Guidelines and Methods Compilation

Foreword

Democracy, participation, human dignity and equality are among the fundamental values on which the European Union is built. Yet for many young people, especially those facing social exclusion, discrimination or migration-related challenges, these values are often experienced not as abstract concepts but as questions arising from everyday life.

The Erasmus+ project WAVE II – What about Democracy Education, Participation and the Transfer of European Values in the Context of Intercultural Youth Social Work was developed to explore how these values can be meaningfully addressed in youth work and youth social work. Bringing together seven partner organisations from Germany, Italy, Greece and Serbia, the project created a space for exchange, experimentation and mutual learning between youth workers, educators, social professionals and young people.

Over a period of two years, the partners implemented national workshops, experimental laboratories, international trainings and local activities. Together, they developed and tested innovative, participatory and low-threshold methods that support young people in reflecting on democracy, dignity, equality and active citizenship through practical experiences rather than theoretical instruction alone.

This Guidelines and Methods Collection is one of the key outcomes of the WAVE II project. It brings together the experiences, lessons learned and methods developed throughout the project and translates them into practical tools for youth workers, educators and social professionals. The publication aims to support practitioners in creating inclusive learning environments where European values can be explored, discussed and experienced in meaningful ways.

The methods presented in this handbook are not intended as fixed recipes. Rather, they are adaptable tools that can be adjusted to different local contexts, target groups and learning environments. What unites them is a shared commitment to participation, dialogue, creativity and respect for the experiences and perspectives of young people.

We hope that this collection will inspire practitioners across Europe to further strengthen democracy education, inclusion and intercultural dialogue in their daily work and contribute to building more open, democratic and cohesive communities.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

Across Europe, youth workers and social professionals are increasingly confronted with challenges related to democratic participation, social inclusion, discrimination, migration, and social cohesion. At the same time, European values such as human dignity, equality, participation, democracy and solidarity are often discussed at a political level but remain difficult to translate into everyday youth work practice.

The Erasmus+ project **WAVE II – What about Democracy Education, Participation and the Transfer of European Values in the Context of Intercultural Youth Social Work** was initiated to address this challenge. Building on the experiences of a previous cooperation project, seven partner organisations from Germany, Italy, Greece and Serbia joined forces to explore innovative and practical approaches to democracy education in youth work and youth social work.

Between September 2024 and August 2026, the partnership implemented workshops, experimental laboratories, international trainings, multiplier events and local activities involving youth workers, educators, social professionals and young people. Special attention was given to the participation of young people with migrant backgrounds and other groups facing social disadvantage.

The project aimed not only to discuss European values, but to make them tangible and experience able through creative, participatory and non-formal learning methods. The methods and recommendations presented in this handbook are the result of this collaborative European learning process.

1.2. Guidelines Background

The Compilation is based on findings from national workshops and experimental laboratories conducted and tested by the partner organisations. It incorporates common operational principles, practical experiences and evaluation tools developed throughout the implementation of the WAVE II project.

Additional Digital Guidelines

To improve accessibility, usability and dissemination, the partnership also developed a complementary set of Digital Guidelines. While the present publication serves as the project's "Formal Guidelines", the "Digital Guidelines" provide a more user-friendly and interactive presentation of the methods, tools and key project outcomes.

The Digital Guidelines complement this Guidelines by offering a concise, accessible and practice-oriented overview of the methods and approaches developed within WAVE II. They include visual materials, digital resources, links to the project video course and additional tools designed to facilitate the transfer of European values into everyday youth work practice.

Both resources can be accessed via the WAVE II project website:
www.wave4youthwork.eu

1.3. European Values in Youth Work Practice

European values are often discussed as political principles or legal foundations of the European Union. However, for youth workers, educators and social professionals, these values become meaningful only when they are translated into everyday practice and lived experiences.

Young people learn about democracy, dignity, equality and participation not only through information, but also through relationships, interactions and opportunities to actively engage. Youth work therefore plays a crucial role in creating spaces where these values can be experienced, reflected upon and put into practice.

The WAVE II project identified four core values that were particularly relevant across all partner countries and target groups. These values form the foundation of the methods and approaches presented in this handbook.

Democracy and Participation

Democracy is more than a political system. In youth work, it means creating opportunities for young people to express their views, influence decisions and actively shape activities that affect their lives.

Participation strengthens ownership, responsibility and civic engagement. Young people who experience that their voices matter are more likely to become active members of their communities and democratic societies.

The methods presented in this handbook encourage active involvement, shared decision-making and collaborative problem-solving, enabling participants to experience democracy in practice rather than only learning about it theoretically.

Human Dignity

Human dignity is a fundamental European value and the basis of all human rights. It recognises the inherent worth of every person, regardless of their background, status, beliefs or circumstances.

In youth work, respecting human dignity means creating safe, respectful and inclusive environments where every participant feels valued and heard. It also means acknowledging personal experiences, identities and perspectives without judgement.

Many of the methods developed within WAVE II encourage self-reflection, self-expression and mutual recognition, helping young people explore what dignity means both for themselves and for others.

Equality and Non-Discrimination

Equality means ensuring that all people have fair opportunities to participate and develop their potential. Non-discrimination requires actively addressing barriers, prejudices and exclusion that may prevent individuals from participating fully in society.

Young people with migrant backgrounds, refugees and other vulnerable groups often experience discrimination or unequal access to opportunities. Youth work can play an important role in challenging stereotypes, promoting inclusion and fostering mutual understanding.

The methods included in this handbook encourage participants to reflect on experiences of fairness, exclusion, privilege and solidarity while developing practical strategies for creating more inclusive communities.

1.3.1 From Values to Practice

European values become meaningful when they are translated into everyday actions, behaviours and professional practices.

The WAVE II project therefore focused not only on discussing values, but on creating practical learning experiences that allow participants to explore, question and apply these values in real-life situations. Through art, theatre, sport, storytelling, dialogue and collaborative projects, young people and professionals can experience how democracy, dignity and equality shape everyday interactions.

The methods presented in this collection are designed to support this process. They provide practical tools for turning abstract values into lived experiences and helping young people become active participants in democratic and inclusive societies.

2. Context, Purpose, and Intended Users

2.1 Context

The survey carried out as part of the project identified **Democracy**, **Human Dignity**, and **Equality/Non-Discrimination** as the values most frequently prioritised by youth workers across partner countries. Participatory, non-formal approaches to conveying these values were tested through workshops and laboratories with youth work practitioners, young migrants and local peers. The WP3 Compilation translates these approaches into a structured resource for practitioners.

2.2 Purpose

The Compilation provides a consolidated, quality-assured set of guidance and methods to enable practitioners to facilitate learning processes that transfer European values into practice, attitudes, and behaviours.

2.3 Intended users

The Guidelines are primarily intended for professionals working in Youth Work and Youth Social Work, including youth workers, educators, trainers, social workers and programme staff who facilitate non-formal learning, participation, inclusion and community engagement processes with young people.

3. Normative and Methodological Reference Framework

3.1 Values as enforceable practice standards

In this Compilation, European values are operationalised as standards guiding professional conduct, facilitation, and service delivery.

- Democracy and participation: meaningful youth participation and shared ownership of learning.
- Human dignity: respectful engagement, informed consent, and trauma-aware communication.
- Equality and non-discrimination: prevention and remediation of direct and indirect discrimination and, where relevant, reasonable accommodation.

Accountability and transparency: documentation, predictable procedures, lawful referrals, and clear role allocation.

3.2 Experiential learning cycle

Consistent with the methodology applied in WP2 laboratories, the Compilation adopts a four-step experiential learning cycle: anchor, experience, reflection, and transfer. The debrief is a mandatory component for quality assurance.

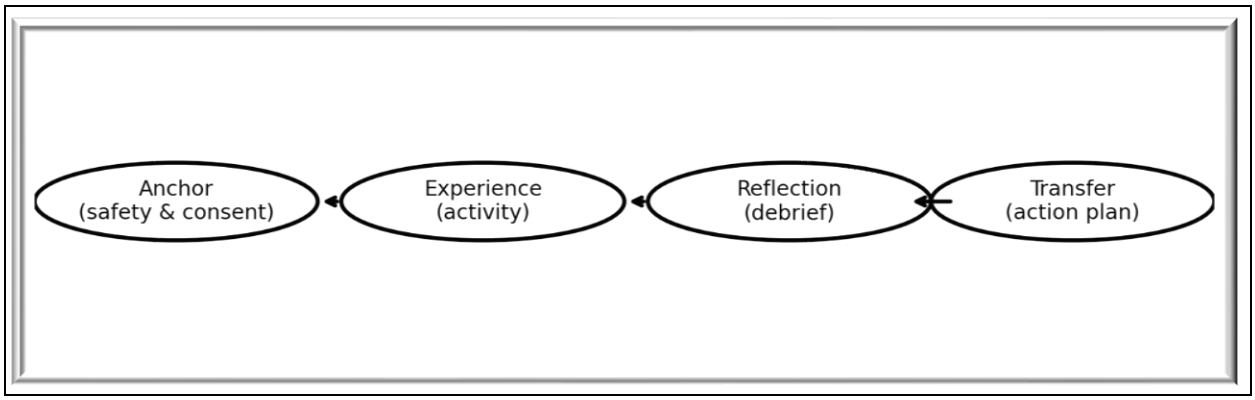


Figure 1. Experiential learning cycle used across methods (Source: Own illustration by the WAVE II Partnership based on Kolb (1984).

4. Cross-cutting Safeguards and Quality Standards

4.1 Do no harm and trauma-informed facilitation

Facilitation should avoid foreseeable harm and re-traumatisation by employing predictable session design, enabling participant control over disclosure, and using grounding techniques.

4.2 Safeguarding and referral responsibilities

Where disclosure or risk indicators arise, facilitators shall follow the applicable safeguarding protocol, ensuring timely referral and secure documentation.

4.3 Inclusion, accessibility and language support

Methods should be adapted to address language needs, including interpretation and plain-language materials, as well as learning diversity, disability inclusion, and culturally responsive practice.

4.4 Data protection, consent, and documentation ethics based on national legal framework

Photo and video documentation, as well as evaluation data, should be collected only when necessary, based on informed consent, and stored securely in line with data minimisation principles.

5. Methods Collection

The Methods Collection consolidates workshop and laboratory methods reported in WP2, including arts and music laboratories in Serbia, improvisational theatre and collective storytelling in Germany, sports-based dignity laboratories and project-based inquiry in Italy, and cross-cutting methods for co-creation, evaluation, and video-based learning.

Standard Method Template

To ensure consistency and transferability, all methods in Section 5 use the following template:

1) Purpose and values addressed; 2) Duration; 3) Required materials; 4) Preparation; 5) Facilitation steps; 6) Structured debrief; 7) Inclusion adjustments; 8) Risk and safeguarding notes; 9) Outputs and suggested indicators; 10) Notes for replication. (See Annex 1)

5.1 Self-Portrait as a Path to Dignity

What is it about

This is an art-based, experimental workshop method centered on self-portraiture as a tool for identity exploration and reflection on human dignity. It combines creative practice, guided discussion and cultural inspiration (e-g museum visit or exposure to artworks). The method can be implemented in museums, cultural centers, schools, youth centers or community spaces.

Purpose

To foster self-awareness, self-expression, and reflection on human dignity through artistic creation, while enabling participants:

- To explore identity through visual self-representation,
- Develop emotional awareness and self-reflection,
- Strengthen critical thinking through dialogue on values (e.g. dignity),
- Experience art as a tool for empowerment and inclusion,
- Improve social and intercultural communication through group exchange
- Build confidence in expressing personal thoughts and emotions through a structured art-based process

Values addressed

Human dignity (main); inclusion; equality; participation; cultural dialogue.

Duration

Minimum: 180 minutes. Maximum: 240-300 minutes. The method may also be adapted into shorter modules of 90-120 minutes where required.

Materials

Personal photographs (printed), carbon paper, A3 drawing paper, pencils and erasers, watercolors, brushes, pastels or coloured pencils, collage materials (magazines, scissors, glue),

protective table covers, and a camera or smartphone for documentation. A printer may be used for replication activities.

Setting

- Indoor setting recommended (classroom, community centre)
- Quiet and safe environment that allows concentration and discussion
- Tables for individual work and space for group dialogue
- Can be adapted to outdoor cultural events if weather and materials allow

Facilitation

- Ideal group size: 10-15 participants
- Maximum recommended: 20 participants
- Facilitators required:
- 1 trained art facilitator (with experience in expressive or art-based methods)
- 1 support educator/youth worker (especially if minors are involved)
- Suggested ratio: 1 facilitator per 10-12 participants
- An assistant or observer is recommended for documentation and safeguarding, particularly with vulnerable groups.

Facilitation steps

- **Welcome and introduction**: present objectives, establish ground rules on respect and confidentiality, and introduce the themes of dignity and identity.
- **Self-observation and first sketch**: participants trace essential lines from their photographs using carbon paper as the base of the self-portrait.
- **Cultural inspiration (optional but recommended)**: where feasible, facilitate a guided visit to artworks or present selected examples of portraiture in order to broaden visual references and interpretations of identity.
- **Creative experimentation**: participants develop their self-portraits using different materials such as watercolour, pastel, or collage, focusing on personal expression rather than technical perfection.
- **Thematic reflection (human dignity dialogue)**: facilitate a discussion on the meaning of dignity, including associations with art, identity, culture, and the languages used by participants.
- **Integration of reflection into artwork**: participants incorporate words, symbols, or concepts linked to dignity into their portraits.
- **Collective sharing and documentation**: participants present their work, take photos with their portraits if consent is given, and may record short reflections.
- **Closing circle**: conclude with a final reflection and, where appropriate, a group photo.

Reflective questions (minimum questions)

- What does dignity mean to you?
- How do you express your identity through your portrait?
- Did creating your self-portrait change the way you see yourself?
- How can art give visibility and value to people?
- What connections did you identify between dignity and creativity?

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- How can we promote dignity in our communities?

Inclusion and accessibility adjustments

- Participants may portray a loved one rather than themselves if self-representation feels uncomfortable.
- Multilingual discussion, visual examples, and alternative materials for participants with motor difficulties should be provided where needed.
- Facilitation should remain trauma-informed and personal sharing must remain voluntary.

Risk and safeguarding notes

- Signed photo and video consent forms should be obtained where documentation is planned, especially for minors.
- Facilitators should avoid pressuring participants to disclose sensitive experiences, monitor emotional reactions linked to identity themes, ensure an appropriate supervision ratio, and store all multimedia materials securely in accordance with data protection rules.

Outputs and suggested indicators

- Outputs include individual self-portraits, participant reflections, and photographic and/or video documentation where consent has been obtained.
- Suggested indicators include the number of completed artworks, the level of active participation in discussion, participant feedback, and observable engagement, interaction, and collaboration throughout the process.

5.2 Democracy Theater Direkt

What is it about

Democracy Theater Direkt is a participatory improvisational theatre method for citizenship and democracy education, adapted and further developed by theatre educators Eva and Lorenz Hippe in Germany. It builds on the method "Instant Theater", a form of improvised storytelling and performance originally developed in 1968 by R. G. Gregory and the group Word & Action in Dorset, England.

Instant Theater was conceived both as a public form of improvisational theatre and as an educational method promoting collective creativity. Over time, it spread internationally—particularly in language learning, political education, and theatre pedagogy.

Based on this foundation, Theater Direkt applies improvisational storytelling specifically to democracy and citizenship education. Participants start with an open situation — without a predefined script — and collectively create characters, a story line, conflicts and solutions. Through role-play and reflection, democratic processes are experienced in a concrete, embodied and creative way.

The method has been successfully implemented in youth work settings, including with diverse groups of young people with migration backgrounds.

Purpose/Learning objectives

The method enables participants to:

- Experience democratic decision-making in practice
- Strengthen communication, negotiation and listening skills
- Reflect on universal values such as human dignity and solidarity
- Practice collective problem-solving
- Experience the emotions associated with civic participation
- Connect fictional scenarios to real-life civic participation
- Gain confidence in expressing opinions despite language barriers

Participants learn that democracy is not abstract — it is something they emotionally and socially experience but also a process they can actively shape.

Values addressed

Respect for human dignity; empathy and solidarity; active participation and shared responsibility; listening and mutual respect; inclusion and equality.

Duration

Minimum: 120 minutes. The method can also be implemented over several sessions across multiple days, for example six hours across two sessions including preparation and reflection.

Facilitation

- Recommended group size: 8–20 participants
- Minimum 1 trained moderator with experience in youth work and/or theatre facilitation

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- Ideally 1 additional youth/social worker per 8–10 participants
- Multilingual or intercultural assistants are highly recommended when working with diverse groups
- Facilitators guide the process but do not define the content. Participants drive the storyline and solutions.

Materials

- A room with sufficient space, chairs arranged in a circle where possible, pens and paper for notes, an optional flipchart for visualisation and documentation, and optional video documentation. A laptop may also be used for documenting the storyline and, where appropriate, for generating simple dialogues.

Setting

- Indoor setting recommended (seminar room, community space, youth centre).
- A second space for performance (if available) is helpful but not mandatory.

Facilitation Steps

1. Introduction & Framing

- Introduce the theme (e.g., democracy, participation, elections).
- Establish group rules for facilitation:
  Respectful communication:
- No hurtful or discriminatory statements
- Only answer the questions asked by the facilitator
- Every answer is true, every voice counts
- There is no turning back (no possibility to change the previous answers)
- Participation is voluntary and cannot be forced

2. Story Development

Provide an introductory sentence to open up a situation without overly influencing the setting, leaving it up to the participants.
Guide the group with simple questions:
Who? (We are looking for 3 characters.)

- What are their names?
- How old are they?
- What is their gender?

What is their relationship to each other?
What is their professional or personal situation?
When?

- What season is it? (Ask about the weather.)
- What day of the week is it?
- What time of day?

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Where?

- Start from the outside and move inward.
- Where exactly does the situation take place?

What has happened?

What is the triggering event?

- Playfully question the story.
- Ask about potential contradictions in the story.

Develop a shared storyline collectively: The goal is to co-create a shared and vivid starting situation.

3. Small Group Work

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Each group elaborates characters and develops a scene with short dialogues.
- Encourage negotiation and collective decision-making.

An alternative to working in small groups if time is too short is to use AI to write simple dialogues based on the collectively developed scenario.

4. Performance

- Groups perform their scenes.
- Audience observes and takes note of collective dynamics and values expressed.

5. Reflection & De-roling

Explicitly "step out of roles" to ensure emotional distancing.

Structured reflection (see reflecting questions below):

How were decisions made?

Which values were visible?

How did you feel in your role?

Connect the fictional scenario to real-life situations.

Reflective questions (minimum questions)

- How did we make decisions together?
- Whose voice was heard, and whose was missing?
- Which values guided our solution?
- What happened that led us to choose this path?
- How did it feel to negotiate disagreement or conflict?
- How does this situation relate to real life?
- What could we do differently outside this workshop?

Inclusion and accessibility adjustments

- Use simple and clear language
- Allow multilingual support and translation
- Encourage non-verbal expression (movement, gesture)
- Provide guiding questions visually (flipchart)

- Offer additional clarification where needed
- Adapt pace according to group needs
- Integrate culturally rooted storytelling traditions if relevant

Risk and safeguarding notes

Risks:

- Role-play may trigger strong emotions related to personal experiences
- Conflicts within scenes may resonate with real-life trauma
- Participants may identify strongly with their roles

Safeguards:

- Establish clear rules of respectful communication at the beginning
- Emphasize voluntary participation, don't force anything
- Allow participants to leave the room at any time if they feel unwell
- Ensure careful, sensitive moderation
- Monitor emotional reactions during scenes
- Take breaks, if possible with windows open or in the open air between work phases
- Include structured reflection and explicit de-roling at the end
- Remind participants that roles are fictional
- Offer follow-up conversation if needed
- Emotional safety is ensured through respectful facilitation and clear closure

Outputs and suggested indicators

- Co-created theatre scenes displaying democratic processes (keep written track)
- Active participation of all or most group members
- Verbal articulation of democratic values during reflection
- Increased confidence and willingness to speak
- Participants linking scenarios to real-life civic engagement (e.g., elections)
- Documented reflections (notes, quotes, optional video)Indicators of success:
- Balanced participation
- Respectful negotiation
- Ability to identify values guiding decisions
- Observable increase in engagement and ownership

5.3 Experimental Lab for Equality and Dignity

What is it about

This method is a participatory creative laboratory that combines dialogue, visual art and music to explor European values such as human dignity, equality and anti-discrimination.

The laboratory uses artistic expression and group reflection to enable young people to translate abstract values into creative outputs such as murals and music. The approach emphasizes experiential learning, intercultural dialogue and collaborative creation.

Participants reflect on their personal experiences of dignity and equality while working together to produce collective artistic messages promoting inclusion and solidarity.

Methodological approach

The laboratory combines three learning components:

1. Values exploration through guided discussion and reflection
2. Creative expression through visual art and music activities
3. Collective production of artistic outputs communicating social messages

This experiential approach allows participants to explore sensitive social issues through creative practice rather than only through theoretical discussion.

Purpose/Learning objectives

The purpose of the method is to acquire knowledge and skills that contribute to the understanding and affirmation of European values, as well as to develop intercultural dialogue and youth participation.

- To increase young people's understanding of European values: human dignity, equality and anti-discrimination.
- To create a safe space for intercultural dialogue among young migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and returnees.
- To encourage creative expression (art, music and visual work) as a tool for promoting European values.

To enable participants to create their own messages and content promoting equality, solidarity and non-discrimination

Values addressed

- Anti-discrimination
- equality
- human dignity
- importance in building inclusive and democratic societies

Duration

- Minimum: 240 minutes
- Maximum (preferred): 2 sessions over 2 days (each day 360 minutes)

Facilitation

- Recommended group size (per workshop): 8-10 participants
- Facilitators required:
  - 1 trained art facilitator providing professional guidance in creative components + 1 educator / youth worker experienced in working with migrant population guiding the process
  - 1 trained music facilitator providing professional guidance in creative components + 1 educator / youth worker experienced in working with migrant population guiding the process
  - Optional: Culutral mediators in case educator / youth worker does not have experience in working with migrant population

This structure allows sufficient individual support and active engagement of all participants throughout the activity.

The methodology is flexible and can be easily replicated with larger groups, provided that the facilitator-to-participant ratio is adjusted accordingly to preserve the participatory and inclusive character.

Materials

- Flipchart paper and stand
- Large roll paper (minimum 2 × 3 meters) or combined flipchart sheets (as a base for the mural)
- Markers in various colours
- Tempera paints, watercolours, and brushes
- Coloured tape and adhesive tape (for fixing paper to the wall or floor)
- Post-it notes
- Music equipment (speaker and phone/laptop; simple musical instruments)
- Camera or mobile phones for documenting the process

Setting

- Indoor setting, in a community space adapted for participatory sessions and artistic / music workshops
- Ideally a second space so both methods can be implemented simultaneously

Facilitation steps

1. **Introduction and creating of safe space**
    - Welcome participants and introduce the objectives of the workshop
    - Establish group agreements (respect, confidentiality, voluntary participation)
    - Conduct a short icebreaker to build trust - each participant says their name and chooses a color that represents how they feel that day and briefly explains their choice
2. **Exploring European values**
    - Introduce the concepts of dignity, equality and anti-discrimination
    - Use cards with key terms
    - Encourage participants to share their understanding of these values
3. **Reflection and dialogue**
    - Participants discuss experiences related to dignity or discrimination
    - Guide the discussion using open questions
4. **Creative group work**
    - Divide participants into groups
    - Each group chooses a creative medium (visual art or music)
    - Participants create an artistic representation of European values
        - define and refine their ideas
        - develop the artistic / music message
        - collaborate on the structure of their work
        - prepare their work for presentation
5. **Presentation of creative outputs**
    - Groups present their artworks and music pieces
    - Participants explain the message behind their work
6. **Reflection and evaluation**
    - Hot–Cold method for reflection – participants stand closer to the "hot" wall if they think the activity was useful

Post-it message method is used for evaluation expressing "My contribution to equality" by each participant and placing it on the board

Outputs and suggested indicators

Outputs:

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- One collective mural expressing the values of human dignity, equality, and anti-discrimination
- One collective song expressing the values of human dignity, equality and anti-discrimination
- Increased awareness and understanding of European values among participants
- Photo and video documentation of the process
- Participant-generated messages promoting equality and solidarity

Suggested Indicators:

- Number of participants (8-10 per workshop)
- Number of creative outputs produced (at least 2 group outputs)
- Percentage of participants who report increased understanding of the addressed values (measured through reflection and evaluation activities)
- Level of active participation during discussions and workshops

Number of documented materials (photos, visual outputs)

Inclusion and accessibility adjustments

- Use clear, simple, and non-technical language during discussions and explanations
- Interactive and experiential methods that do not rely solely on verbal expression
- Creative activities (art and music) allowing participants to express themselves beyond language barriers
- Small group format to ensure individual attention and support
- Flexible facilitation approach, adapting the pace and methods to participants' needs
- Creation of group agreements to foster a respectful, non-judgmental atmosphere mutual respect and equal participation of all group members

Risk and safeguarding notes

- Obtained signed photo and video consent forms in line with data protection and safeguarding standards
- Emotional well-being - as topics such as discrimination and dignity may evoke personal or sensitive experiences, ensure a supportive and voluntary sharing environment. Avoid sharing personal stories and ensure the possibility to step back from discussions if needed.
- Safe space principles - respect, confidentiality and non-judgmental communication

Supervision and support - ensure continuous supervision and the ability to respond promptly to any emerging concerns

Reflective questions

- What does human dignity mean to you in your daily life?
- Can you recall a moment when you felt respected or disrespected? What made the difference?
- Why is equality important in a diverse society?
- How can we respond to discrimination when we witness it?

What is one action you can take to promote equality and dignity in your community?

5.4 Sport as Key of Dignity

What is it about

This method explores **sport** as an **experiential and symbolic tool to activate a reflection on human dignity.** ·Rather than explaining the concept theoretically, participants are guided to experience dignity through the body, interaction, and play.
The method is designed for non-formal educational settings (youth centres, schools, community spaces) and works particularly well with groups that are not easily engaged through traditional approaches.
It can be implemented using any sport, adapting rules, tools, and dynamics.
In this document, the general structure is presented together with examples based on a *table tennis laboratory,* where sport becomes a device to explore inequality, recognition, frustration, cooperation, and self-worth.
The main idea is that modifying the conditions of play (rules, tools roles, access to resources) allows participants to feel differences in opportunity, limitation, and recognition-thus activating a deeper understanding of dignity.

Purpose/Learning objectives

The main purpose of this method is to promote an **experimental reflection on human dignity**, understood as an intrinsic value.
Through sport-based activities, participants will:

- Experience dignity in concrete and sometimes unequal situations
- Reflect on personal and others' value
- Recognise inequalities, stereotypes, and invisible privileges
- Develop collaboration, mutual listening, and respect
- Express themselves and build meaningful connection within the group

Values addressed

Human and individual dignity; listening and mutual respect; inclusion and equality; recognition and self-worth; and the right to participation and expression.

Duration

Minimum: 60 minutes. Maximum: 120 minutes. Duration may be adapted depending on the number of participants, the number of rounds or activities, the depth of reflection, and the sport or discipline selected.

Facilitation

To ensure a meaningful and inclusive experience, the group should include a maximum of 20 participants.

Recommended facilitation:

- educators for groups up to 12 participants
- educators for larger groups Their role is not to teach, but to:

- guide the experience
- regulate intensity and inclusion
- observe group dynamics
- activate reflection at the right moments

Materials

Materials depend on the chosen sport and may include balls, rackets, cones, or goals. Additional materials may include everyday objects used to modify the game, blindfolds, printed or handwritten coded messages, pens or markers

Setting

Flexible:

- Indoor (gyms, youth centres, classrooms)
- Outdoor (fields, courtyards, open spaces)

The important element is the possibility to move freely and create teams.

Facilitation steps

1. Welcome and introduction

Educators open the activity with a sport-based icebreaker to create a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Participants are invited to introduce themselves through a simple and dynamic interaction linked to the chosen sport.

- This phase builds: trust, initial engagement, group activation

Example (table tennis): participants pass the ping-pong ball to each other; whoever receives it shares their name, age, and favourite sport.

2. The coded message

- Participants are divided into teams and asked to solve a coded message where numbers or symbols correspond to words.
- Messages are related to dignity (definitions, quotes, keywords) Teams can ask for help, but with a penalty (e.g. losing points)
- The result determines different conditions in the next phase.

Example (table tennis): teams decode a message about dignity; the team that takes longer or asks for more help will play the next round with a disadvantage (e.g. non-standard equipment).

3. Unbalanced challenges

- Teams compete in the chosen sport under different and intentionally unequal conditions.
- The imbalance is designed to generate an embodied experience of: limitation and frustration, adaptation and creativity, perceived injustice, cooperation

Example (table tennis): one team uses regular rackets, while the other uses alternative tools such as a wooden spoon, a pot lid, or an oven mitt.

Reflective questions (minimum questions)

- When did you feel recognised by others?
- How did the different conditions affect the way you saw yourself and others?

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- Did your sense of value change depending on your performance or result? Why?
- What does dignity mean to you after this experience?

Inclusion and accessibility adjustments

- Physical intensity should be adapted to participants' abilities and vulnerabilities.
- Alternative roles such as observer, supporter, or strategist should be offered, simple language and non-verbal tools should be used, and competition should be balanced with cooperation.
- The selected sport should be chosen with regard to participants' specific needs and levels of comfort.

Risk and safeguarding notes

Facilitators should monitor competitive dynamics to avoid conflict escalation, prevent humiliation linked to imposed disadvantages, protect emotional safety during reflective phases, avoid reproducing real inequalities without proper facilitation, and ensure that all participants feel seen and respected.

Outputs and suggested indicators

Outputs may include active participation across the group, spontaneous reflections on fairness, value, and respect, verbal or non-verbal expressions of self-worth, and strong group cohesion and mutual recognition. Suggested indicators include active engagement, ability to collaborate under unequal conditions, and evidence of reflective learning emerging from the activity.

5.5 Project Method

What is it about

Activity Type: A learner-centered, collaborative inquiry process focused on problem- solving and "learning by doing". It refers to Participant-Led Learning: It aligns with the philosophy of the Project Method (often attributed to William Heard Kilpatrick), which emphasizes learner interest, collaboration, and solving real-world problems.

Context/Setting: A flexible, non-formal, or formal environment where the Youth Worker functions as a facilitator rather than a lecturer, and the work extends into the local community for the final presentation.

The "Project Method" is a teaching/learning practice that allows for a group of learners to work together in order to create or develop something as a result of investigation and research (NCSALL, 2005) on a real-world issue that the group considers important. Its starting point is the decision of the group to address this issue collectively, to search for answers or solutions. The group then gets engaged in the work of exploration, re-construction of knowledge and group work: they conduct research methods (interviews, collection of "evidence" or data etc), make use of existing information, interact, cooperate and make decisions, judging and evaluating their "findings" all the way until they get to form the answer to the problem they have set as the point of departure. The process is actually a journey that develops learning for each individual participant and at the same time brings forth a collectively produced outcome (such as a book, a podcast, a leaflet, an exhibition etc.) that reflects their answer to the problem they have set at the beginning. This outcome is then presented in the community (neighbourhood, school, youth club) to raise awareness or to inform and even to influence decision-making. During this process, the youth worker/counsellor/teacher acts as an organizer of the work of the group rather than as the typical lecturer or leading organizer of a group activity: In this Method the educator is seen more as a facilitator than a deliverer of knowledge and information (NCSALL, 2005).*

Purpose/Learning objectives

The purpose is to increase young people's understanding of European values: human dignity, equality and anti-discrimination. In more detail:
The application of the Project Method within the WAVE Project provides participants with a structured framework to explore real -world social problems, such as inequalities, discrimination or violations of human dignity, as experienced by the learners in everyday life situations, critically analyse them and develop practical solutions or responses to them. By engaging in the Project Method activities, participants will identify specific societal issues of concern to them, investigate their manifestations and causes and relate them to what they consider right or wrong, namely to values. Motivated by their own concern for what they recognize as problematic in their everyday life, they cooperate to seek answers and solutions to the "problem" they have identified. Through this process, participants will gain:

- Regulatory Knowledge: An understanding of the phenomena they explore and how EU and national regulations address these issues.

- Value-Based Understanding: A deeper insight into the core values, rights, and legal protections both national and European that safeguard individuals and counteract negative societal impacts.
- Skills upgrade: Project Method applications are recognized for contributing to the development of skills such as critical thinking and reflection (Mezirow 1998), attachment of meaning to a situation or object (Dewey [1916) 1966), self-motivation and empowerment (Wrigley 1998, p.5), civic engagement (Freire).

*Interested to find out more about the Project Method?

"Project Method derives its pedagogical background from the educational theory of J.Dewey (1968} as well as from Vygotsky's work on cognitive psychology (1997-Greek edition). First presented in an article by Kilpatrick in 1918 (NCSALL, 2005}, it is strongly attached to the "progressive movement in education" of the first decades of the 20th century that stressed out the importance of "practical inquiry
-everyday problem solving -and meaning seeking as part of social interaction" (Wrigley 1998, p.2} . It is defined as a practice that allows for a group of learners to work together in order to create or develop something as a result of investigation and research (NCSALL, 2005}. In doing so they acquire knowledge because they collect and implement information, research and experience their environment and finally create or re-construct the object of their learning, that is the outcome of their research (see also the learning-by-doing problematic in Dewey's classic work "Democracy and Education", originally published in 1916). Unlike traditional education, proponents of the project method attempt to allow the student to solve problems with as little teacher direction as possible. The teacher is seen more as a facilitator than a deliverer of knowledge and information (NCSALL, 2005). The Project Method practices and the Project-based learning were introduced in adult education by Freire (1970) and his followers in their attempt to establish participatory and emancipating education models connected to collective action and community oriented movements (Wringley 1998, p.3). More recent theorists in the field of adult education have stressed out other, less political aspects of the Project Method potential in learning, such as individual growth, self-actualization and self-expression (Wringley 1998, p.3). It has also been connected to the critical pedagogy school of thought that requires from adult education to provide "services that are culturally relevant, participant driven, and socially empowering" (Degener 2001}".ttmiro Grundtvig Project: Training the trainers material, www.nostos.org.gr

Values addressed

The Project Method provides a frame for the exploration of a variety of social circumstances underpinned by EU values such as the dignity of the person, anti- discrimination, equality etc. The choice of the value to be addressed in the Project Method process depends on the concerns or questions the group of participants shares and decides to explore further up to the point to collaboratively create a response to them.

Duration

Min - max minutes : The duration depends on the decision of the group members facilitator(s) on their work plan and tasks allocation. It could be min. 3 meetings + the "final event" and its

preparation (public presentation of the results and outcomes, for example launching of a podcast) or it could be a series of group meetings extended in weeks or months to share and review the work done between the meetings.

Facilitation

There is no maximum number of participants, the minimum though is 6-10 persons. The number of social/youth workers or educators needed depends on the number of participants and the complexity of the subject of the exploration the group conducts. Usually it is one educator/youth or social worker per 20 persons.

Materials

Writing materials and a black/white board and a flipchart, for the group to take notes, describe the plan and its development, take minutes etc. Other materials that may be needed depend on the plan the group has formulated. For example if the outcome of the project is a leaflet to be distributed in the neighborhood or the local community, they will need PC and printer, paper etc.

Setting

No particular specifications. The most important though is that the meeting place must be a safe environment for all the participants.

Facilitations steps

Common phases in the Project Method, although groups can determine the ways that a project is realized are the following: "identification of a problem or issue; preliminary investigations; planning and assigning tasks; researching the topic; implementing the project, drafting and developing a final product; disseminating and evaluated what worked" (NCSALL, 2005, p.2}. In more detail, a Project Method application includes the following steps or stages:

1. identification of a problem or issue:

Project Method is a pedagogic framework that facilitates learning. Its content is defined by the initiative of the participants. Participants are supposed

- to form a group on their own initiative because they are interested in a problem and they decide to search for a solution to it.
- to commit themselves to the task at hand, to accept responsibility

2. preliminary investigations, planning and assigning tasks:

The initial and preliminary investigation of the topic they have chosen to focus on through brainstorming, gathering of basic information etc, allows participants to get an idea of what the project involves. At this point the participants decide:

- to work in teams, so that tasks are shared and all members contribute to the finalresult
- to decide (and agree!) on the content and the structure of their work as a group
- to work in a structured way
  1. researching the topic, which is equivalent to implementing the project,
  2. drafting and developing a final product that is the outcome of the project

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3. presenting and disseminating the final product, for example by organizing a local event
4. evaluation of the work done, the accomplishments and setbacks

Outputs and suggested indicators

The final product of the group's collective work, expressing their views on the issue they have investigated, the solution or response they have reached and the values that underpin it.
Photo and video documentation of the process.

Indicators: Number of participants that remained till the end of the process; level of participation and engagement; follow-up measures taken to re-align the process if something goes wrong; number of documented materials (minutes, interview drafts etc).

Inclusion and accessibility adjustments

- Allow writing/drawing contributions; provide interpretation and plain-language prompts.
- Offer small-group circles for participants who prefer lower exposure.

Risk and safeguarding notes

As a participant-led learning method, the application of the Project Method is based on the participants' motivation and commitment. For this, it is useful to arrange a "contract" among all the embers including the facilitator(s) to lay out their plan, their objectives and some basic rules of conduct and interaction.
Besides that, the Project Method is inclusive by definition because

- it promotes active involvement of participants and ensures their engagement
- it enables each one of the participants to contribute their personal interests and skills to the shared objective-it constitutes a blending of personal interests or knowledge to achieve the intended result. Thus, the outcome of the project is the synthesis of everyone's skills, knowledge and contribution
- it is particularly effective on participants that seem reluctant or intimidated or even resistant because it combines teamwork with individual action on the basis of personal interests and secures that each participant acquires equal standing to every other group member.

6. Training and Transfer-to-Practice Package

A central element of the second project phase was the transfer of the methods developed and tested into practical youth work settings. To achieve this, the project combined an International Training for Youth Workers and Educators with a series of Local Trainings organised by the project partners in their respective countries.

Building on the international training, each partner organisation organised local training activities involving professionals from their own networks and communities. These trainings served as a testing and transfer phase, allowing participants to adapt the methods to local realities, target groups and institutional settings. Feedback collected during the local trainings contributed to the further refinement of the methods and guidelines.

6.1 Training pathway

The reports and evaluation results confirm that workshops and laboratories achieved higher engagement when youth workers were supported by expert facilitation, a 'mute observer' perspective, and structured documentation, including video interviews subject to consent. The training concept integrates these elements into a coherent training and replication pathway.

6.2 International Training-of-Trainers (ToT)

The Training-of-Trainers (ToT), an international event, is recommended as the primary mechanism to ensure methodological coherence and safeguard compliance. The ToT combines foundations in values-to-standards, facilitation skills, hands-on method practice, safeguarding and ethics, and replication planning. The ToT is intended for youth workers from four countries who during a two day training gained knowledge which they will implemented within the local trainings in their countries.

The international training held in Athens on 10–11 March 2026 brought together youth workers and partner organisations from several European countries to explore how European values such as democracy, equality, non-discrimination and human dignity can be promoted through intercultural youth work. The programme combined presentations, discussions and interactive exercises, allowing participants to reflect on the meaning of these values in everyday life and to exchange experiences from their respective national contexts. Particular attention was given to the practical dimension of democracy education and the ways in which young people can be encouraged to actively participate in their communities.

A significant part of the training focused on innovative methods for teaching and promoting European values. Partner organisations presented a range of approaches, including Project Method, Democracy Theatre Direkt, Self-Portrait as a Path to Dignity, Artistic and Music Expression, and Sports as a Key to Dignity. Through World Café sessions and in-depth workshops, participants had the opportunity to experience these methods first hand, discuss their effectiveness, and assess their potential for adaptation in different settings.

The training concluded with a collective reflection on the learning process, highlighting key outcomes, lessons learned, and opportunities for transferring and adapting the methods through local trainings, thereby enabling youth workers and other practitioners to apply these approaches in their daily work with young people across Europe.

The international training served as the foundation for the subsequent local trainings by providing participants with practical experience of the project's educational methods and a common methodological framework. Through the exploration, testing and reflection of the different approaches, participants strengthened their capacity to transfer these methods to their national contexts and adapt them to the needs of local youth workers and young people. This transfer process ensured that the knowledge, values and practices developed at the international level could be further disseminated and sustainably applied through local training activities.

6.3 Local Trainings

The local trainings conducted in four different countries serve as a mechanism for the practical application, contextual adaptation, and further dissemination of the methodological structure established during the international training. These trainings intend to equip youth workers, educators, social workers, trainers, and other relevant practitioners from participating countries with the skills to apply the knowledge, participatory methods, and values-based approaches they acquire within their respective local youth work contexts. The main goal is to strengthen participants' professional capacities to employ effective non-formal education methods for democracy education and the promotion of European values, with particular focus on democracy, equality, non-discrimination, human dignity, and meaningful participation. The local training can be organised as one and a half day or two days events, which build upon the methods introduced during the international training, including the Project Method, Democracy Theatre Direkt, Self-Portrait as a Path to Dignity, Artistic and Music Expression, and Sports as a Key to Dignity. These approaches are recognised as practical and transferable educational tools that support the exploration, experience, and critical reflection of democratic values in everyday youth work. Each partner organisation may select the methods most relevant to its local context, provided that the common methodological structure from the international training is preserved. This structure includes explicit learning objectives, participatory implementation, reflection and debriefing processes, safeguarding measures, inclusion and accessibility strategies, and modification planning. As a result, the local training support replicates and sustains the use of the developed guidelines and methods, thereby advancing the overarching project goal of strengthening the capacity of organisations and professionals to promote democratic culture, social inclusion, and active participation among young people at the local level (See Annex 2)

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

7.1 Core tools

The implementation of the workshops and laboratories demonstrated the operational value of combining participant questionnaires, structured observation by a 'mute observer', and video interviews capturing perceived usefulness and satisfaction, which were developed within the WP2. (See Annexes 3-5)

7.2 Minimum evaluation architecture

The monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) approach combines quantitative and qualitative elements, and particular qualitative evaluation questionnaire was developed for laboratories (Annex 4). The evaluation questionnaire for the workshop is a part of Annex 2 (guidelines for implementing the workshop)

7.3 Data governance

Data collection should adhere to data minimisation principles, be stored securely, and be used solely for project learning and reporting, in compliance with national legislation and GDPR requirements.

8. Multi-format Packaging and Visual Resources

To ensure accessibility and engagement, the Compilation will be disseminated in multiple complementary formats:

1. The formal Guideline with detailed Method Collection (Multilanguage)
2. Digital tools – Digital Guidelines and Video course for practitioners (Multilanguage)
3. Project-Website (Multilanguage)

The formats, tools and resources are all available on the website www.wave4youthwork.eu in the following languages: EN, GE, GR, IT, SRB.

Visual resources included in this Compilation will be original project visuals, partner-owned materials, or third-party resources used in compliance with applicable licensing and attribution requirements.

Annexes

Annex 1 Standard Method Template

Annex 2: The local training concept

Annex 3: Questionnaire

Annex 4: Mute observers' workshops evaluation

Annex 5: Workshop questions for interview (video)

Use and Dissemination of the WAVE II Materials

The educational materials developed within the Erasmus+ project WAVE II are freely available for non-commercial educational purposes. Youth workers, social workers, educators, civil society organisations and other interested stakeholders are encouraged to download, use, share and adapt these resources for democracy education, intercultural learning and youth participation.

When using or sharing the materials, please acknowledge the WAVE II project and its co-funding by the European Union through Erasmus+.

Project results:
www.wave4youthwork.eu

The materials are also available through the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform and the websites of participating organisations.

Suggested attribution:
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