

SALTO

PARTICIPATION &
INFORMATION

Practical Ideas: How to Tackle Elections & Participation

This **practical document** together with a [poster](#) is designed by SALTO Participation and Information Resource Centre for anyone who wishes to engage young people in discussing and creating action on the topic of **Participation in Democratic life**, including the **elections**. This resource has been created with trainers, youth organisations, youth workers, teachers, and the National Agencies of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps in mind.

You will find some ideas on how to encourage discussion and action in the following:

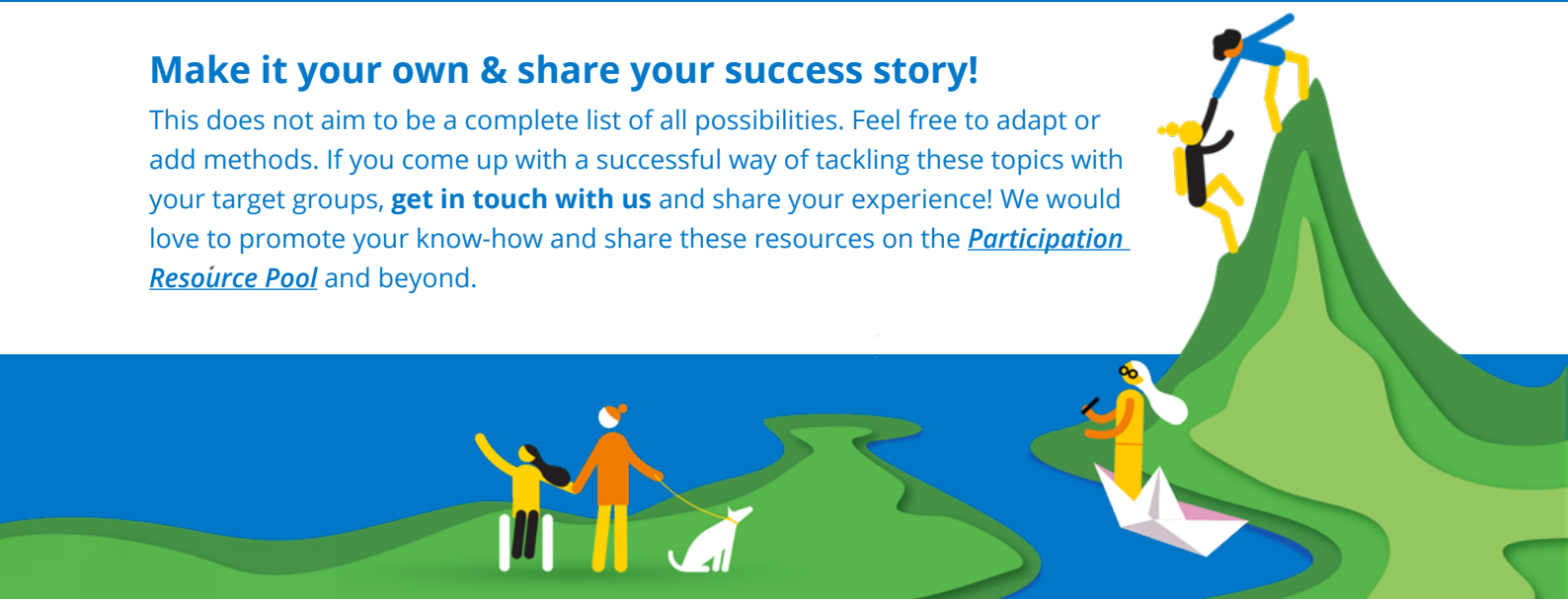
1. **Training events** (e.g. conferences, group work)
2. **(Strategy) meetings and consultations**
3. **Communication** (e.g. social media interactions)

You can use the guidelines and the poster when working with the following groups:

- Young people
- Organisations
- Youth workers and educators
- Trainers, to help them come up with methods and programmes corresponding to the topics on the poster

Make it your own & share your success story!

This does not aim to be a complete list of all possibilities. Feel free to adapt or add methods. If you come up with a successful way of tackling these topics with your target groups, **get in touch with us** and share your experience! We would love to promote your know-how and share these resources on the [Participation Resource Pool](#) and beyond.



IDEAS:

Encouraging More Awareness & Discussion on Elections and Participation of Young People

1. Training events

1.1 Run a World Cafe!

This is an effective and flexible format for hosting a large group dialogue. Most facilitators and trainers are familiar with this method. You can discuss a wide range of topics of interest to young people:

- What type of Erasmus+ and/or European Solidarity Corps projects are needed to **encourage more participation** in the elections?
- What training and support do young people expect in regard to health and wellbeing, employment/inclusion, the environment & climate change? What would young people ask the decision-makers to receive this training? (This could be related to school curricula, better counselling services, non-formal education opportunities, recognition of volunteering, etc.) Have young people come up with ideas and requests for the decision – these might be parents, school management, student bodies, boards of non-profit organisations, local municipalities or youth centres, politicians, etc.

You can use the poster to do the following:

- **Choose topics** to discuss with your prep team, youth delegates, students, etc. Show them the poster and ask which topics concern them the most and what they would like to talk about. You may want to limit yourselves to 1–3 key topics on the poster for discussion – no need to cover them all!
- **Make each of the topics a separate table of discussion** and explore with participants how these topics influence actual policy-making and (young) people's lives. Discuss and ideate together what could be done to improve the situation related to the topic. How can we create better training or education materials, engage more people to speak up and get involved in advocacy or volunteering?

A resource to explore:
The World Cafe Community Foundation [website](#).



1.2 Organise a Mini Project Lab

Depending on your aims and available time, you can also run a mini project lab for a quick brainstorming session on projects for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps that would aim to boost (youth) participation in democratic life. If you have more time, a full-length project lab is also an option.

Participants form a team with a clear aim to come up with a project idea that would improve young people's participation in democratic life, including elections. Each group will choose a project angle from the map and work on further developing it.

For example:

Group 1: Work on how to make health and well-being a more prominent topic in the local elections in their respective countries and regions. The poster gives a good idea of other actions that might help to reach the goal (the project can include lobbying to raise awareness, protesting, training events, etc.).

Group 2: Work on creating peer-to-peer quality education materials addressing political literacy and critical thinking.

Group 3: Work on how to raise the topic of youth unemployment among decision-makers and media and demand more inclusive policy-making in that regard.

Group 4: Work on an idea for a volunteering project to tackle the environment and climate change with the aim to raise awareness and spark political debates on these issues.

1.3 Have parallel sessions/workshops

If you have an event where there is space for parallel sessions, you can engage practitioners, experts and trainers to build parallel sessions on the topic of participation in democratic life. Each session could tackle how we can influence decision-making and elections regarding the topics on the map.

Should you not want to focus on elections, you can address democratic participation from other angles, such as volunteering, training and education, projects, developing critical thinking skills, etc.

Examples:

- A session with a civic movement/NGO sharing practical examples of how they have improved inclusion and diversity in their organisation/region/country step by step.
- An interactive session with an expert tackling the environment and climate change and how to spot greenwashing (before elections or in general).

- A session of innovative practical training and education tools and methods helping to raise awareness on democratic participation during elections. If you don't want to focus on elections, you can focus on democratic participation connected to volunteering for inclusion, for example.
- A session on communication and critical thinking addressing the types of false information that are widespread before elections. A more concrete focus can be chosen from the poster, e.g. elections and false information regarding European values or climate change. Participants can learn and discuss how false information spreads, how to spot it, and how it can influence voter turnout, election results and actual policy, impacting (young) people's lives.

1.4 Group work

If you have more time, you can have groups working on researching the topics on the poster, who then present their conclusions to other groups.

As the first step, show the poster on the screen or put it on the tables or the wall in the classroom/training room. Have participants "take the journey" from one place on the map to another, discussing what comes to their mind regarding each topic. Ask which topic is most interesting to them and why. Help them see how there are more ways of participating than voting and how these actions can have a strong impact. Ask participants to divide into groups based on their topic interests.

For the second step, the group can conduct interviews with decision-makers, NGOs, other students, etc. and research how the topic they have chosen is connected to participation in democratic life. They can focus on cases of lobbying and what impact this has on their topic or how protesting has influenced legislation, etc.

In the third step, have each group present their key findings to others.

A resource to explore:

Participation Resource Pool introduces various ways of participation [here](#).

1.5 Co-create a fun educational quiz!

Another group work idea is to have groups divide topics and generate [Kahoot!](#) quizzes on the topics from the poster and play them with others as a fun competition.

A resource to explore:

See an example of a quiz on the [Participation Resource Pool](#).

1.6 Debate together!

You might want to have the participants practise their debating skills based on the topics on the poster. The poster helps participants address methods of democratic participation on a wider scale and inspire ideas for more concrete debating topics. This can be a fun way to learn argumentation skills and see various perspectives

Examples:

- “We need more international cooperation and fostering European values.” VS “We need more autonomy and protection of local values.”
- “Going to vote in elections is the most important form of participation.” VS “Going to vote in elections is not (is no longer) the most important form of participation.”

2. Meetings & consultations

You can use the poster in meetings, strategy discussions and consultations.

Show it on the screen or print it out and have people discuss the “big picture of participation”, getting the participants to discuss how all (or some) of the topics on the map resonate with the project/organisation/strategy, etc. You can come up with a set of concrete questions to narrow down the topics based on your needs.

For example:

How can we raise awareness and engagement of young people regarding health and well-being, European values, and climate change? What might be the (strategic) actions we need to take?

- Seeing the topics on the poster, what actions is our project/organisation addressing well and what important aspects have been receiving too little attention? What could we do differently to better address some important issues?
- How can we make the various topics presented on the poster feel more practical and closer to young people? What kinds of communication, activities, events, etc. are needed to do that?
- Which of these topics and actions on the poster are a priority for us? Why? Which are of lower priority? Why?
- Which of the topics on the poster do we feel most knowledgeable about? Where do we see that we have less understanding? Is this something we need to improve our understanding of? Why? How can we do this?
- As a young person, what are the topics that truly interest me on this poster? Why these? What feels less interesting or more confusing? Why?

- What actions or information would we like to see more of regarding these topics on the poster? Youth exchanges? Training events? Projects? More interactive learning in the classroom? Why these?

3. Communication

When you have local events, adapt the poster by translating the texts. You can use **Canva** or any other preferred tool to do this easily.

If you're considering doing this with Canva but have not used it before and your team doesn't have resources to help you with adapting the poster, [Canva has a practical online course](#) that can guide you. It will teach you step-by-step how to use and adapt templates, generate different formats, and more. Each video tutorial is just a few minutes long. This way, you can have the **poster translated into your local language** rather quickly.

With Canva, you can use the poster to design the following:

- **(Carousel) posts** introducing the topics of (Youth) Participation in Democratic Life
- **Story posts** (if you're savvy, you can animate the visuals), where you can create a poll, direct people to read a story or watch a reel, gather questions or thoughts, etc.
- Create **PowerPoint presentations** and use the illustrations separately slide by slide
- Design **other information materials** you need, using the illustrations and design.

How can you use the poster for communication about participation in democratic life?

3.1 Write short blog posts

You can write them on your own or have beneficiaries, trainers, or partners write about participation and the topics reflected on the poster. It can be one post or a series of posts showcasing good practices in your country, sharing resources and tools, etc. It all depends on what your focus is and who you want to communicate with. Tips and ideas for communication can be found in the [Participation Resource Pool in the section Promotion & Outreach](#).

You can use the poster or elements of it to illustrate the blog posts.

When planned, a co-creational approach featuring project teams and young people as co-authors might be a great way to run communication activities in a

participatory way. This would enable them to talk about democracy, elections and participation from **a focus point they care about**. You can get creative together: choose a more practical angle or go for the “popular science” type of educational content.

The blog posts/articles can be shared on social media and in newsletters (your own and your partners’) or published in youth work and education-focused media channels, etc.

Examples:

- “5 inspiring youth actions in [*insert the name of your country here*] to change the planet.” Here, you could feature Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps projects that tackle climate change and environmental protection or inclusion topics.
- “10 tips for teachers who wish to make democracy education more fun in the classroom.” Here, it could be a list of practical tools and methods, from teacher to teacher, exchanging good practices.

3.2 Make reels/short videos

Create short videos on one or more of the topics on the poster. You can do this together with young people, trainers, educators – anyone who is motivated for video content creation. If you have resources, you can engage a video creator to mentor them and support them in creating the content. This way, you can connect the training opportunity with the communication action.

3.3 Create quizzes and polls

Use elements of design to organise and promote the polls or online quizzes related to the topics on the poster. For example, publish one online quiz on various topics from the poster each week or focus on one topic from different angles.

Example of quiz topics:

- **Week 1: Health and wellbeing – myths and reality.** Here, you can ask about policies or laws regarding health and well-being as well as false information. Challenge respondents to explore whether they know where to get reliable mental health information, qualified support, etc.
- **Week 2: Environment and climate change – is this greenwashing?** This can be done using videos, photos, various claims, etc.
- **Week 3: Young people and elections – test your knowledge.** Here you can ask about the youngest members of parliament, the voting age in different countries, young voter turnout, etc.

- **Week 4: Protest special – fantasy or fact?** You can find various pictures of true protests throughout history and random photos and give multiple answers for respondents to guess which occasion it is or how it shaped history. After they have responded, a pop-up can appear with short informative and educational messages, some interesting facts, etc.

You can make this a fun online game with prizes (make sure they are ethical, environmentally sustainable, and connected to the topic of democratic participation). The questions can be chosen together with partner organisations, active young people, experts, and trainers.

Looking for more ideas and inspiration?

- [Check the Toolbox for 2024 European Elections on the Participation Resource Pool](#)
- [Get ideas from “Vote Outside the Box – Toolkit for Electoral Management”](#)
- [Read the article featuring projects organised to boost youth participation in democratic life.](#)
- [Expand your knowledge and tools with the help of the Youth Participation Toolkit.](#)
- [Visit the Flagship Projects Collection presenting quality projects.](#)

[Download the poster!](#)

[Download illustrations
\(Zip file\)](#)



Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

