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AKA BOOKLET:

Methodologies for Fostering Social Action and Democratic Engagement

CONTENTS

A K A
Active Citizens

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The AKA (Awareness, Knowledge, Action) Active Citizens project has been two full years (2022-2024) of transformative and eye-opening experience. The project aimed to increase the democratic participation and engagement of young people with vulnerable backgrounds in eight different countries. Living in a world where there are still inequalities that threaten for young people's participation in democratic processes proves that there is still a long way to establish inclusive democracies. Young people, particularly from marginalised communities are often the first to face barriers and are excluded from political debates that concern their and our common future.

At the beginning of this AKA journey, SOLIDAR Foundation together with project partners designed a project with a view to tackle these inequalities, enable environment and establish ways for youth to ensure their active and meaningful involvement in democratic life in the societies they live. To explore sustained ways to inclusive democracies and build this bridge for youth, the project utilised Global Citizenship Education (GCE) concepts and methodologies to empower and encourage its participants through awareness raising and knowledge sharing workshops, equipping them with the necessary tools to find solutions to issues and to effectively engage in the democratic processes.

Throughout the project, partners in collaboration with SOLIDAR Foundation, engaged in continuous peer learning, mentorship, fostering a sense of community among educators and participants and creating a safe space for youth to design their own learning journey and take action accordingly. This collaboration helped participants to gain awareness of societal and environmental issues, to learn about their roles in democratic societies and engage in political debates to amplify their voice to policymakers.

This booklet is a practical guide for educators and practitioners keen on promoting transformative learning experiences. It offers concrete tools, approaches, definitions and 6 flexible steps to take to support the community of education practitioners in familiarising with Global Citizenship Education and start practicing it, or further developing different methodologies. Available in eight languages, we aim to present main concepts, themes, and methodologies used to highlight the non-formal education pedagogical approaches that were implemented and how they impacted participants with diverse backgrounds.

INTRODUCTION

The AKA (Awareness, Knowledge, Action) Active Citizens[1], co-funded by the CERV Programme of the European Commission, ran over the course of two years (2022-2024) and **aimed to promote the democratic participation and engagement** at the **EU level of young citizens** with **vulnerable backgrounds** in **8 countries** through **Global Citizenship Education (GCE) based activities** implemented in **community centres**. Coordinated by SOLIDAR Foundation[2], in collaboration with project partners namely, Associazione di Promozione Sociale (ARCI)[3] (Italy), Ceméa[4] (France), Centre for Peace Studies (CPS)[5] (Croatia), DAFNI KEK[6] (Greece), Diáspora Sem Fronteiras[7] (Portugal), Liga Española de la Educación[8] (Spain), Pour la Solidarité[9] (Belgium) and Willi-Eichler Akademie[10] (Germany).

In light of the European Elections of 2024, but also in the broader realm of achieving fairer, more equal societies that live in harmony with each other and the environment at a global scale, it is essential to promote the participation of youth, a sector of the population that is often willing to participate in politics but doesn't always have the right tools to express their demands and interact with the EU democratic processes. This is especially relevant in the case of those from vulnerable backgrounds or those who, due to intersecting characteristics, encounter obstacles to their political participation. By fostering their involvement in the democratic and civic life of the EU, the gap between their local realities and broader European governance can be bridged.

More specifically, to enable environment and explore ways of engagement in civic life, the project elaborated and tested GCE-based methodologies to empower the youth involved through Awareness and Knowledge, resulting in Action tackling social challenges for a just transition as well as structural inequalities in our society in a **collective** and **transnational** manner. Young participants got the opportunity to acquire awareness of current societal and environmental challenges, understand their role and opportunities in a democratic society and the contribution of diverse stakeholders. In this way, they also got the opportunity to learn about EU policy and how to impact it democratically, interact with policymakers and replicate the methodology used to further social action beyond the project's lifespan. Throughout the project, partners benefitted of **continuous peer learning** opportunities sharing the lessons learned, contributing to the **sense of belonging to the EU** indirectly by facilitating the creation of a community composed of educators and young participants who cooperated for two years, for their personal betterment but also for the betterment of their communities at the local level, and eventually at the EU and global level.

With this booklet, project partners aim to present the main features of the terminology and methodologies used throughout the project and the different target groups involved, outlining the non-formal education pedagogical approaches that were implemented and how they impacted participants. These methodologies resulted from a

common understanding of what is Global Citizenship Education and how to practice it as a transformative learning experience, which stemmed from the **Training of Trainers** that all educators involved in the project attended at the start of the project. They then implemented it locally throughout **24 activities** carried out by 8 community centres co-created by project partners and the 500+ young people involved. Participants in the project were involved in the very early stages of the preparation of the activities, by attending the training for trainers along with educators and defining together the guidelines for all activities that took place in the following two years.

The multilingual approach is meant to enable further testing and implementation of the methodological features that project partners identified thanks to the AKA Active Citizens project and therefore for fostering social action and democratic engagement at the EU as well as the local level.
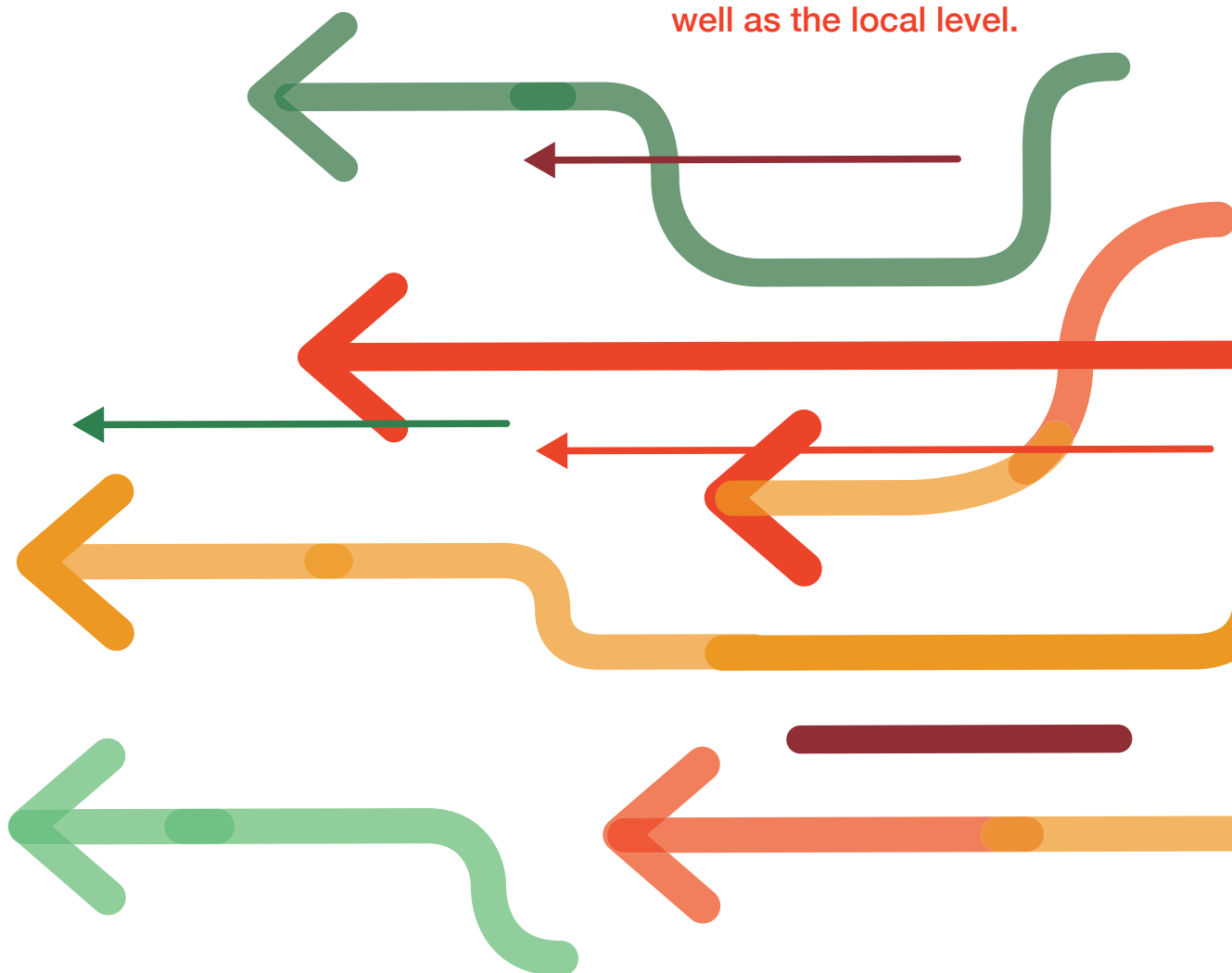
METHODOLOGIES: FOUNDATIONS FOR GCE METHODOLOGIES THAT FOSTER SOCIAL ACTION AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

The different workshops organised in 8 different EU countries were implemented through various Global Citizenship Education (GCE) methodologies and benefited from various pedagogical tools. By using these methodologies and tools, **the project partners aimed at tackling structural discrimination and enabling democratic participation, promoting GCE for mainly youth in vulnerable situations**. Each workshop introduces unique approaches and tools designed to engage participants, foster understanding, and encourage active participation in the communities they live. The following sections include an analysis on the applied methodologies, common strengths and areas to improve across different countries.
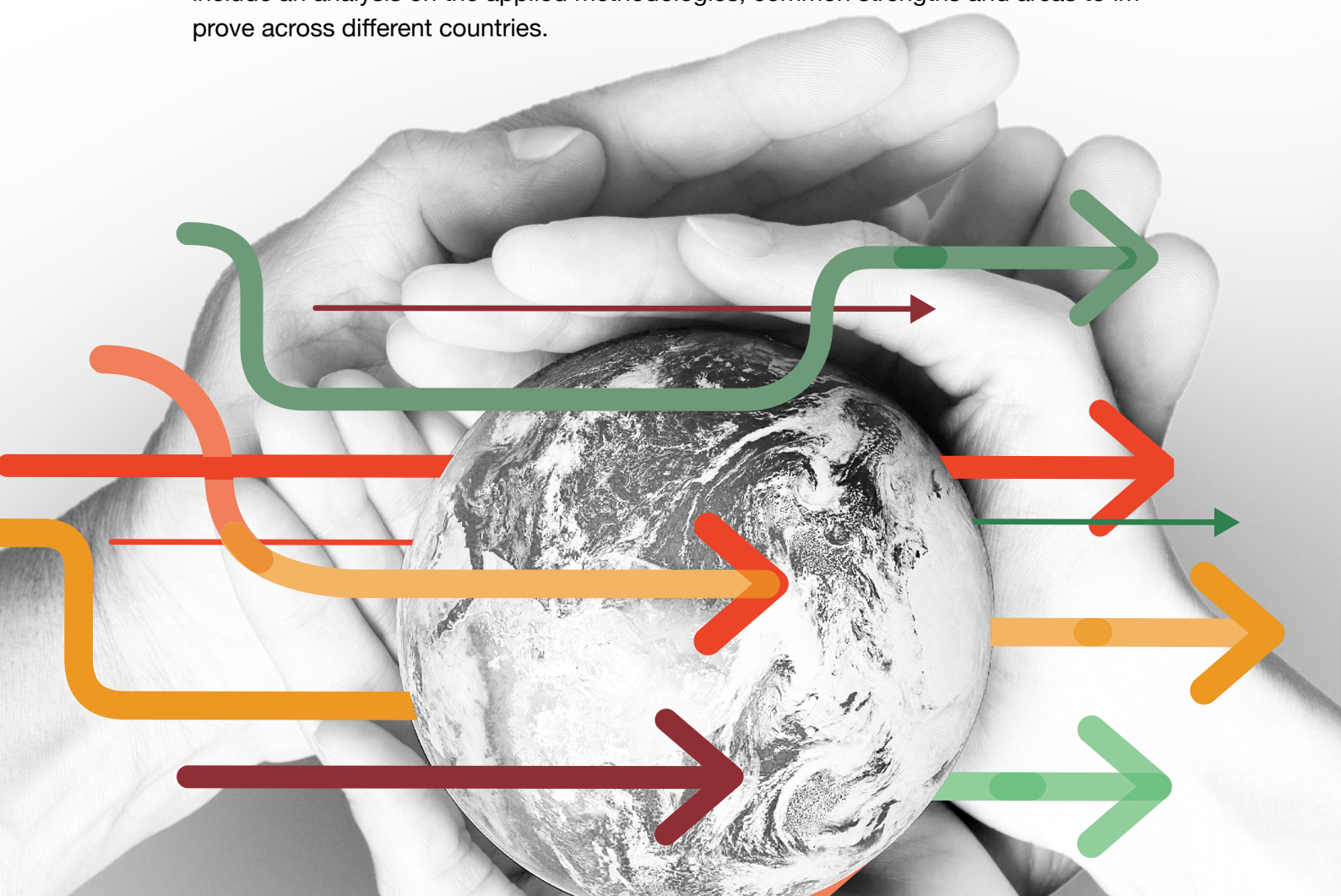
A common definition of GCE

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) can be defined in different ways, and the angle SOLIDAR Foundation has taken is the one of Professor Vanessa Andreotti of the University of British Columbia, as it encompasses many of SOLIDAR members' conceptualisations[11]. Andreotti understands GCE as political education on a global scale which prepares learners to develop a sense of belonging to the global community, to get involved and to take an active role in society to contribute to a peaceful, just world in which ecological resources are preserved. She explains that key challenges such as migration, climate change, digitisation and peacekeeping are global in nature and cannot be tackled within a nation-state framework alone[12].

This core approach aligns with the aims of AKA because it involves a transformative, democratic, and participatory, value-driven perspective. Participants were not meant to be merely informed or trained in a top-down manner but empowered to take action both during and as a result of the project, understanding societal issues, recognising their right to participation and acquiring the tools for it. It also aligned with partners previous work on people' engagement in matters such as gender equality or environmental awareness, and their mastery of non-formal pedagogical approaches. In a collaborative effort to foster a cohesive and impactful approach, and building upon the existing work of SOLIDAR and its members on a theoretical and policy framework for GCE, educators and young leaders from all partner organisations gathered in Brussels for one day of joint training at the start of the project, to identify the key values of GCE that they all shared. Together, they elaborated the concrete steps that each activity shall have implemented to adhere to the concept of a transformative learning experience.

Based on this, community centres were set-up in 8 different EU countries using GCE methodologies with the help of various pedagogical tools, to promote empowering education on structural discrimination, democratic participation, and targeting youth in vulnerable situations. Each centre then held a workshop on a different topic according to the target group and their needs. These workshops introduced unique concepts and tools designed with a tailored, co-created approach to engage participants, foster understanding, and encourage active participation in the communities they live.

The glossary that can be found below is the result of this joint work to achieve a shared methodology for GCE, where each partner contributed to the definition of one or more concepts, as indicated by the organisation's names in between brackets. The concepts presented below are categorised under 5 thematic namely, **Climate Justice, Democratic Participation, Gender Equality, Learning,** and **Social Justice**. Under GCE, co-creation of tools, ensuring a safe learning environment, peer learning practices and action-oriented approaches were foreseen to foster transformative learning.

Glossary of the Main Concepts and Themes

CLIMATE JUSTICE

1. **Climate disruptions**[13]**:** significant and rapid changes in Earth's climate conditions, often associated with global warming caused by human activities. **(CEMÉA)**

2. **Eco-responsibility & Activism & Justice**[14]**:** collectively or individually refer to the practices and movements aimed at ensuring a sustainable interaction between the humans and environment. This includes adopting eco-friendly behaviours and practices to minimise environmental impact (responsibility), advocating for sustainable management of resources and influencing public policy, and individual actions to prevent ecological damage. **(CEMÉA and ARCI and Liga Española de la Educación)**

3. **Guerrilla gardening**: Act of gardening – raising food, plants or flowers, on land that the gardeners do not have the legal rights to cultivate, such as abandoned sites, areas that are not being cared for, or private property. **(ARCI)**

4. **Just transition**: a concept aimed at ensuring that the transition to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly economy is fair for all, especially for the most vulnerable countries, communities, workers. **(CEMÉA)**

5. **Permaculture**: an approach to land management and settlement design adopting arrangements observed in flourishing natural ecosystems and applying them to regenerative agriculture, town planning, rewilding and community resilience. **(ARCI)**

6. **Planetary boundaries**[15]**:** the physical limits of the Earth's biosphere within which humanity can sustainably develop without threatening vital ecosystems. **(CEMÉA)**

7. **Sustainability**: balance and respect between human development and the planet's conservation, maintaining social and environmental justice. **(Liga Española de la Educación)**

8. **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030**[16]**:** a set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to combat poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. **(CEMÉA, DAFNI KEK)**

9. **Urban mobility and accessibility**: citizens' right to travel and commute in their own city using a public transport system that is eco-friendly. **(Liga Española de la Educación)**

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

10. **Active Participation**[17]**:** engaging with participants as active co-creators and contributors for all activities, leading to enhanced democratic participation also outside the project activities. This includes the competences that people need to reach a level of awareness of themselves in relation to the environments they are plunged into, to make sensible decisions and participate actively and positively in the democratic cultures they live in. **(All partners)**

11. **Artivism**: The intersection of art and activism, harnesses the critical imagination to design events and strategies that provoke new questions and meanings in pursuit of more respectful ways of being. The forms of artivism changes according to its historical context, and its use of technology and media. In many cases artivists attempt to push political agendas by the means of art, with a focus on raising awareness of social, environmental, and technological problems[18]. **(Centre for Peace Studies)**

12. **Civil disobedience**: Active refusal of a citizen to obey certain laws or demands of a government (or other authority). It has to be "nonviolent" to be called "civil". **(Pour La SOLIDARITE (PLS))**

13. **Community centre**: a meeting space animated by value-driven communities. These included youth centres (BE, DE), educational centres (ES, FR) social and cultural centres (EL, HR, IT) migrants' centres (PT) that project partners cooperate regularly with, and where young people from vulnerable backgrounds, and notably young women, feel safe to take collective action.

GENDER EQUALITY

14. **Gender equality**: equality of rights and opportunities between all individuals regardless of biological sex, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. (Diaspora Sem Fronteiras) **Civil disobedience**: Active refusal of a citizen to obey certain laws or demands of a government (or other authority). It has to be "nonviolent" to be called "civil". **(Pour La SOLIDARITE (PLS))**

LEARNING

15. **Anti-discrimination Education**: addressing and counteracting biases, prejudices, and discrimination in educational settings by promoting equality and inclusivity. It involves teaching about social justice, human rights, and the impacts of discrimination on individuals and society. **(Willi-Eichler Akademie)**

16. **Critical Race Theory**: methodology used in anti-discrimination education, focusing on understanding and challenging the ways race and racism intersect with other forms of inequality and oppression in legal and social systems. **(Willi-Eichler Akademie)**

17. **Formal, non-formal and informal learning:**
    a. **Formal education** is curriculum-driven, with a specific plan for both proceedings and outcomes, and with pre-defined and developed content as the basic pedestal for learning.
    b. **Non-formal** takes place outside of the official education system (organizations, NGOs, youth clubs, etc.) but is still embedded in planned activities.
    c. **Informal learning** is the opposite of formal learning and is driven by conversation and interaction, it is dynamic and always subject to the people involved and the situation that germinates[19]. Together with non-formal learning, it is considered an effective way of learning, especially for young people, because it is flexible, learner-driven, and contextual. This type of learning is often more meaningful and immediately applicable, which enhances retention and understanding. It also leverages curiosity and intrinsic motivation, encouraging continuous personal and professional growth. **(All partners)**

18. **Intercultural Education**: A political movement and process aimed at ensuring social justice for disadvantaged students that recognizes social justice as an institutional issue that can only be resolved through comprehensive education; the starting point of a critical analysis of the system of power and privilege. The fundamental goal of intercultural education is the elimination of inequality through education; good education for all[20]. **(Centre for Peace Studies)**

19. **Lifelong and Life wide Learning**: learning that applies to all forms of learning activities over the course of one's life and encompassing the different dimensions of each person's life (for personal as well as professional development and wellbeing). It includes formal, non-formal, and informal learning. **(All partners)**

20. **Political education**: encouraging participants to think critically, take risks, challenge those with power, and be reflexive about how authority is used in society **(All partners)**

21. **Value-based**: ensuring that all activities' content and methods reflect the values underpinning the definition of GCE, such as tolerance, freedom, respect, social and environmental justice, and solidarity (see the definition of GCE) **(All partners)**

SOCIAL JUSTICE

22. **Addressing injustice**: adopting a methodology that integrates a reflection on injustices and structural discriminations in all activities **(All partners)**

23. **Gentrification**: A process whereby the character of a poor urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, often displacing current inhabitants in the process. **(Pour La SOLIDARITE (PLS))**

24. **Interconnectedness**: the state of having different parts or things connected or related to each other (e.g. the interconnectedness between the climate and social crises). (All partners)

25. **Intercultural awareness raising:** acknowledging cultural differences, encouraging a dialogue that identifies diversity as an added value **(All partners)**.

26. **Intergenerational Solidarity**[21]: social cohesion between generations **(DAFNI KEK)**

27. **Intersectionality:** the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalised individuals or groups[22].**(All partners)**

28. **Intersectional discrimination:** happens when two or multiple grounds of discrimination operate simultaneously and interact in an inseparable manner, producing distinct and specific forms of discrimination. **(Pour La SOLIDARITE (PLS))**

29. **Social Inequalities**[23]**:** Inequalities related to economic status (such as income, pay or wealth inequality), inequality of treatment and responsibility (benefit from and access privileges), political/civic discriminations (access to governmental resources), unequal opportunities to improve one's quality of life and discrimination based on membership (be it for familial, national and religious origins for instance). **(DAFNI KEK)**

30. **Social justice:** pursuit of equity to diminish social inequalities at an individual and collective level, with an effective intersectional gaze. **(DAFNI KEK and Liga Española de la Educación)**

32. **Socio-Spatial segregation**: Separation of a population on the same territory according to its differences in income. **(Pour La SOLIDARITE (PLS))**

33. **Structural discrimination**: Sustained inequality between individuals on the basis of illness, disability, religion, sexual orientation or another measures of diversity **(Pour La SOLIDARITE (PLS))**

34. **Urbanisation**: A process by which large numbers of people become permanently concentrated in relatively small areas, forming cities. **(ARCI)**

Strengths for organising a Transformative Learning Experience

The success of the GCE methodologies was not only due to contextual factors but also to the foresight and care taken to create a space in which they could thrive, allowing participants to express themselves and participate freely. During the project's conception and also because of the initial joint training, several effective practices were identified and employed by participants. This comprehensive effort involved key components such as the co-creation of tools, ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment, implementing peer learning and mentorship, and utilising action-oriented pedagogical approaches. Each element contributed significantly to the project's overall success and the meaningful engagement of participants. In addition, two areas such as better evaluation and follow-up as well as common understanding of the concepts and time constraints were identified as areas for strengthening.

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CO-CREATION AND PARTICIPANTS' ENGAGEMENT

A conducive environment for transformative learning starts from the set-up of the activity. The emphasis on practising meaningful participation, empowering participants to engage actively in the designing of each activity and in selecting the topics to be discussed was identified as a key element for the success of the community centres. Methods such as brainstorming, world café, and interactive discussions fostered a sense of involvement and ownership. Furthermore, the pedagogical tools like **photolanguage**, **SDGs mapping**, and the **Climate Fresk**[24] made complex topics accessible and engaging for a public otherwise at risk of distance from crucial debates for the future of our societies.

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Another essential aspect of the workshops implemented in this project that allowed for meaningful engagement of vulnerable communities was the adoption of **safety contract** or **codes of conduct**. These were designed at the beginning of the project and presented and discussed with participants at the beginning of the activities of the community centres. The aim is to ensure a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment for diversity to be expressed, respected and heard. This approach enabled participants to feel comfortable sharing their opinions and learning from each other. The creation of safe spaces where personal, lived experiences could be shared, such as Truth Talks implemented by WEA, Germany, and generating questions about gender equality and democratic participation (Diaspora Sem Fronteiras, Portugal) further contributed to a supportive and inclusive environment.

PEER LEARNING AND MENTORSHIP

The elements of peer learning and mentorship implemented during all workshops in 8 different countries have proven to be beneficial for learners. The use of these elements allowed participants to learn from each other, develop leadership skills and helped them to activate in their own communities. In addition, the identification of young leaders to liaise with project partners facilitated transnational peer-learning. These were young participants in the activities that volunteered to take a more active role in the project by working closely with the educators for the co-creation of activities as well as for the peer learning session of the project

meetings with other partners. Mentorship programs, as seen in the **empower young people: What bothers you? Who will fix it? project implemented by Centre for Peace Studies (CPS)**, Croatia, empowered young people to take active roles in education and community engagement.

ACTION-ORIENTED PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES AND TOOLS

Throughout the implementation of the local level workshops, partner organisations included action-oriented approach into their activities. This approach was used to enable participants to think about and implement practical actions to address existing problems in their societies. The use of practical tools like **Design Thinking** utilised by **Liga Española de la Educación, Spain** to identify existing issues in society and concepts of **urbanisation and environmental activism, utilised by ARCI, Italy**[25], encouraged participants to practically apply their learning(s) to their societal problems and develop short-and long-term actionable solutions. This included activities where participants had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with policymakers to voice their concerns, share their ideas and participating in policy debates at local level. On the other hand, while participants engaged in direct interaction with policymakers, the integration of their inputs or recommendations into concrete policy actions and continuation of these dialogues were not always guaranteed.

ENSURING COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF CONCEPTS

Ensuring common understanding of concepts among all participants and educators with sufficient time. The concepts such as ecological transition, intergenerational solidarity, etc., used to tackle or address existing challenges in eight different countries proved to be very effective. However, the concepts are complex and require some time to explore and become familiar with. The need to **better adapt the approach of these concepts** to the local context and realities of the participants was also identified as an important aspect for an impactful activity. Before starting a workshop, tailoring the concepts to local needs can help participants to understand and relate these concepts to their realities more easily.

BETTER EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

One of the transversal areas that requires improvement in learning activities is the **establishment of long-term follow-up and evaluation mechanisms**. Throughout the implementation of local level activities, participants' immediate engagement in providing feedback on spot were high, however it was challenging to identify and implement structured plan to assess the long-term impact of the activities on participants daily lives and their communities. This includes mechanisms for continuous and effective engagement of participants in their communities.

Target Group — The Importance of Bringing Together Participants from Diverse Backgrounds in the AKA Project

Bringing individuals from such diverse backgrounds together was crucial for an enhanced learning experience with the aim of fostering more inclusive and accessible communities in the AKA project. During the implementation of national level activities, the project partners ensured an inclusive space where diverse perspectives and experiences were shared during discussions and allowing participants to learn from each other. By engaging in these discussions, participants exposed themselves to different realities, gaining insights that they might not have encountered in their daily lives.

In addition, **participants from marginalised backgrounds found a sense of empowerment in sharing their stories and being heard**, motivating and inspiring them to take active roles in their communities. Bringing diverse individuals together has also proven to generate more comprehensive solutions to existing issues that affect all members of society. Working, collaborating and implementing activities in different contexts in a learning environment also helped remove certain stereotypes and prejudices. It fostered the sense of acceptance and understanding of the existence of different cultures, which is vital for social cohesion.

This diversity is a core strength of the community centres that the project supported, as it surpasses the more limited notion of tolerance, and is about truly understanding each other. **When both learners and educational staff are comfortable with diversity, inclusion is fostered, and diversity enables an enrichment of the learning environment.**

The AKA project primarily targeted young people with vulnerable backgrounds, to ensure their active and meaningful engagement in their communities. Based on the UNIA's report[26] published in 2022, 7,310 persons filed complaints, mainly based on their origin, health condition or disability. Ethnic-based motivations are the first cause for discrimination in the country. For this reason, **Pour La Solidarité (PLS)** focused on young NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) aged 18-29 in the Brussels region, coming from vulnerable backgrounds including low social and marginalised communities, ethnic minorities, migrant communities, or individuals with low school performance. Similarly, there are groups of young people with a migrant background living in Croatia, facing discrimination. They are often left out from peer groups, remain in small, segregated communities, with low awareness of their potential to affect change, and no political rights. **CPS** worked with two groups: motivated young individuals who could educate their peers and youth making initial attempts to get involved in activities, including young people from migrant communities, all interested in progressive social change. **Diaspora Sem Fronteiras** included young people from vulnerable communities aged 13-32, including high school students and participants of the Educa Program, the programme that helps students to develop their critical thinking, observation, re-

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flecting skills and developing learning mechanisms from Cascais. When it comes to the challenges related to ecological transition, **Ceméa** observes that in France there's a lack of opportunities and spaces for individuals to collectively discuss it and exchange ideas about possible solutions and outcomes. For this reason, Ceméa reached out to young adults and adult learners from diverse backgrounds who were trainees in social and youth work, and environmental education and sustainable development. In Germany, with the rise of far right and right-wing populist parties, young people in particular have become the target of populist propaganda and content on social media, which has led to a growing tendency among young people in Germany supporting right-wing and populist parties. **WEA** engaged first-time voters and young people aged 16-25, with activities open to individuals of all ages and socio-demographic backgrounds, ensuring a mix of students with and without migration experiences and from different educational backgrounds. **DAFNI KEK** targeted adult learners aged 18-65 experiencing various vulnerabilities or deprivations such as unemployment, migration/minority status (e.g., Roma), poverty, age-related issues, or lack of functional literacy. This is particularly because the statistics show a decline in the participation rates of citizens reaching to 47.17% in conventional, institutionalised and formal processes of political participation in Greece. **Liga Española de la Educación**'s participants came from varied backgrounds including working adults and students, expressing interest in active community involvement and finding solutions to issues impacting them directly. Liga Española de la Educación reached out to their participants based on the recent study of young people in the Extremadura region (LEECP, 2022), 61.1% of respondents stated that "the world we live in needs profound reforms," including gender equality (44.3%), social rights and reforms (36.7%), and scientific and technological achievements (29.9%) were also identified as important issues that requires change in the society. **ARCI** involved youth aged 9-14 from Consulta dei Ragazzi (youth council) in Fusignani (Ravenna), to raise awareness on the issues related to climate change and its impact in society which is usually not included in educational curricula, in Italy.
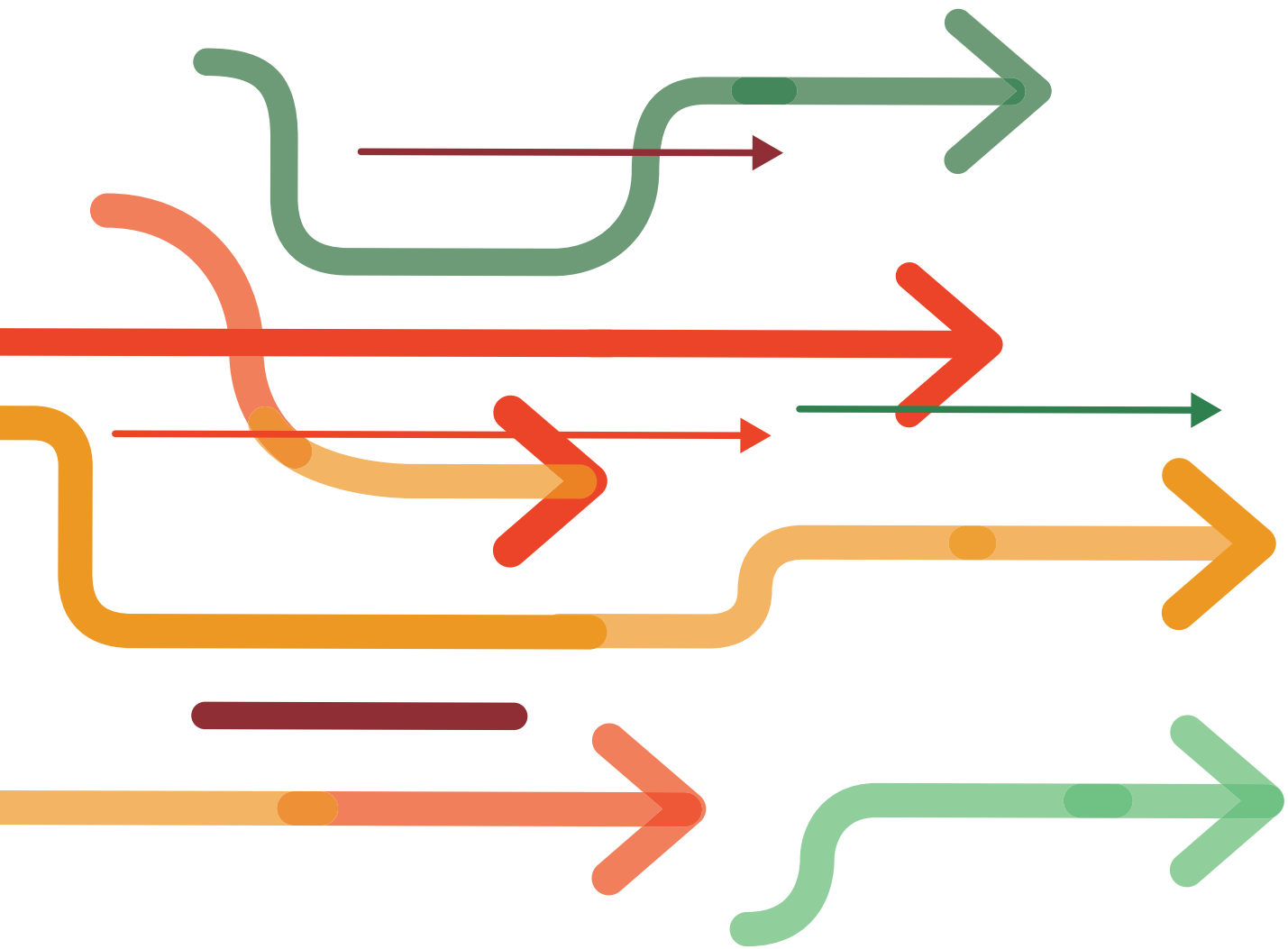
GCE METHODOLOGIES FOSTERING SOCIAL ACTION AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AT LOCAL LEVEL IN 8 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Based on the concepts jointly agreed among project partners and outlined above, different methodologies were used to fit the diverse social and cultural settings in eight different countries and community centres. The following section provides an overview of various GCE methodologies, pedagogical tools, and strategies implemented by the project partners to ensure active engagement of its participants during the events. While this booklet includes conclusions that can be mainstreamed in different GCE-based activities to promote its use and understanding, this project confirmed that a **plurality of approaches and tools must be put in place for different target groups and different purposes**. Therefore, we keep referring to a set of methodologies rather than one static approach to GCE.

In order to ensure safe space and interactions between participants, educators and all the other relevant people involved in the workshops, the partner organisations ensured that measures for inclusion and safety were in place in various ways and methods, such as safety contract or the establishment of house rules.

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**"United in Diversity"
— GCE methodologies
to discuss how to
combat Structural
Discriminations**

— Pour La Solidarité, Belgium

In order to introduce the idea of **structural discrimination** and related concepts, PLS partnered with a Belgian NGO, La Coordination Nationale d'Action pour la Paix et la Démocratie[27] that has developed a **pedagogical tool** ("Ma ville, mon quartier")[28] that aims to question and deconstruct simplistic discourse on integration through the issue of socio-spatial segregation, by using a **display of photos ("photolanguage")** of Brussels. This first workshop allowed participants to talk about and express their experiences and questions about discrimination. These were grouped within the following mind map categories: (i) violence resulting from racism; (ii) the role of schools and education institutions in exacerbating discriminations; (iii) the socio-spatial segregation and gentrification of Brussels, (iv) responses to violence (v) the potential for change in diversity and (vi) a violent police and unequal justice system.

On this basis, the second workshop focused on **the different means of reacting to discrimination and violence** that are **common global issues**. PLS focused on the **different strategies of engagement and participation** through the **"Desobeyi"** tool covering conventional and non-conventional participation forms, including civil disobedience and non-violent protests.

The third and concluding workshop synthetised what the group learned and worked on co-developing several questions to be discussed with **the locally elected representative, Myriem Amrani**, as another form of political engagement. Her own personal background, experience and **political engagement** was seen as an inspiring example for this group. At the time of the implementation, she was appointed Chair of the local social welfare help centre (CPAS).

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GCE for "Raising awareness about the ecological transition among young people and stakeholders in the social and cultural fields"

— Ceméa, France

Participants in the community centre led by CE-MÉA were engaged by expressing their needs and expectations, and the workshops' course was adapted accordingly when necessary. Participants felt empowered to question the concepts and topics, also thanks to the work in small groups, to foster exchanges, interactions and collective thinking throughout the workshop. This approach allowed the possibility to have a learner-centred space and process.

One of the tools used to tackle the theme of the ecological transition was the **climate fresk**, based on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, which helped to make them more accessible. **Mapping the 2030 SDGs** involved understanding the 2030 SDGs, as the "institutional roadmap for transition", situating them in relation to the social role and actions of organisations and providing an assessment of their power of action or limitations, for the ecological transition. Lastly, **Exploring Low Carbon Lifestyles**, presented as an exhibition, raised awareness about planetary boundaries, and social justice in ecological transition, emphasising the necessary changes in our habits and to collectively reduce our carbon footprint across major domains: food, transportation, construction, consumption. Through this tool, concepts of social roles, eco-responsibility were introduced and debated.

WILLI-EICHLER-AKADEMIE e.V.

GCE for "Integrating tolerance"

– WEA, Germany

Various methods such as brainstorming and world cafe were used in the preparation and initial workshop at the community centre set up in Germany, to agree on relevant topics and formats for the activities. This resulted in the decision on specific topics that are relevant for the future of young people and visible in current public discourses and election campaigns.

The result was the elaboration of three different formats: firstly, a workshop on tolerance driven social inclusion "Truth Talks"[29] in cooperation with "Hawar Help. E.V.", created spaces where different people meet and develop an understanding and empathy for other people's in-

dividual stories and experiences. Secondly, with "**Speed dating**" with policymakers led to the creation of a set of cards with different questions including political and personal aspects. Young people had the chance to connect with local policymakers in one-on-one settings and getting to know each other by creating new perspectives on the other persons position and life, based on the questions from the cards game. Finally, thanks to a **Q&A** with Katarina Barley, the leading candidate to the EP Elections of the governing SPD party in Germany, an individual Q&A format involving the whole class took place. This was done in collaboration with the school's advanced politics course with the students contributing their own interest and questions, handling the moderation themselves.

ΔΑΦΝΗ ΚΕΚ

GCE for Intergenerational Solidarity: "Major Social Challenges: Intergenerational Solidarity and Lifelong Learning"

– DAFNI KEK, Greece

During the initial workshop, educators were introduced to GCE methodologies and developed the following workshops on the concept of equal participation. After a general introduction of the **concept of equal participation** as the core principle, the participants got into understanding the notion of **Social Justice** by interpreting specific life scenarios stimulating their own experience (gender, age, migration,etc). The equal participation approach was collectively chosen by the youth leaders and educators during the initial training with an aim of ensuring equal participation of the participants to freely express their opinion.

The second workshop focused on **Solidarity towards Inequalities**. Participants identified the structural and systemic roots of inequalities and discussed how solidarity can serve as a powerful tool to address these issues. The third workshop tackled **building trust towards the political institutions** and how the residents' opinion could be better represented to mobilise effective solutions in favour of the less advantaged. While this workshop helped participants to understand the importance of political representation, it also aimed at building their capacity with skills and knowledge to become active citizens by participating in political processes. During the final dialogue meeting, participants including young adults had the opportunity to engage in discussions with a member of the European Parliament and a CSO representative about GCE. These discussions helped participants to understand how GCE is pivotal, addressing socio-political challenges and movements aimed at achieving social justice and inequalities.

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GCE to empower young people: "What bothers you? Who will fix it?"

– Centre for Peace Studies, Croatia

The initial workshop was organised in the frame of the course on **Peace Studies**, a GCE-based program that transferred knowledge and information, created a common experience and recruited a group of young people who then, under mentorship, developed and organised peer education for youth from migrant community. One of the Peace Studies program's goals is to educate on contemporary injustices and social threats to equality such as economic injustice, human rights violations, migration issues, gender inequalities, war and postwar legacy. The other equally important aim is to **create visions, empower participants to take active roles in progressive social change, develop their activities and initiatives, and teach them the know-how on cooperation skills and self-organisation**.

The smaller team of Peace Studies participants developed the workshop for youth: **What bothers you? Who will fix it?** based on the same methodology and the AKA toolkit. This workshop emerged from an initial lecture on "Globalisation and Social Justice" organised within the Peace Studies program, followed by three preparatory meetings mentored by a young leader and three interested participants. The initial lecture aimed to provide foundational knowledge on global issues related to interculturalism and just transition. Utilising the project's developed toolkit and the GCE methodology, they developed a political education workshop designed for young people from migrant communities, their peers. As for the dialogue meeting with policymakers, the participants had an opportunity to identify institutional actors from the Croatian Youth Network (CYN) and others. For this, an initial meeting was organised gathering the youth leaders of CPS, representative of CYN and young migrants as an initial step to involve youth from migrant communities in the youth policy activities that CYN advocates on local, national and EU level.

GCE for pursuing socially and Environmentally Just Societies

– Liga Española de la Educación y la Cultura Popular (LEECP), Spain

The community centre set up in Spain greatly benefitted of the active participation of young participants of the workshop. This allowed to take greater advantage of the transnational aspect of peer-learning throughout the project implementation.

The inaugural workshop participants gave the participants a platform to discuss and share their ideas and experiences around what they believe are missing from their native Cáceres, for it to be deemed a fair city. Concepts like social justice, environmental justice, and sustainability were redefined and grouped by the participants. They took ownership of these definitions, and once the group came to a consensus on them, they were used as the foundation for the work that followed. The young participants then learned about the steps being taken locally by Cáceres and the EU to support a just transition that leaves no one behind, and how to support it.

In terms of methodologies, it was the **Design Thinking** approach identified as well aligning with GCE. This approach allows to adapt the techniques and concepts to any problem that the group decides to address, facilitating collaborative and consensual work with immediate positive feedback. Based on this, in the second workshop's the participants used the GCE and Design Thinking methodologies to prepare a pitch that included all the improvement ideas they planned to offer to the local legislators, along with an explanation of how they believed these ideas would contribute to Cáceres' status as a socially and environmentally just city.

The third and final workshop involved a conversation with two locally elected representatives of City Hall. Participants learned how to engage in politics by exchanging questions and comments regarding their proposals and how City Hall could decide whether to adopt them in the short- and long-term. The young participants' recommendations left a lasting impression on the local politicians, who extended an invitation to the group and the AKA project to participate in the upcoming public discussion regarding urban transport systems and mobility.

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Active Citizens

GCE to support the transitioning to a Sustainable Economic Model

– ARCI, Italy

Following the series of workshops organised as part of the project with the group of students involved in the Consulta dei Ragazzi (youth council), the students aimed at bringing the environmental issues (floods etc) to the attention of the city administration. From January to March 2024, the group of students who volunteered for the project took part in series of workshops aimed at making them more aware of the environment they live and empower them to act together to change the way of living in a more sustained way. Through the practical workshops and field trips that offered hand-on learning experience and the discussions emerged during the activities, the participants had the opportunity to learn about **urbanisation** and **environmental activism**. These workshops organised in various urban field trips with the aim of helping participants to learn about their responsibilities towards the environment in which they live in, the urgent need for more green areas for biodiversity and vegetation by observing the development of urban areas and the role of the rivers.

By discussing the issues in groups and working together towards common goals, they felt empowered to take an active role in the project and developed a sense of responsibility and of belonging to a group with the same ideals. Participants also had the opportunity to engage with a transgenerational audience during the final public event, taking on the responsibility to preparing and sharing what they had done during the workshops with the community and the local administrators.

GCE to raise awareness about gender equality and democratic participation

– Diáspora Sem Fronteiras, Portugal

The workshops aimed overall to create safe, dynamic, and participatory environments to develop pedagogical approaches. Two training sessions were held for young facilitators to learn and test the strategies and activities before applying them, showing the importance of educators' training as well. Participants shared their experiences on gender equality and democratic participation to initiate discussions.

To create a community atmosphere, the community centre in Portugal worked with some "**gener-**

ating questions". The initial set of questions was posed to the participants, who were required to identify and discuss their personal qualities. Afterwards, while seated in a circle, participants were asked awareness-raising questions related to gender equality. Participants were then divided into small groups to discuss three questions about gender equality and democratic participation: "**what topics would we like to explore more?**", "**what do we think could be done? Where?**", and "**what prevents me from speaking or participating in activities on these topics?**".

At the end, participants shared feedback and reflected on future actions they could take to turn the discussed proposals into concrete actions. Later, the dialogue meeting with local authorities, including various civil society representatives, served as an opportunity for the young participants to share their experiences and the results of the initial discussions regarding gender equality and democratic participation. This meeting also allowed all the participants to think together about the next steps and actions they could take in their own communities to raise awareness about gender equality in different spaces that they are involved in (especially with their friends at school and their families).

Evaluation

The project partners made use of various ways and techniques to gather feedback from the participants after the completion of different workshops at local level. This section of the booklet highlights the methods used by project partner organisations to evaluate their workshops and activities, highlighting the similarities and differences in their methods and feedback they received. Some of them include oral debriefings, written evaluations, and individual testimonies.

The project partners highlighted the value of interactive workshop sessions that encouraged **active engagement and interaction**. These sessions were highly valued by participants, especially those that allowed them to share and connect with their personal experiences and immediate concerns in the community they live. Discussions on structural discrimination, social complexities, and personal reflections were particularly appreciated. **Creating a safe space** for open dialogue was a priority for all organisations, allowing participants to express their views freely. This safe environment enabled participants to develop ideas and find ways to put these ideas in concrete actions after the workshops. The educators focused on helping participants **apply the knowledge gained from these workshops to their own context**, identifying actionable steps, developing concrete plans, and fostering ecological practices. Interactive and engaging methods were frequently used throughout the implementation of activities. These methods facilitated critical thinking, learning by sharing and active participation, making the workshops more effective and impactful.

Despite these similarities, evaluation methods varied among project partners. For example, PLS used oral debriefing to ensure participants expressed their opinions about the activities freely, Ceméa combined written and oral feedback, WEA used individual feedback reports and multimedia materials (videos, photographs) as an innovative approach. Furthermore, Diáspora Sem Fronteiras posed thought-provoking question, "What is the next step I take?" for participants to reflect on and share an action they could take to turn the workshop's proposals into reality.

The dynamics among participants also varied, with DAFNI KEK finding that older participants were more talkative and influenced the discussions, while LEECP faced challenges with attendance and found smaller groups more effective. On the other hand, PLS noted the difficulty in engaging young individuals (NEETs) with political concepts due to their immediate life concerns. Ceméa faced the challenge of making complex ecological concepts less theoretical and accessible for participants. WEA dealt with logistical difficulties in coordinating large events and communication with multiple organisations.

Despite these challenges, the outcomes and perceived impact were significant. For instance, PLS found the experience transformative for both educators and participants, highlighting the potential for advocacy. Ceméa participants appreciated the practical tools such as **photolanguage**, **SDG mapping**, and the **Climate Fresk** for addressing ecological challenges, while WEA established new networks and long-term cooperations for implementing future events. Also, participants in DAFNI KEK' valued the space and the opportunity to express their worries about subjects like social complexity and the EU decision-making process, which they would not often have.

To sum up, the project partners tailored their methods to the needs, and contexts of their participants, even though the importance of feedback, engagement, relevance, safety, and empowerment was consistent throughout all of these evaluations. This diversity in methods and focus underlines the adaptability and multifaceted nature of GCE implementation.

SOLIDAR FOUNDATION'S 6 STEPS FOR GCE IMPLEMENTATION

Many GCE methodologies were successfully implemented by the project partners in 8 countries: **Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Spain, Italy,** and **Portugal** to address diverse social, environmental, and economic challenges. These diverse practices stemmed from a common understanding of definitions and concepts of Global Citizenship Education that allowed each partner organisation to enrich the methodologies for transformative learning based on non-formal education that they already mastered. These practices have demonstrated the effectiveness of interactive, participant-centred activities in fostering democratic participation particularly among youth and groups that formal education is likely to fail at engaging. Based on these diverse methodologies, SOLIDAR Foundation developed the following **6 steps** for GCE, aimed at incorporating these best practices into a unified, sustainable, and adaptable way that can be universally applied across various contexts to achieve impactful learning outcomes. This methodology is the result of the collective reflection of project partners on the successful elements of their practices in 8 European countries.

Below is the list of steps identified as successful for the implementation of GCE-based learning activities.
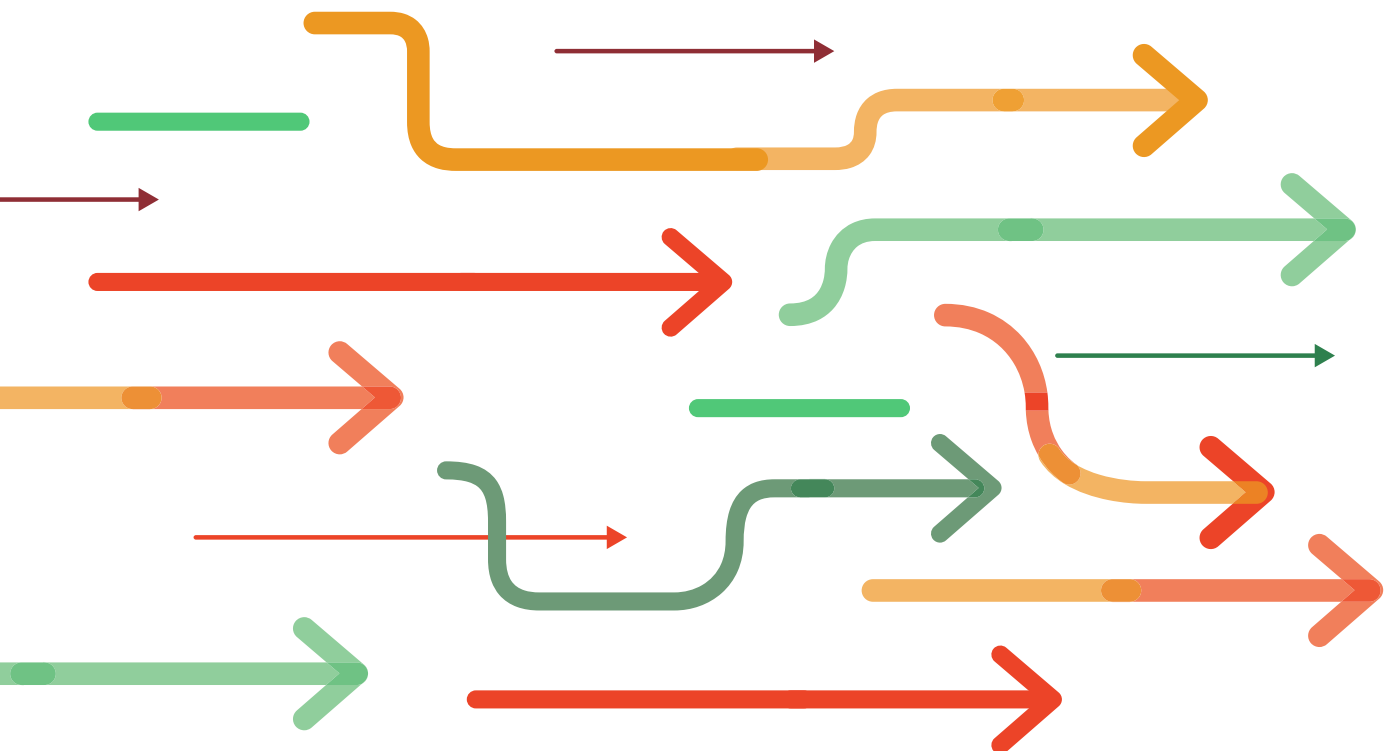
STEP 1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A needs analysis is one of the ways to identify the needs and interest of a certain group. This assessment can be conducted in different formats. The initial surveys (open and close, multiple-choice questions), interviews, and focus groups could help to properly customise the GCE workshops, conferences, events etc. to the needs of the participants. These techniques assist in determining the requirements, preferences, and expected learning outcomes of the participants, guaranteeing that the information is interesting and address their need(s).

STEP 2 BACKGROUND-CONTEXTUAL RESEARCH

It is essential to comprehend the socio-political environment of the area/community that the GCE methodologies will be implemented in. This involves researching the local community's dynamics, identifying challenges, and opportunities. Such contextual knowledge helps in customising the activities to resonate with the participants' real-world experiences and environments.

STEP 3 COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATOR'S TRAINING

Educators should receive thorough training on GCE methodologies and specific tools such as photolanguage, design thinking, and interactive workshops (or others that respond at best to the selected context). This training equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deliver the workshops that engage and empower participants.

Educators should be provided with all necessary resources and materials required for organising the workshops. This may include stationary handouts, visual aids, and digital tools that support interactive and engaging learning experiences, but most importantly, these materials should not be conceived in a fixed way, but to be provided based on the needs expressed by the educator, once their received the training

STEP 4 WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

In order to ensure successful workshops, its recommended to establish a structured yet flexible framework that provides safety, understanding, space for co-creation and direct engagement with relevant stakeholders, such as policymakers. The following steps explains the ideal workshop structure for GCE implementation.

→ **Safety contract:** It is pivotal to collectively develop a safety contract together with participants and educators, at the beginning of the workshop. This informal contract sets the house rules for interaction, ensuring respectful and supportive learning space where everyone feels comfortable to express their thoughts and ideas.

→ **Ensuring common understanding of concepts among all participants and educators:** When conducting a learning activity, it is helpful to provide participants with clear explanations of the concepts to ensure that everyone has a common understanding of the key concepts. This allows participants to relate more concretely to the activity and actively engage with it. This can be achieved through introductory sessions of the workshop.

→ **Co-creation with participants of both format and content:** Following the section on understanding the concepts, the workshop format and content shall be co-created with participants to ensure the content addresses their needs and realities. This participatory approach ensures participants engagement in the workshop at early stages from identification of activities, defining learning outcomes of the workshop. By involving participants in the co-creation processes, the workshop becomes more relevant, engaging and creates sense of ownership.

→ **Adaptability based on participants' feedback during the implementation:** Throughout the implementation of the workshop, educators should collect feedback from participants at different stages of the workshop and be prepared to adapt the content and formats as needed. Regular check-ins and feedback sessions can help identify areas for adjustments of needs and interest of the participants.

→ **Benefits of engaging directly with policymakers/stakeholders concerned by the theme that is tackled in the activities:** Ensuring direct interactions between participant and policymakers is crucial for mutual learning, networking and experience sharing. This helps participants to learn more about the relevant policy developments to foster their advocacy skills. The ways for long-term and more sustained ways for these dialogues shall be established to ensure participants input considered in policy-making.

STEP 5 **FOLLOW-UP AND SUSTAINABILITY**

To ensure the sustainability of the results of the workshops it is important to maintain engagement and support ongoing activities. For the continuous interaction and collaboration among participants, the following steps shall be considered to ensure systematic follow -up and sustainability.

Establish Networks: Create peer learning networks to maintain engage-

ment and support ongoing activities. These networks can be composed of participants, educators, and other relevant individuals who shares same values and interest. This way, continuous experience sharing, sharing of best practices and resources can help maintaining the engagement of participants.

Regular in person / online Meetings: Another way of securing the continuous interaction and collaboration among participants is to organise regular meetings (in person/ online) for participants. These informal meetings can be organised both in person or online to enable participants to reconnect and exchange information.

STEP 6 **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Evaluation: To guarantee effectiveness and sustainability of the work that has been done, but also for reference for further impact, is vital to implement regular feedback mechanisms to assess the impact of the workshops and make necessary adjustments based on participants' input. In addition, periodic evaluations to measure the long-term impact of the activities on participants and the community shall be conducted.

Feedback survey: Within two-three working days after the day of the workshop, send the participants a feedback survey to assess the impact of the workshops and make necessary adjustments based on participants' input.

Quality Assurance: In order to evaluate the long-term impact, whether how useful the activities were for their daily work or the community, a periodic evaluation can be conducted (optional)

CONCLUSIONS

The AKA Active Citizens project has been an enriching learning journey for all parties involved. Participants were the obvious direct beneficiaries of the actions promoted thanks to this CERV co-funded project, but educators and the organisations involved to build the community centres could learn just as much from their transnational partners and from participants themselves. This project allowed partners with extensive experience in non-formal education for democratic participation to finetune their methodologies and practices, learning from each other and defining together a joint approach for implementing Global Citizenship Education.

The concept of GCE has become a defining one for the goals pursued by the activities of SOLIDAR Foundation members: empowering learners, creating transformative learning spaces, co-creating learner-centred approaches all the while raising awareness about the interconnectedness of today's societies and resulting in action for social justice. It is this value-based approach that inspired the activities described in this booklet, with the aim of experimenting tools and practices, and offering the results to the community of education practitioners that are interested in promoting transformative learning opportunities.

These results consist in the awareness that education is a journey that never stops, and that while we have in mind learners for co-creating activities, educators should always be considered part of the learning community as well and given the proper means for developing their education projects. As illustrated in this booklet, Global Citizenship Education activities are ones in which the methodology and the content of the learning space are conceived unitedly. The practice of safety contract, co-creation of the aims of the workshops, and continuous feedback rounds for quality assurance are examples of the persistent efforts that must be in place for offering an empowering learning experience. But the investment is worthwhile: out of 500+ direct participants, most of them expressed interest in getting engaged in political debates for the first time. It supported participants in questioning their own biases and acknowledging the different layers of diversity that compose societies, and to identify together how to overcome structural discriminations and challenges to social justice. We can fairly assume that these activities had a lasting impact, as they ignited that initial spark of interest that is essential for engagement in one's community and its future.

The GCE workshops also diversified in terms of their format and structure. WEA used of **speed dating and Q&A** sessions to initiate dialogues between participants and policymakers, while DAFNI KEK used the **world café** format which gave an opportunity for participants to reflect on several issues. CPS utilised **art** into its activities, creating a unique harmony of **art and activism**, empowering participants to use their imagination through art to develop solutions for existing issues in their societies. ARCI focused on practical activities like **guerrilla gardening**, allowing participants to discover and

learn about environmental activism. The young participants notably enjoyed having the opportunity to engage in discussions with local administrators about concerns related to environment. Liga Española de la Educación (LEECP) provided an open invitation to GCE workshops, the **design thinking** methodology found very useful, helping participants to collectively redefine concepts like social justice, environmental justice, and sustainability. This booklet aimed to offer concrete tools, approaches, definitions and steps to take to support the community of education practitioners in familiarising with Global Citizenship Education and start practicing it, or further developing different methodologies. Nevertheless, it has only reached its goals if it helped the reader to question the importance of these issues, the relevance of accurate designing of learning spaces, and the significance of promoting value-based education. Living up to the spirit of Global Citizenship Education, project partners look forward to seeing it used, tested, challenged and improved.

And now, what next?
SOLIDAR Foundation Learning Hub[30]

The foundations laid by the AKA Active Citizens project for the community centres established over the past two years and the related methodologies will continue to inform and inspire SOLIDAR members and their partners. This booklet forms indeed part of the SOLIDAR Foundation Learning Hub, an online library to collect case studies, toolkits, and other multimedia-based learning materials on policy as well as on practices. This space is conceived for educators and learners alike to explore resources that may help them create, develop or enrich their lifelong learning journey.

Endnotes

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25 See the section on SOLIDAR Methodology(ies) for further information on these approaches and tools.

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