage them to engage.

## 2.5.2. Activity – Empathy map



### Name of the Activity

Empathy Map

### Addressing competencies



Empathy



Observation



Active listening



Creativity and teamwork

### Goals of the activity

The aim of using empathy map is to enable youth leaders to synthesise the information they have collected about the groups they are interacting with and develop a deeper understanding of these groups' mind-sets.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

You can provide participants with a randomly selected empathy map template freely available online. You can also ask youth leaders to create their own map, introducing the following elements:

- Person's characteristics: name, age, portrait photo (drawing);
- Daily routine. How does a normal day of this person look like?
- Thoughts and feelings about the problem at hand. What are his/her main thoughts and feelings about the problem?
- Key quotes (sayings). What are his/her usual phrases and style of talking?

The training room should allow for hanging the different empathy maps on the walls.

### Timeline

Up to 120 minutes.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Invite youth leaders to discuss in small groups (up to 5 persons in a group), what is their current target group of interest. For example, local authority they would like to influence. Ask them to identify one typical representative of this target group. For example, mayor, head of youth department, etc.
2. Provide them with a template of an empathy map or ask them to search for a template online. Let them some time to look at the main sections to be completed in the map. Then, ask if there are any immediate questions to be addressed.
3. Invite youth leaders to discuss what information they already have about their persona and write it on the empathy map. Then, encourage them to make a research of that person. Let them be creative on the ways they will use to find this information. Youth leaders add the new information to the empathy map.
4. Each group presents in front of the other groups the completed empathy map. The empathy maps are hung on the walls, so that links among them can be easily established and the overall awareness and empathy of the whole group raised.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

There are different templates of empathy map available online. You can check these and create your own version.

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

Always keep the focus of youth leaders on understanding that when we develop our deep curiosity even for a target group that we are sceptical about, we can expand our perspective and see hidden opportunities for potential collaboration and better solutions. If there are youth leaders, who demonstrate artistic skills, you can encourage them to draw, sing and theatre play the person they are depicting instead of writing.

## 2.5.3. Activity – Creative brainstorming



### Name of the Activity

Creative Brainstorming

### Addressing competencies



Creativity



Problem solving



Collaboration



Active listening

### Goals of the activity

In this activity space for creativity without resistance and judgement is created. The activity has been inspired by Shirzad Chamine and his book on positive intelligence. In his training programme on positive intelligence, Shirzad introduces the 10% rule of the innovator. According to this rule, in order to embrace the spirit of innovation you need to change your mind-set and accept that even in the craziest idea you hear there is at least 10% from this idea that has potential for a great solution.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

No special materials are required. You can provide participants with writing materials, including sticky notes to put down their ideas. The best setting of the room is organizing the chairs in a circle.

### Timeline

Up to 60 minutes.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. The exercise can be used when your group is in a stage of ideating possible solutions.
2. Invite participants to sit in a circle. Ask participants to present their craziest ideas that come to their minds. Ask one of them to start sharing (For example: "I think we can change mayor's view on this issue through organizing a naked parade on the main square of our city").
3. Ask the other participants, using the 10% rule to continue upgrading on elements of this idea. (For example, "Great idea. What I like about it that we need to conduct an attractive activity in the centre of the city, so that more people are engaged. What about inviting circus artists?")
4. Encourage youth leaders to continue their creative brainstorming in the described model until they reach a complete solution.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

As mentioned, the current exercise has been inspired by the concept of positive intelligence. More information can be found here: <https://www.positiveintelligence.com/resources/>

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

This is a highly positive activity. No risks can be identified. It would be recommended before engaging participants in the brainstorming process explained above, to make a short demo with a volunteer from the group.

## 2.6. Boosting Proactivity

Leaders have or develop certain personality traits that make them stand out as such. Very often proactivity is counted as one important trait that leaders usually display. Proactive personalities are usually self-initiative, change-oriented with a focus on future developments (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). Leaders anticipate challenges in their environment and at the same time they are open for new opportunities. Hence, leaders can also be described as being goal-oriented or goal striving. In order to achieve set goals, leaders observe and reflect about what they can do to improve the current situation (Wu & Wang, 2011). They envision or anticipate future scenarios and make plans as to how best achieve their goals. Further, it is also characteristic for proactive leaders to reflect and evaluate the outcomes of goals. This way leader can check whether the applied strategies for achieving a goal is efficient enough. Proactive leaders seek to initiate dialogue with the people they represent and with policy makers alike. It is important that a proactive leader speaks up for the represented community and acts without being assigned to do so. This is why leaders are very often bridging the gap between two or more parties, taking on a mediator role.

The term “proactivity” can be described as action-oriented behaviour. Acting in a proactive manner means to be able to anticipate possible or probable challenges before they occur. When acting proactively, specific actions are taken, in order to produce a certain or a desired outcome. It can therefore be described as self-motivated, change as well as goal-oriented behaviour (Wu & Wang, 2011).

Proactivity is very often contrasted with reactivity. Reactive behaviour is commonly known as an immediate reaction to an unanticipated event only after it has occurred (Wu & Wang, 2002). Usually, reactive behaviour is not goal-driven or goal-oriented and can therefore be regarded as rather spontaneous. Proactive behaviour on the other hand arises from a more active mind-set, as proactive people reflect and think about how they could bring about change to improve the current situation. Proactivity comprises an array of character traits or properties that are very often associated with leadership and how leaders are being perceived.

In order to enhance proactivity of youth leaders, it is necessary to determine what exactly matters to youth leaders and youth in general. What are youth leaders’ common grounds? Which areas of interests do they have? Youth workers have to find a point of contact that is appealing for youth leaders.

One approach to connect with youth leaders is reflecting on their (educational) biography (Dausien / Rothe / Schwendowius, 2016). By reflecting on their own experiences and by identifying important transitional stages and most importantly how they dealt with certain situations, awareness of youth leaders' actions and reactions can be raised. Biographical work offers the possibility to look at one's own decisions made retrospectively, analysing experiences and the reactions thereto. This reflective process entails looking at one's own behaviour from a certain angle. It allows the individual (youth leader) to check, whether the reaction to important events was more of a reactive or more of a proactive nature.

By doing biographical work with youth leaders, proactive behavioural strategies can be developed and enhanced. This process also fosters self-determination and empowerment. It has to be made transparent to youth leaders that they are in charge of their own decisions. Biographical work has the potential to demonstrate to youth leaders that they can have a say in things (self-initiated behaviour) if they choose to do so.



## 2.6.1. Activity – Life Path



### Name of the Activity

Life path

### Addressing competencies



Boosting proactivity

### Goals of the activity

To exchange experiences and to get insights of the Path of Life that are useful for the proactivity of the youth leader(s).

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

- Paper (A3) and pencils in different colours.
- Minimum group of 3 persons, if you do this activity in a bigger group you need a space where the group can be splitted up easily in smaller groups of 3.
- Instruction of the individual assignment.
- An example of a Path of Life, for example of the youth worker him/herself can be helpful for the youth leaders.

### Timeline

30 - 40 minutes

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. Explain the activity; Important is to emphasize that the youth leaders focus on those situations in their lives when and where they felt in power and/ or when and where they were most challenged. What is their motivation to do or do not do the things they did in their lives from birth up until now? What have they learned (positively and negatively) from their life experiences?
2. Assignment individually (max 10 minutes):
  - Create your own path of life by drawing a straight line with a marking point left on the paper with the year and date of birth and right a marking point with the year and date of today.
  - Start left and draw your own design of your life plan representing your individual life paths, naming the different routes and places like it is a road map. The plan should follow your life's journey with all ramifications. There might be broad roads, narrow alleys and even dead end roads.
  - Mark important moments in your life both positive and negative by creating marking points (tops) above the straight line and marking points under the line (descends).
  - Describe in keywords those important moments.
  - Reflect in short on the total picture of your life. What does the Path of Life tell you?
  - Optional: What are your dreams and wishes for the future?

The pictorial representation of the personal history shows which ways had led to the very point they are right now and helps to reflect what were the most important situations and challenges in their journey of life. What was helpful and what was holding them back in their progress.





### Concrete steps for the implementation

3. Make groups of three people and everybody presents their pictorial representation to the others. The others are only allowed to ask questions of understanding. No discussion, no interpretations, and judgements of advices what could or should have been done! Make explicit to the groups that everybody is entitled to not answer a question.
- 4a. Optional: Share plenary insights that participants got from sharing their Path of Life with others and from the questions, they got.
- 4b. Optional/ additional: the participants can be asked to create a route beyond the status quo of today, leading to aims and dreams they want to achieve in the future.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

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### Risks and recommendations for trainers

When the youth leaders work in the small group as a facilitator be aware of the safety of every participant. In paths of Life, there can become an exceptional focus on painful moments in the life of a youth leader, surely with youth leaders who find it difficult to talk about their experiences anyway. Monitor a safe climate for every participant.

## 2.7. Structuring Dialogue with Policy-Makers

Youth work has a long history in EU with diverse tradition from country to country. Youth work has contributed to raising the voice of young people and creating strong youth driven communities with modern visions for the future of Europe. Among the main initiatives that empower youth leadership is the structured dialogue to be elaborated in current chapter of the manual.

**Structured dialogue** is a tool to ensure that the position of young people is taken into account when defining youth policy. To accomplish this, a structured dialogue joins young people and policy makers across different levels (local, regional, national, international) to discuss and involve youth policy together (Sveinsdóttir, 2017). The main aim of the structured dialogue is to create opportunities for youth that they can acquaint themselves with challenges, form their own opinions and develop their own propositions or solutions on tackling said challenges. Such dialogue can be implemented on local, regional, national or international level. One of the main outputs of the structured dialogue is the opportunity for the youth to present and co-create propositions with policy-makers. Activities that can be undertaken within the structured dialogue are versatile and should be chosen appropriately and in accordance with the topic and the interest of the youth community represented. Such activities can take the form of seminars, assemblies, debates, discussions (Sveinsdóttir, 2017).

Structured dialogue enables young persons to become inventive in their daily life and to speak out on their needs, interests and issues. The key focus of the structured dialogue is a learning process itself.

An indicative structure of a dialogue activity that you can use, when planning such activity can include:

- Introduction: The facilitator should introduce him/ herself, the participants and the key topic that will be talked about in the dialogue.
- Ground rules: The ground rules should be either introduced or put together with the participants.
- Icebreakers: The beginning of dialogue can feel uncomfortable so it is a good practice to start with an icebreaker activity. This will loosen the atmosphere and start building trust and relationships among participants as well as between the participants, facilitator or any outside guests.

- Core of the dialogue: Once trust is built and participants have warmed up, you can move into the key issues that participants should be dialoguing about. As a facilitator, you must have a good overview and feeling about the balance between the structure and the time and space to adjust and improvise depending on the current situation and the involvement of the participants in each stage. You might want to break things up with alternative individual work within some sessions of the dialogue or smaller group and wider group activities. This is also depending on the group dynamics and the flow of the session itself.
- Reflection: Dialogue should always end with an opportunity to reflect, so make sure you always leave time for it. This can be very difficult as it is often only in the last few minutes and you are in fear of running out of time or patience and attention span of the participants. You should ask a couple of reflective questions such as:
  - What was the AHA moment of today?
  - What is one thing that surprised you today?
  - Identify one thing you heard that you were not expecting to hear.
- Wrap-up and closing remarks: It is important to end on a positive note. Finish by thanking your participants and adding a few closing remarks on what went well in the dialogue (Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 2017).



## 2.7.1. Activity – Thinking hats



### Name of the Activity

Thinking hats

### Addressing competencies



Decision Making



Problem solving



Adaptability



Critical thinking

### Goals of the activity

It is impossible to be creative, emotional, objective and logical all at the same time. The Thinking hats activity allows you to focus on your thought process. By 'wearing' a specific coloured hat, you focus your thoughts on that specific mode of thinking.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

Materials / conditions to meet for implementation Blank poster or piece of paper on which the participants can write their solutions for each hat or YOCO cards.

### Timeline

60 minutes (10 minutes – presentation of the activity and each hat; 10 minutes – time for every group to collect and write down their solutions; 30 minutes – 5 minutes presentation for each team; 10 minutes – evaluation and group discussion.)

### Concrete steps for the implementation

As a facilitator of a structured dialogue, the current activity might support you in conducting the session on finding possible solutions to the issue at hand. In the process of searching for a solution, the method of six thinking hats gives different forms of thinking and opinions, which allows for grasping different perspectives and at end generate a full array of solutions. Participants are grouped in small teams representing metaphorically a coloured hat. When assigned with a hat, the group has to enter into the role of this hat and express opinion through the perspective and key characteristics of the hat, as described below:

- The white hat – objective thinking: neutral facts, numbers, and data.
- The red hat – emotional thinking: emotions, feelings, intuition.
- The black hat – critical thinking: caution, truth, judgement, second thoughts.
- The yellow hat – positive thinking: benefits, savings, plus sides, why is this a good thing to do, discusses only the positive side of the problem.
- The green hat – creative thinking: research, suggestions, new ideas, alternative ideas, second options.
- The blue hat – metacognition: thinking about an opinion, summary of what was done so far, deciding on what to do next.

Suggested sequence of work with the hats: white, green, yellow, black, green, blue, red. After suggested sequence is conducted, groups identify the problem, suggest solutions, advantages, and risks of suggested solutions, evaluate solutions and verify the adequacy of the suggested solution. The technique can be used individually but more often in a group, the participants can decide for themselves who will have which hat. The facilitator guides participants, encourages, motivates and helps them with questions.

Variations: Instead of thinking hats you can use the YOCO cards as visual tool and in the challenges addressed add coaching cards as part of the solutions to the identified challenges.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

<https://mgrush.com/blog/debono-six-thinking-hats/>

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

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## 2.7.2. Activity – Walk and talk



### Name of the Activity

Walk and talk

### Addressing competencies



Team work



Communication



Decision making

### Goals of the activity

The goal of this activity is to break the routine and offer a different approach.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

Space (preferably outdoors) for participants to go for a walk.

### Timeline

35 minutes

- 5 minutes - brief facilitator input;
- 15 minutes - walk of the pairs;
- 15 minutes - debriefing in the large group.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

As a facilitator of a structured dialogue, the current activity might support you in conducting the session on finding possible solutions to the issue at hand.

Structured dialogues and debates among participants and policy makers does not always have to be formal and in an indoor setting as especially of the topic itself can support the notion of the importance of field work.

While in a group format start by explaining the advantages of thinking while moving. Then explain that the next step is to walk in pairs and discuss the question being central for the concrete structured dialogue session. Depending on the number of participants, make sure that the pairs are not walking on the same route or at least two pairs per same route that the suggestions the pairs make can be added with the second pair walking the same route. We also suggest that the pairs receive a map of the route they should walk and give directions to observe the environment and the behaviour of people.

Suggest that during half of the time participant A is speaking and, on the way, back Participant B. Provide each pair with sample questions such as: How (dis)satisfied am I with the current situation? What are current most important challenges/questions? Explain what the participants should bring back as a result. Remind the participants to take a picture of the focus questions before they leave the room. As a facilitator, you may also ask them to bring back an inspiration, like a photo from the route. Debrief how the inspiration outside helped them to answer the focus question.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

<https://equiip.eu/activity/activity-4-walk-and-talk/>  
<https://www.sessionlab.com/library/structured-dialogue>

### Risks and recommendations for trainers

It is very important to choose a calm and easy trail for the participants.

## 2.7.3. Activity – Dialogue is or is not



### Name of the Activity

Dialogue is or is not

### Addressing competencies



Active listening



Communication



Adaptability



Dialogue and debate

### Goals of the activity

Through this activity you can encourage participants to reflect more deeply upon what dialogue is (that it is a specific way of thinking about talking and it is not just a generic chatter) and that the dialogue has particular rules and expectations. In an encounter with those who might have different opinions, values and beliefs, dialogue is the process by which we come to understand the others' lives, values and beliefs better and others come to understand our lives, values and beliefs.

### Materials / conditions to meet for implementation

YOCO cards

### Timeline

35 minutes

- 10 minutes – brief facilitator input;
- 15 minutes – pair work;
- 15 minutes – discussion.

### Concrete steps for the implementation

1. All participants are given the YOCO cards. Sort the cards under these headings: DIALOGUE IS and DIALOGUE IS NOT (one card is left blank for your own ideas).
2. On their own participants sort the cards into two piles according to whether they think the description on the card refers to dialogue or to a different form of communication.
3. Working in pairs the participants reflect on each other's lists, discuss their decisions, and make any changes that they agree on. Any descriptions they cannot agree on should be kept to one side.
4. End with a discussion about the descriptions including what participants have written on the blank card.

### Additional resources – hyperlinks to further references

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### Risks and recommendations for trainers

Direct attention to the cards the participants could not agree upon. It is a great transition to understanding differences between participants.

# 3

## Tips and Tricks for Youth Workers

When approaching the topic of leadership training/development of youth leaders or young people in general, you firstly may want to think about the different stages of this process. This process can be divided into three (teaching) sequences: "Getting Started", "Implementation", and "Follow-Up". Below you can find general tips and tricks for each sequence.



## 3.1. Getting Started

Before getting started on the topic of leadership with youth leaders in your classroom/community, it is always good to first collect your thoughts and questions on the topic. Below you can find some inspirational questions, statements and tips to support your train of thought and to get you started:

- Why is youth leadership important to youth?
- Why should it be of any interest to them?
- What can they get from being a youth leader?

The topic you choose for introducing/illustrating the topic of leadership needs to be important in youth leaders' life. They have to be able to make a connection with their individual reality. It has to be worthwhile engaging with the topic. Young people want their real concerns and challenges represented and understood. Motivating them to follow concrete interests and real concerns is a very important basis of empowerment. Connecting real life situations and surroundings with learning and coaching is therefore essential. Example of topics: Fake News; Climate Change; Violence; COVID-19, etc.

Young people often engage in a dialogue on a topic that they actually do not recognize as policy. In other words, it is important to approach and speak to young persons in a cool and relevant for them manner. (Example: If you say to them, go to vote, it does not work. However, if you engage them with a discussion on topics they are interested in, they might provide useful solutions and ideas for policymaking.)

Do not force youngsters to adapt to the 'adult-way' of listening. It must be two-way traffic. Youngsters listen in a very different way than adults. If somebody is talking about a subject, the thoughts of youngsters go fast-forward, while they are listening at the same time.



## 3.2. Implementation

Youngsters want to work on “real-cases” and engage in activities that resemble real-life situations. When it comes to real cases, it is not all about skills or competencies, but more or also about the setting, you have to act in as a youngster. (Example: When you are invited to have an appointment with a policy maker, you have to go to the City Hall. To enter there, you need to pass the security check, which can be very impressive already.)

Examples of Scenario-Learning and Activity-Based Learning:

- Implement role plays, stage debating events;
- Organize debating events / meetings with experts and stakeholders. Introduce the art of debating (i.e. how to produce a valid argument, how to dismiss an argument, how to express one`s point of view, how to fight negative trends);
- Practice active listening / listening to others -> fosters empathy;
- Introduce game-based learning elements / “fun” elements (drama techniques).

Further methodological guidelines:

- Encourage peer-to-peer support among youth leaders.
- Encourage leaders to know their team. Youth leaders should know the strengths of their team and how to motivate them.
- Learn how to learn. Raise awareness in youth leaders that they need to support their arguments with sound background information / the data to argue with.
- Encourage them to lead by example. The leader has to live what he/she wants in order to inspire others for it and to earn their respect.
- Keep different learning styles of youth leaders in mind. Try to present information in different ways so that it is appealing for various learning styles (Howard Gardner’s Theory on Multiple Intelligences).

## 3.3. Follow-Up

In order for youth leaders to benefit from the exercises and examples outlined above, it is important to think about follow-up exercises or sessions. This will ensure that they are engaged with the topic on a regular basis, preventing regress.

# 4

## Measuring Key Youth Leadership Qualities

The following list can be used by youth workers and trainers to develop the learning outcomes for their future training and the main topics to be covered. It can also serve as a self-evaluation for young leaders, which will help them raise their self-awareness and map areas for their future development. This list can be used along with the Leadership qualities subdeck of YoCo cards, which allows for a more interactive guided reflection process in a group or individual youth work setting.





### Youth Leader's Qualities

Rate your level of knowledge/skills and attitude from 1 to 5  
(1 – I need to further develop this quality,  
5 – I have already developed this quality)

1. LEARNING TO LEARN
2. INFORMATION GATHERING
3. CRITICAL ANALYSIS
4. OPEN MINDEDNESS
5. PERSUASION
6. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
7. EMPATHY
8. ACTIVE LISTENING
9. PEOPLE FOCUSED (APPROACHABLE)
10. PASSION
11. SELF-MOTIVATION
12. MOTIVATING OTHERS
13. FACILITATION SKILLS
14. ASKING POWERFUL QUESTIONS
15. NETWORKING
16. PROACTIVE
17. VISIONARY
18. SOLUTION FOCUSED
19. DETERMINATION
20. ADAPTABILITY
21. PERSISTENCE
22. RESILIENCE
23. MORALITY
24. DECENCY
25. TRUST
26. HUMBLENESS



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