



How to participate?

Workshop about active citizenship and participation in society.

If you have any questions or comments, please write to info@yvote.eu!

Time: 1,5 hour

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Goal:

1. Participants know what ways there are to participate in society, especially EP elections.
2. Participants know stories of people very active and understand their motivation.
3. Participants reflect their own participation in society.

Mini Outline:

1. Why? do we do this session
2. What? discussing different levels
3. How? get in groups, with one "active" person. exchange experiences, motivation
4. What if? - think about future, how one wants to be active

Outline

Why: Goal of session and why are we talking about it? (5 min)

Introduction by trainer. Tell the participants what the goals of the session are (see above) and why the sessions is done (e.g. by being active we can shape society in different ways, it is a privilege that we live in a society where we can freely stand up for what we believe in. There are many ways from very small and easy to very time-consuming to take part in. We believe it's important to know your options and find what role you want to take in society.)



What: participation at different levels (35 mins)

It's hard to give a definition of active citizenship. Gathering examples gives quite a good overview of the possibilities.

Option A: Explain to the participants that some externals who are very active in society are joining the session and there will be time later on to ask them questions. Let the externals introduce them self shortly (e.g. 1 min per person) so the participants have a basic overview of where they are active and what they do.

Discover what you know and do about active citizenship and participating in society:

part a: speed dating (10 mins)

Make an inner and outer circle facing each other

Prepare several questions about how pax already participate in society

A couple has 1 min time to answer the question to each other (announce change after 30 sec, tell them whether inner or outer circle should move) + let them say their names to remember them.

possible questions:

1. Have you ever voted and at which elections?
2. What possibilities are there to participate in your city and have you been active already?
3. Who motivated you to become active and whom did you motivate?
4. What topics are you most passionate about and why?
5. Have you signed and/or started a petition and for what causes?
6. Could you imagine increasing your participation, if so, in what ways?

part b: collecting ideas (25 mins)

- introduce different levels on which a person can be active: local (e.g. city and surroundings), regional (e.g. county/ region), national, EU, make a flipchart for each (with range from very easy to very time-consuming/ requiring skills etc) (5 min)
- four groups, one for each flipchart. ask them to gather examples on how to be active and write them down from very easy to more complicated (10 min) → *depending on the group size, it would be good to have one facilitator in each group*
Option A: you may ask your external visitors to join one group each and support them if they don't have so many ideas themselves
- let each group shortly present results in big group, add possible new ones if important are missing (e.g. volunteering, participatory budget, student council, referendum, saying your opinion online-against hate speech, discussing politics with friends,...) (10 min)

Mention the [this time I'm voting campaign](#) for EP elections 2019 by the European Parliament.



Option B: How? Save your study rooms! (40min)

The idea of this part is to let participants come up with a plan to achieve a certain thing in society. Form groups of 4-7 people and give one scenario to each of them.

Possible scenarios (you can also come up with your own):

1. Your university has decided to close one of the buildings which contains many study rooms because it needs to be renovated. However, the closing date is just when exam period starts and you and your fellow students are angry since you always used these rooms for studying. Now you want to convince them to let them open.
2. The community you live in has a partnership with another town/ city in a different EU member state. The local government has been gradually decreasing the budget for joint project since less and less people are taking part. You are a group of friends (whether from one city or both does not matter) and you want to revive the exchange programme.
3. The local park is the place where the citizens of your town get together for social activities. Especially during the summer months, you notice that littering is increasingly problematic. Try to find a solution involving as many parties as possible (not just the political ones... ;).
4. In your country the regions are responsible for educational programs. Now, the regional government plans to raise the students fee at universities. It will be double of the amount before. You are part of the students council in your university and want to convince the regional government to leave the fee as it is. How can you have the biggest impact?
5. Each year there is a big festival in your city which is very popular. Now, it was decided by court that it is not longer allowed. The city council supports this because of several reasons: a group of people living in the city center went to court because of the noise, the police does not have the capacity to deal with the increasing number of drunk people and vandalism and the city was extremely dirty afterwards. Still, the festival has many supporters, also because it brings the city community closer together. You, young citizens of the city, try to make the festival happen again next year.

Give the groups time (around 25 min) to discuss what they could do in this situation. As a trainer, walk around to check that they don't get stuck. Possible questions they should think about (trainer should use them as tips if they get stuck):

1. Why was this decision taken? What could be a possible compromise? (e.g. *close building only after exam period and try to have it done before the next one, or do different floors one after the other/ offer other rooms instead*)
2. Who are the influencers in this situation? Who has power? Who knows how the system works and might help? (e.g. *city council, uni, committee which took decision. Possibly student union/council might help and know whom to talk to*)
3. Where can possible supporters be found? (e.g. *uni cafeteria for student matters, neighborhood, online forums, ...*)
4. What actions can be taken? (e.g. *gather signatures, write letters to decision makers, ask for meeting to discuss the matter, protests, ...*)

In the end, let the groups shortly present their ideas/ plans (around 15 min. depending on how many groups were formed. e.g. 5 min per group. In case there were more groups, more time may have to be allocated).



Next?: Silent reflection (10 mins)

Write the following questions on a flipchart so that it's visible for all pax. Ask them to think about them by themselves (possibly make notes). This should be independent of the things they heard before, although they can let themselves be inspired by the ideas.

1. What kind of topic/field are you passionate about?
2. Could you imagine being active in this field (or another)? If already active, are you satisfied with your activities?
3. Think about the EP elections. Are you going to vote? Try to convince others to vote or educate them about the elections? Maybe talk to family members/ friends about it?
4. Write down two goals for yourself. This can be anything from asking your mom if she knows about the EP elections to organising a huge project!

Possibly (if time)

Come together in big group: Those who wish to say out loud their ideas for participation can do it shortly (not all)/ share what they noted down earlier. However, it can also be very personal so this is optional.