



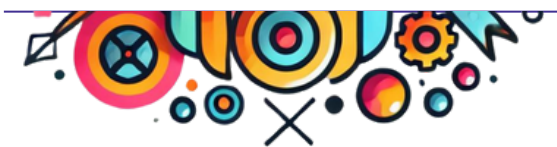
# TRAINING CURRICULUM



STREET DEBATE



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-Street Debate realized by Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS

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# Introduction

As democratic systems confront new pressures and the call for governance that reflects all voices becomes ever more urgent, the task of enabling citizens to shape the direction of public life is now both a vital strategic goal and a collective duty across Europe. The curriculum we present here, created under the “NOT SKIP: Network of Organizations for Promoting Skills for Participation”, co-financed by the European Union, under the Cerv programme, offers a coherent and hands-on pathway for fostering civic involvement at both local and European tiers. Revitalizing participatory democracy goes beyond updating laws and institutions; it depends on equipping every individual with the understanding, capacities and instruments to contribute substantively to collective decision-making and to the shaping of the common good. Through a series of focused modules, which covers everything from understanding the EU decision-making processes to implementing Street Debates, the curriculum equips facilitators, educators, civic leaders, and decision-makers with the skills and methods needed to promote meaningful democratic participation. At its center is the innovative Street Debate methodology, which turns everyday public spaces into inclusive areas for discussion. This empowers individuals from all backgrounds to share their views and help shape their communities. For this purpose, four training modules have been proposed in order to achieve the best results in decision making processes:

## Module 1

EU DECISION-MAKING  
AND CIVIC  
ENGAGEMENT

Is describing and explaining not only how the EU makes decisions but also has as a target to analyze why citizen participation matters. It's a way to put EU topics into local public spaces in order to engage people in democratic dialogue and how they can influence EU policies. Participants learn how to connect EU issues with local communities and get involved.



*-Street Debate , The Word Carrier*

a tool for creating open, inclusive dialogue in public spaces, it trains facilitators to ask engaging questions, choose suitable locations, and foster participation through listening, respect, and visibility of diverse voices.

## Module 3

*COMMUNICATION  
AND PERSUASION  
TECHNIQUES*

involves strategies to influence others' thoughts, feelings, or behaviors by presenting information in a compelling and convincing manner. Key elements include understanding your audience, building credibility, using emotional appeals, and structuring your message effectively.

teaches facilitators how to turn community input from street debates into clear, actionable policy recommendations. It covers analyzing qualitative data, creating SMART proposals, and presenting them effectively to decision-makers.

## Module 5

*TRAINING METHODOLOGY*

gain hands-on experience with Street Debates and Local Awareness Raising Campaigns (LARC) as tools for civic engagement. Through simulations, role-playing, and practical exercises, they'll learn how to facilitate inclusive public dialogue and turn community voices into meaningful local action.

## Module 2

*STREET DEBATE  
METHODOLOGY*

## Module 4

*POLICY  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
AND ADVOCACY*

This curriculum meets the growing need for tools that encourage participation and civic dialogue. It also helps strengthen democratic legitimacy, transparency, and social unity. By mixing theory with hands-on learning, it offers the knowledge, confidence, and tools necessary to make a change, from the street to the policymaking arena. By promoting inclusive debate, critical reflection, and community-driven action, the curriculum seeks to close the gap between institutions and society and to support a more transparent, accountable, and participatory European Union.

## Target groups

1. Grassroots citizens: Individuals with limited civic engagement experience who seek to understand and contribute to democratic participation.
2. Professionals and experts: CSO members, local administrators, and civic initiative leaders who support public engagement initiatives.
3. Decision-makers: Local and regional policymakers aiming to improve participatory governance and citizen involvement.

## Objectives

- Understand EU decision-making processes and their impact on citizens.
- Develop practical skills for civic engagement and democratic participation.
- Facilitate and conduct Street Debates to encourage public discussion.
- Formulate and communicate policy recommendations based on citizen input.
- Utilize digital tools for expanding and promoting civic engagement.



## Learning objectives

By the end of this module, the facilitators will:

- Understand how the EU functions and makes decisions.
- Recognize how EU policies affect citizens at local and regional levels.
- Identify practical entry points for civic engagement within the EU policy cycle.
- Be inspired by real-life cases of grassroots influence on European policymaking.

Democracy in the European Union (EU) does not stop at the ballot box. Every citizen has the right and the opportunity to influence public policy, contribute to democratic dialogue, and shape the future of Europe. This module introduces participants to the structures and functioning of the EU, focusing on how decisions are made and why citizen involvement is essential. Through practical cases and reflection exercises, participants will explore how civic engagement—especially using methods like Street Debate—can become a powerful tool to bridge the gap between citizens and EU institutions.

## EU Decision-Making and Civic Engagement

– @asociatia nameless art (Romania)



# Module 1

## *1.1. Overview of EU institutions and decision-making*

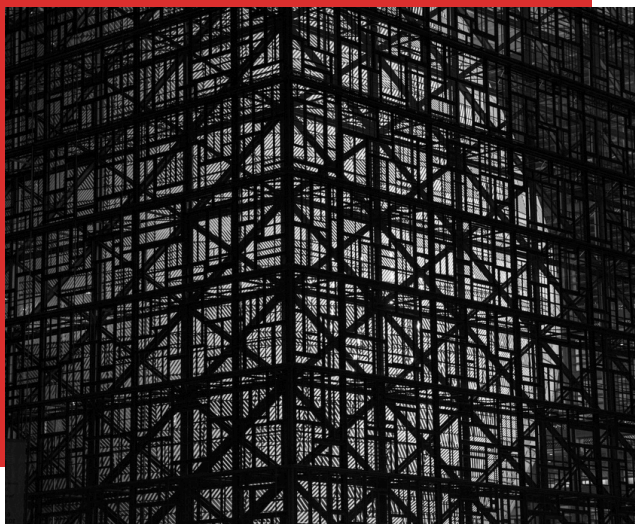
The EU is a unique political and economic union, composed of 27 Member States, and operates through a complex but collaborative system of institutions. Understanding how decisions are made within this system is key to identifying where and how citizens can get involved.



**The European Commission** acts as the EU's executive body. It is responsible for proposing new legislation, implementing decisions, managing the day-to-day business of the Union, and ensuring that EU law is correctly applied across Member States. Commissioners are appointed, not elected, but they are bound to act in the interest of the EU as a whole rather than individual countries.

**The European Parliament** is the only directly elected EU institution. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are elected every five years by citizens of the EU. The Parliament plays a central role in passing EU laws, especially through the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, which it shares with the Council of the European Union (also known as the Council of Ministers). This procedure gives the Parliament equal power with the Council in approving, amending, or rejecting legislation.





**The Council of the EU** is composed of national ministers from each EU country, with different configurations depending on the policy area (e.g., environment, education, finance). Along with the Parliament, it is a co-legislator and has authority over the EU budget and policy areas like agriculture, security, and migration.

At the highest level, the European Council, comprising heads of state or government of the Member States, sets the EU's overall political direction and priorities. Though it does not pass laws, its influence on long-term policy strategies is significant.

Other important institutions include the **Court of Justice of the EU** (which ensures legal compliance) and the European Central Bank (which manages the euro and monetary policy).



The EU decision-making process primarily occurs through the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, but some areas use special procedures, such as consultation or consent. These decisions affect a wide range of issues that reach into citizens' daily lives, from digital rights and climate policy to food safety and urban mobility.

Understanding this institutional setup helps citizens and civil society actors recognize where intervention is possible—through public consultations, engaging MEPs, joining civil society coalitions, or initiating citizen-led actions.





*Watch the video* “The EU decision-making process”

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xZM7Wfux\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xZM7Wfux_s)

*Match 5 real policies* (e.g., GDPR, Green Deal) to the institution responsible for proposing or enforcing them.



*-Street Debate, The Word Carrier*



Role-play as EU institutions using a simplified case: “Should the EU ban single-use plastics?”

Assign participants to Commission, Parliament, Council, NGOs, and lobbyists.

Debate, propose amendments, and “vote” following the Ordinary Legislative Procedure.



## 1.2. Importance of citizen participation

The European Union promotes the principle of participatory democracy, encouraging citizens to play an active role beyond elections. However, the complexity of the EU and the physical and emotional distance people often feel from Brussels contribute to a widespread sense of disconnection. This makes active civic engagement even more important.

When citizens participate in EU affairs—through consultations, public debates, or civic actions—they contribute to more inclusive and responsive policymaking. Participation can expose blind spots in policy design, raise concerns from underrepresented groups, and strengthen democratic legitimacy. Moreover, democratic engagement improves social cohesion, builds trust in institutions, and empowers individuals and communities.

This is where the Street Debate methodology becomes especially powerful. It offers a way to bring EU-level topics into local, everyday environments by using public spaces to host accessible, informal, and highly visible debates. Rather than requiring prior political knowledge or institutional familiarity, Street Debates pose experience-based questions that passers-by can relate to—questions like “I felt a citizen of the European Union when...”, “How can I change the world?”, “The world would be more fair if...” Citizens are invited to share their views, opinions, in real time and with their agreement, their responses are publicly posted on large display boards, encouraging others to engage and challenge ideas.

Street Debates reaches people who typically do not participate in political discourse, especially in marginalized or rural communities. They create a democratic space that feels open and safe, and they transform abstract policy issues into human conversations. This method aligns with the goals of the NOTSKIP project by fostering inclusion, dialogue, and democratic awareness through participatory tools that are both structured and spontaneous.



*Have you ever taken part in a democratic decision? In shaping the future of your community?*

*Discuss: “What blocks people from engaging with EU processes?”*

*Identify and map barriers and opportunities in your community.*

*Check the project partners and see when they are organizing a street debate.*

*Explore Have Your Say: Find an open consultation and discuss how citizens can respond. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say_en)*

## 1.3. Case studies on civic engagement



-Street Debate realized by Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS

The following cases illustrate how civic engagement—often with limited resources but great creativity—can influence policy, empower communities, and initiate democratic change. These stories also show potential areas where Street Debate could be applied to amplify citizen voices.

### Italy: Participatory Urban Regeneration in Bologna

In Bologna, civic groups and citizens collaborated with local authorities to transform abandoned public spaces through "collaboration pacts." While not EU-led, the initiative drew attention from European networks and inspired urban democracy reforms. Citizens directly influenced how municipal funds were spent and participated in decision-making for urban design—an ideal topic for Street Debates about public ownership and democratic city planning.

### **Romania: “Declic” Digital Campaigns**

Declic is a digital activism platform in Romania that mobilizes citizens to sign petitions, submit feedback to lawmakers, and participate in public hearings. One notable campaign successfully halted legislation that would weaken anti-corruption laws. While largely online, Declic’s method could be adapted to offline engagement through Street Debates, especially in areas with low internet access, to raise awareness and build consensus.

### **Portugal (Azores): Youth Engagement through European Solidarity Corps**

On the Azores Islands, a youth association led an EU-funded project engaging young people in discussions on climate change and local policy. Using public art and open-air forums, they invited the community into conversation. Incorporating Street Debates into similar youth projects would bring visibility to island-specific concerns—like sustainability, depopulation, and EU investment in remote regions.

### **Greece: Refugee Advocacy in Athens**

Grassroots organizations in Athens have used street actions, public assemblies, and policy briefings to advocate for fair treatment of refugees. One campaign engaged both migrants and local citizens in co-producing messages for local government. Street Debate could extend such engagement by creating a shared civic space where diverse voices interact equally.

### **Lithuania: Citizens’ Jury on Education Reform**

A group of randomly selected Lithuanian citizens participated in a national citizens' jury to evaluate potential reforms in public education. Their recommendations were presented to policymakers and widely covered by the media. This structured deliberative model contrasts with Street Debate, but both can work together: Street Debate can serve as a prelude to deeper dialogue, surfacing public sentiments that later feed into formal deliberation processes.

### **Poland: Community-Led Monitoring of EU Funds**

Local CSOs in Poland have monitored how EU structural funds are used, involving communities in assessing whether these funds meet real needs. In one region, a street exhibition and public dialogue exposed gaps in housing policy, resulting in local action plans. Street Debate could help such initiatives by offering real-time public input on how funds are spent and which priorities should be set.



In groups, analyze one case study using these questions:

*Who initiated the action?; What tools did they use (ECI, petition, public forum)?; What was the outcome?; What made it successful or challenging?*

Present your analysis in a 3-minute pitch to the group.

## Conclusion

To help participants move from theory to action, participants are encouraged to identify a relevant EU policy topic or challenge that affects their local area—be it employment, climate adaptation, digital access, or education. From there, they can map the different actors involved (e.g., local government, EU institutions, CSOs), and identify touchpoints where citizens can get involved.

This process forms the foundation of a Street Debate campaign. By turning mapped issues into questions that connect with people's daily lives, organizers can take the issue to the street. *For example: "Why do you live here?; When did you felt different ?; What do we over-consume?; Is ecology a matter for rich people?; Is it easier for a man to succeed in life?; Can we live without petrol?; Do you feel European?; What makes you happy ? – What makes you angry?; Can we all live together?; Can we change the world make shopping?; What is important for you in your neighbourhood?"*

Street Debates are not only about discussion—they are data collection tools, storytelling platforms, and mobilization events. They offer immediate insights into public opinion, spark reflection among participants, and can serve as entry points into more sustained democratic engagement.



## Learning objectives

By the end of this module, the facilitators will:

- be able to understand the core principles and values of the Street Debate methodology - learn how to design inclusive and open-ended questions capable of engaging people in public spaces.
- develop the ability to observe and select suitable locations for implementation, taking into account the dynamics and rhythms of urban life
- strengthen their skills in moderation and listening, learning how to create a welcoming space that encourages participation from diverse groups, including those who are often excluded or hesitant to speak in public.

The module also aims to provide practical tools for planning, testing, and conducting a Street Debate independently, with special attention to inclusion, respect for plurality, and the promotion of authentic public dialogue.

# The Street Debate Methodology

– @fattoria pugliese diffusa aps (Italy)



# Module 2

## 2.1. Principles and objectives

Street Debate is based on a simple yet powerful idea: the possibility to create spaces for dialogue and exchange in everyday places, where people usually pass by without stopping or talking. Everyone crossing a square, street, or market carries their own thoughts, memories, frustrations, and desires. The Street Debate methodology allows these voices to emerge spontaneously, accessibly, and visibly. No stage is needed, no microphone, not even speaking in front of everyone. A clear question and a willingness to listen are enough to start gathering an authentic mosaic of opinions. The principles at the core of this methodology are listening, valuing differences, respecting others' speech, and trusting each person's ability to express something valuable. Street Debate does not aim to summarize or average opinions but to create a space where plurality can be shown visibly and readably. It's not about convincing others or reaching a collective decision but about offering the chance to reflect together and see, with new eyes, others' thoughts as well as one's own. The debate in the street revolves around a shared question, designed to be relatable for everyone, regardless of age, education level, or cultural background. This question should open up space for personal stories without imposing a direction on the answers. This is how the mechanism of exchange begins.



## 2.2. Planning and facilitation techniques

To plan a Street Debate action, it's necessary to observe the public space as a living, ever-changing environment. Each place changes depending on the time of day, day of the week, season, and events happening there. Before choosing the right place and time, it helps to walk around at different hours, notice who passes by, how they move, if they stop, and where attention concentrates. Only by observing the real context can it be understood when the debate can truly start.

*Take some time to walk around your neighborhood. Which places are frequented the most? Where do people stop, watch, talk, or gather naturally? Write down two or three spots where you think a Street Debate could be implemented effectively, and explain why. Observe these locations at different times of the day and week, what do you notice?*



### PREPARATION OF MATERIALS

**a clearly visible question, some initial answers already written down, colorful cards easy to read from a distance, a quiet corner to write down new contributions. The visual aspect matters—it should arouse curiosity without intimidating. The space should invite people to approach, read, and if they want, participate.**

During the action, facilitators must balance listening and discretion. It's essential not to pressure anyone to speak. Those who approach must feel free to choose whether to remain silent, read, or intervene. The facilitator's role is to create conditions for genuine speech to emerge. When someone decides to share their opinion, it's important to faithfully repeat it back, reading it together before writing it down. This moment helps people feel truly heard, without changes or interpretations. Even those who prefer not to speak can participate by reading others' answers, reflecting silently, or returning later. The street debate doesn't end with the interview; it also lives in the gaze of passersby, in the comments exchanged between strangers in front of the panels, and in the memory of those who stopped even briefly.

## 2.3. Engaging diverse groups in public spaces

Engaging diverse groups happens precisely because of the open, informal structure of Street Debate. There is no need to register or have special skills. Everyone can say something, even just a sentence or brief thought. For this reason, it's important that the question is phrased to touch on common experiences without excluding anyone. Some people may initially find it harder to participate: those who speak little English, who are not used to public speaking, or who are suspicious. In these cases, the facilitator's attitude is crucial. Patience, availability, and the ability to listen even to silences or uncertain attempts to speak are necessary.

Sometimes a secondary question, a kind gesture, or even seeing other responses already displayed can spark the desire to participate. The organizer's job is to ensure that no one feels excluded, not even those who pass by quickly or stop only out of curiosity.



-Street Debate realized by Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS

Anyone wishing to try this methodology can start with a small test, perhaps in their own neighborhood, during a market or in a frequently visited square. Just a few cards, an effective question, and a busy spot are enough. No formal permission is needed if the action is brief and unobtrusive. It's possible to test the question with friends, neighbors, or relatives, collect some initial answers, prepare the materials, and pick a suitable time. Even an hour can be enough to understand the kind of reactions it generates.

With some practice, the action can be extended, involving more people and organizing a team with different roles: writing, listening, handling logistics. The important thing is that each team member finds their own way to feel involved, valued, and comfortable. Only then will the debate be alive and open, and passersby will feel that, for once, that space is theirs too.



## Learning objectives

By the end of this module, the facilitators will:

- Effective storytelling and message framing
- Managing conflicts and counterarguments
- Engaging with policymakers and stakeholders
- Learning to articulate messages clearly and concisely, avoiding ambiguity and jargon
- Understanding the needs, knowledge, and perspectives of different audiences to tailor communication effectively
- Developing the ability to attentively listen, interpret, and respond to messages from others
- Enhancing awareness and control of body language, tone, and facial expressions to support verbal communication.
- Learning to structure messages logically and persuasively, using techniques like introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions.

This module will target effective communication and persuasion techniques involving understanding your audience, building credibility, and using a combination of logic and emotion to encourage their critical thinking and actions. Key strategies include establishing common ground, framing arguments effectively, and anticipating objections.

## Communication and Persuasion Techniques

– @associacao juvenil da ilha terceira (Portugal)



# Module 3

### 3.1. How can you use storytelling and framing to persuade and inspire others?

#### WHAT IS STORYTELLING AND FRAMING?

Storytelling and framing are two related concepts that involve shaping and presenting information in a way that appeals to the emotions, values, and interests of your audience. Storytelling is the art of creating and delivering a narrative that connects with your listeners and illustrates your message. Framing is the process of selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of a situation or issue, while downplaying or omitting others. It opens minds on how your audience perceives and interprets it.

#### WHY IS STORYTELLING IMPORTANT?

*Be transparent  
with your intent;  
ethical framing  
builds trust and  
credibility.*

Storytelling and framing are communication strategies used to invite reflection and broaden understanding. In the context of Street Debates, the aim is not to win arguments or change minds, but to spark curiosity, help people connect with ideas emotionally and personally, and encourage them to consider perspectives they may not have encountered before. In Street Debates, framing helps participants present their viewpoints transparently and respectfully, by choosing what parts of an issue to highlight in order to make their messages more accessible or relatable.

To use storytelling and framing effectively, you must understand your audience and tailor your story and frame to their needs, preferences, and expectations. Additionally, it is important to define your purpose and goal, and ensure that your story and frame are aligned with them. The structure and language you use should be clear and simple, avoiding overwhelming or confusing your audience with too much information. Incorporating relevant facts, data, and evidence to support your story and frame is essential. To make your story and frame more memorable and relatable, use vivid details, examples, and anecdotes. Additionally, you should appeal to the emotions, values, and beliefs of your audience in order to demonstrate how your story and frame benefit them or address their concerns. Finally, invite feedback and dialogue from your audience to be open to different perspectives and questions.

### WHAT ARE SOME COMMON TYPES OF STORIES AND FRAMES?

In different contexts and situations, depending on your purpose and goal, there are many types of stories and frames you can use. For example, the challenge story and frame is one that focuses on how you or your organization faced a difficult problem or obstacle and overcame it with creativity, resilience, or innovation. It can help you demonstrate your skills, achievements, and values and inspire others to take action or embrace change. The vision story and frame describes how you or your organization envision a better future or outcome and what steps are being taken or plan to be taken to achieve it. It can help you communicate your vision, mission, and strategy, as well as motivate others to join you or support you. The value story and frame highlights how you or your organization deliver value to customers, clients, or stakeholders and what makes you unique, different, or superior. This can help you showcase your products, services, or solutions, as well as persuade others to choose you or trust you. Lastly, the learning story and frame reveals how you or your organization learned from a mistake, failure, or feedback and what changes or improvements have been made or intend to be made. This type of story and frame can show humility, growth mindset, commitment to excellence and foster a culture of learning and innovation.

## WHAT ARE SOME PITFALLS TO AVOID WHEN USING STORYTELLING AND FRAMING?

Storytelling and framing can be very effective, but if misused or abused, they can backfire. To avoid pitfalls, you must be honest and not fabricate or distort facts. Additionally, your stories and frames should be respectful and relevant to your audience. Furthermore, they should be creative and engaging to keep your audience's attention. Finally, remain flexible in your stories and frames to allow for adaptation and improvement.

**“Storytelling and its Persuasion power”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDmHWiPGwXI>

**“Why We Use Stories To Persuade Others & Ourselves”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F51Lholi9BQ>

**“The Art of Storytelling: The Mechanics of a Great S**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D\\_J5SENQK6A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_J5SENQK6A)

**WATCH NOW**



### *3.2. How to manage conflicts and counterarguments*

People management consists of a fair amount of mediation and diplomacy, and you can't expect to get the hang of it right away. You're in the middle of a lot now. Initiating difficult conversations, and then getting all the way through them, takes planning and practice (and sometimes even a breather). Holding tension takes restraint.

#### **KEY STEPS**

actively listening to all perspectives  
remaining calm and neutral  
focusing on the issue rather than personalities  
seeking common ground  
developing a plan for resolution.



*Open communication and a willingness to understand different viewpoints are crucial for successful conflict management.*

## 1. UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLICT:

**Identify the problem:** Clearly define the issue, ensuring all parties agree on what the conflict is about.

**Seek different perspectives:** Actively listen to each side's viewpoint, understanding their concerns and needs.

**Consider underlying causes:** Investigate the root causes of the conflict to address the core issues, rather than just the symptoms.

## 2. MANAGING THE CONVERSATION

**Choose a neutral setting:** Select a private and comfortable location for discussions to promote open communication.

**Maintain calm and respect:** Stay composed, even when faced with strong emotions. Use respectful language and avoid accusatory or blaming statements.

**Focus on the issue:** Keep the discussion centered on the problem at hand, rather than personal attacks or past grievances.

**Listen actively:** Pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal cues, demonstrating that you are engaged and understanding.

## 3. FINDING SOLUTIONS

**Identify common ground:** Look for areas of agreement and shared goals to build a foundation for resolution.

**Brainstorm solutions:** Generate a range of potential solutions, focusing on what will work best for everyone involved.

**Develop an action plan:** Create a clear plan with specific steps, responsibilities, and timelines for implementing the agreed-upon solution.

**Evaluate and follow up:** Review the implementation process and make adjustments as needed to ensure the solution is effective.

## 4. PREVENTING FUTURE CONFLICTS

**Promote open communication:** Encourage a culture of open dialogue and feedback to address issues early and prevent escalation.

**Develop conflict resolution skills:** Provide training and resources to help individuals and teams manage conflicts effectively.

**Learn from past conflicts:** Analyze past conflicts to identify patterns and develop strategies to avoid similar situations in the future.

“3 ways to resolve a conflict”

<https://youtu.be/r4xPwhcnS-Q?si=XKoICt2wTaHj7RTf>

“5 Tips for Managing Conflict Effectively”

<https://youtu.be/1Nptf2h5LRc?si=v8DVhOin92ZGywyw>

“How to disagree productively and find common ground”

<https://youtu.be/phgjouvoBUA?si=vUFrL5LYZLCkx-rg>

WATCH NOW



## 3.3. Effective policy development and implementation

Engaging with policymakers and stakeholders is crucial for effective policy development and implementation. It involves building relationships, fostering open communication, and understanding diverse perspectives. By actively engaging with those affected by policies, policymakers can create more legitimate, transparent, and impactful decisions.

### KEY ASPECTS

*Understanding the landscape*

*Building relationships and communication*

*Engaging in meaningful dialogue*

*Ensuring Impact*

By actively engaging with policymakers and stakeholders, organizations can enhance the quality, legitimacy, and impact of policy decisions, ultimately contributing to a more responsive and resilient society.

Policymakers are usually confronted with a vast amount of information. However, they need scientific evidence to develop effective policies and address today's complex problems.

*So, how can you ensure your messages stand out and are heard?*

Regardless of how you communicate your research – through policy briefs, reports, presentations or events – there are **CLEAR STEPS** you can take to effectively inform policymakers of your findings and maximise your impact: ***Know how research relates to societal challenges.*** Make sure you are aware of how your work relates to other research, stakeholder views, as well as public discussions in relation to a specific societal challenge. This can help you reframe the problems and put forward scientific evidence you believe is important.

***Understand policymaking and how decisions are made.*** Policymaking is often understood as something that works in “cycles”, which includes agenda-setting, formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Try to follow trends, parliamentary debates, discussions in different forums, and get involved in policy events organized by political parties, think tanks, NGOs, advisory boards etc. This can help you identify when your input can have an impact based on who needs relevant and timely scientific evidence.



-Street Debate realized by Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS

***Think how you can help policymakers when you design your research project.***

Consider adapting parts of your research project in light of the evidence needs of different policy actors. Keeping in mind their agenda and problems they wish to tackle, evaluate how research could offer solutions and the best timing to share evidence.

***Know your audience.*** Before engaging with policymakers, try to discern their level of knowledge, attitude, interests and concerns on the topic.



**Adapt your language.** Once you understand your audience, adapt your language to their level of familiarity and expertise on the issue. Avoid sounding overly technical or even arrogant. Simplify without oversimplifying, avoid jargon, negative terms, or ambiguous words.

## CLEAR AND SIMPLE

**Communicate with confidence.** Remember, you are the expert! Trust your knowledge and the value of your evidence. Ask yourself: “*How does my research address their needs?*” and present your findings with clarity and assurance.

**Keep your message simple.** Follow the inverted pyramid structure. The most important message comes first: how your findings can solve their problem and address their needs, why your recommendations matter and what their impact will be. Explain why your point is relevant, linking it to the current context. You can complement by filling in with the context, background and methodology.

**Make it visual and relevant.** Use a catchy title and introduction. Be concise and use visuals to support your points.

**Build credibility and maintain contacts.** You can do so by getting involved in policy events, and engaging in dialogues with policymakers and stakeholders. Use these opportunities to shape your message and demonstrate your expertise. By showcasing your research and its impact, you enhance your visibility and credibility, key factors when engaging with policymakers. Make sure to follow up and keep in contact with policymakers you encounter to build working relationships.

**Invest in acquiring new skills.** Communication and interpersonal skills are essential for effectively reaching policymakers, and the good news is that these are skills you can enhance.

WATCH NOW

**“Policy Implementation Explained | 8 Important Tips To Improve Public Policy Implementation”**

[https://youtu.be/PomuTi\\_Ljrs?si=Pv1pxMXWU883o\\_WU](https://youtu.be/PomuTi_Ljrs?si=Pv1pxMXWU883o_WU)

**“Policy Development and Implementation”**

[https://youtu.be/Wk7yu7uDljc?si=\\_V7h9pV6JWUr-mIC](https://youtu.be/Wk7yu7uDljc?si=_V7h9pV6JWUr-mIC)

**“Policy Development and Implementation”**

[https://youtu.be/q-G-LC8wI5s?si=-cYqtkrPGbL\\_4nhk](https://youtu.be/q-G-LC8wI5s?si=-cYqtkrPGbL_4nhk)

## THE 3C'S OF AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The 3 Cs of Communication – Clear, Concise, and Complete – offer a simple yet powerful framework to elevate your communication skills and lead to more productive and harmonious interactions.

<https://romarlearning.com/the-three-cs-of-effective-communication/#:~:text=What%20Makes%20Communication%20Effective?,then%20don't%20say%20anything.>



## EFFECTIVE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION IS A VITAL SKILL

Clear, concise writing improves understanding, saves time, and prevents miscommunication. To write effectively, think before you write, use plain language, and focus on one idea at a time. Keep your sentences short and avoid jargon or unnecessary details.

Organize your content with headings, bullet points, or visuals when helpful. Good grammar—such as correct punctuation and verb tense—ensures clarity. Always tailor your tone and style to your audience, whether peers or higher-ups. By applying these simple strategies, you'll communicate more clearly, efficiently, and professionally.

“How to Communicate Clearly and Concisely (Free Mini-Training)”

[https://youtu.be/YJXUQJKtn8o?si=fmyarc\\_\\_Ro6DPbzI](https://youtu.be/YJXUQJKtn8o?si=fmyarc__Ro6DPbzI)



### *3.4. Listen, interpret, and respond to messages from others*

Even if there are several ways of communicating and spreading your ideas, for sure oral dialogue is one of the most important ones, even if you do it in person or by other means like video.

Moreover, debating, discussing and defending your ideas can be very challenging.

Debating can be a very effective way not only to defend your ideas but also to improve your communication skills and that's why we recommend you "street debate" methodology.

- 1. Informal discussion:** Street debates can simply be open conversations about a question of public interest, where passersby are invited to share their views and engage with others.
- 2. Visual representation:** the street debates use visual representations to showcase a public opinion related on a topic. For making it more interactive, for example, participants can place coins or other tokens on either side of the scale to indicate their stance.
- 3. Promoting dialogue:** The goal of street debating is to foster open dialogue and encourage interaction between people from a different background, with different perspectives, breaking down social barriers and promoting understanding.
- 4. Addressing social issues:** Street debates can address various social issues, from political topics to everyday concerns, and can be a way to gauge public opinion and encourage reflection on different viewpoints.





## 3.5. Body language supporting verbal communication

To enhance communication, it's crucial to improve your body language, tone, and facial expressions, as these nonverbal cues significantly impact how your message is received. By developing self-awareness and consciously controlling these elements, you can ensure your nonverbal communication aligns with your verbal message, creating a more impactful and effective communication style.

### 1. BODY LANGUAGE

#### HOW TO ENHANCE IT?

**Posture:** Maintain an open and upright posture to project confidence and engagement. Avoid slouching or crossing your arms, which can indicate disinterest or defensiveness.

**Gestures:** Use natural and purposeful hand gestures to emphasize your points. Avoid excessive or distracting movements.

**Eye contact:** Make consistent eye contact to show engagement and build rapport with your audience. Remember to balance this with occasional breaks to avoid staring.

**Mirroring:** Subtly mirror the body language of the person you're interacting with to build rapport and make them feel more comfortable.



-Street Debate, The Word Carrier

### 2. TONE OF VOICE

**Vary your tone:** Use variations in your tone to emphasize key points and keep your audience engaged. Avoid a monotonous delivery.

**Vocal variety:** Control your pitch, pace, and volume to convey different emotions and emphasize your message.

**Enthusiasm:** Infuse your voice with enthusiasm and energy to make your message more compelling.

**Listen actively:** Pay attention to the tone of voice of the person you're interacting with and adjust your own accordingly.

### 3. FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

**Express emotions:** Use facial expressions to convey your emotions and make your communication more relatable. A genuine smile can go a long way.

**Maintain consistency:** Ensure your facial expressions align with your verbal message. Inconsistency can lead to confusion or distrust.

**Be mindful of micro-expressions:** Pay attention to subtle, fleeting facial expressions as they can reveal true emotions.

**Cultural sensitivity:** Be aware of cultural differences in interpreting facial expressions.

### 4. GENERAL TIPS

**Self-awareness:** Practice self-awareness by observing your own body language, tone, and facial expressions.

**Seek feedback:** Ask for feedback from trusted colleagues or friends on your nonverbal communication.

**Practice and role-play:** Practice using positive body language, tone, and facial expressions in different scenarios.

**Be authentic:** Let your personality shine through and let your nonverbal communication be a natural extension of your message.

By focusing on these areas, you can enhance your overall communication effectiveness, making your interactions more impactful and meaningful.

**“Interview Mistake: Forgetting About Your Nonverbal Communication”**

[https://youtu.be/C\\_nl9FIF5Yc](https://youtu.be/C_nl9FIF5Yc)

**“The Power of Nonverbal Communication”**

[https://youtu.be/fLaslONQAKM?si=QMRvHOKirNBchp\\_Z](https://youtu.be/fLaslONQAKM?si=QMRvHOKirNBchp_Z)

**“Former FBI Agent Explains How to Read Body Language”**

<https://youtu.be/4jwUXV4QaTw?si=L8VevbbnD1GEbZbV>



## Learning objectives

By the end of this module, the facilitators will:

- be able to guide participants in collecting and analysing input from street debates and community meetings;
- support participants in transforming resident voices into precise, actionable recommendations that meet the SMART criteria;
- help groups formulate their findings in a form that is understandable and convincing to local decision-makers;
- provide tools for presenting proposals effectively through briefs, storytelling, or visual formats;
- equip participants with strategies to build long-term sustainability of grassroots initiatives by using local networks, communication channels, and micro-actions.

This module focuses on the crucial phase of civic engagement: turning spontaneous public expression into meaningful influence on local policy. Through practice-oriented exercises, participants will develop the skills to identify key community needs, frame realistic recommendations, and advocate for their implementation in a structured, strategic way. Special emphasis is placed on ensuring continuity of the initiative after the public event – maintaining energy, structure, and visibility within the local context.

## Policy Recommendations and Advocacy

– @lokalna grupa dzialania “Dolina Rzeki  
Grabi” (Poland)



# Module 4



## 4.1. Transforming community input into actionable recommendation

Conversations with residents, especially those conducted during street debates, are an extremely rich source of knowledge about local issues. It is there that the most important needs of the community – often simple, concrete but hitherto overlooked – are revealed. The key skill is to read these voices and transform them into concrete, actionable proposals for change.

The process STARTS with collecting material from street debates or meetings – *notes, quotes, photos of boards with recorded opinions, results of quick surveys or audio recordings.*

Facilitators help participants not only to sort through this data, but above all to spot recurring themes and issues. *Did several people talk about the same thing? Were similar terms used? What needs came up most often?*

This is not about producing statistics, but about qualitatively identifying the themes that have the greatest emotional charge and social relevance. It is worthwhile, when analysing statements, to pay attention to key sentences that signal real needs: *‘what bothers me the most is...’, ‘no one is dealing with this...’, ‘we should finally...’*. Such statements often take us straight to the heart of the matter. So instead of generally postulating *‘improving the situation in schools’*, it is better to write down a concrete proposal, such as: *‘Introduce compulsory civic education lessons in all secondary schools from September 2026’*.

### FROM RESIDENTS' VOICES TO JOINT PROPOSALS



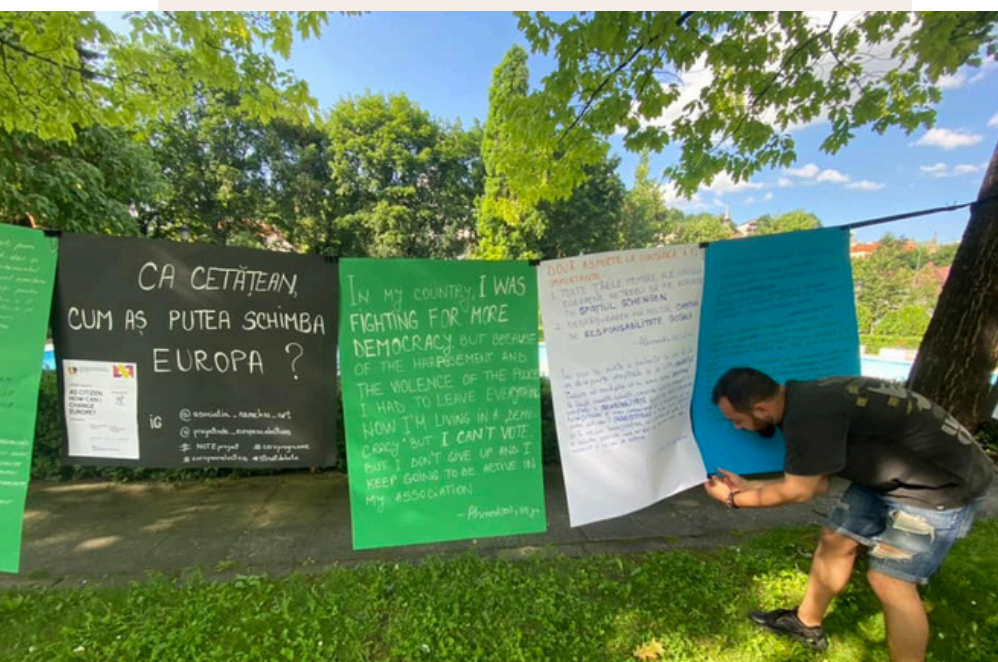
-Street Debate realized by Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS

## GROUPING TOPICS AND BUILDING SENSE

The so-called topic matrix, a simple template in which you write down:

- a specific statement,
- the topic it relates to,
- the need behind it,
- a quote that can be used as an illustration.

The next step is to group statements into thematic blocks – e.g. security, transport, education, common space. Within each group, more specific needs can already be identified, e.g. not ‘school’ but ‘not enough educational activities in school’, not ‘public transport’ but ‘no bus service in the morning to the centre’.



-Street Debate realized by Asociatia Nameless Art

In this way, participants not only systematise the data, but learn to read it from an action level – that is, to look for potential points of change in it.

*During the exercise, participants work in pairs, analysing eight sample statements by residents. Their task is to identify two main themes and create one recommendation for each. They then check that they meet all the SMART conditions – correcting them if necessary to make them more concrete and implementable.*





## CONCLUSION

Turning words into action is a process that requires attentiveness, collaboration and the ability to combine different perspectives. Through this section, participants learn the tools for analysing social statements, learn how to work with qualitative data and lay the foundation for effective communication with decision-makers. This is the first step to making citizen initiatives not only loud – but also effective.

### 4.2. *Presenting findings to policymakers*

Assembling the voice of residents is only half the journey. Equally important is how this voice will be presented – to whom, in what form and with what language. In this section, participants learn how to transform social needs into a message that will reach decision-makers and institutions – i.e. those who can really affect change in the public space. *Effective communication is not just a matter of style – it is a strategy for building trust, shared responsibility and concrete action.*

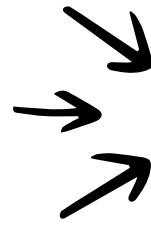
#### FROM ACTIVISM TO DIALOGUE

A common **mistake** when communicating with institutions is to **use the language of resistance, resentment or generalities**. Meanwhile, in order to **be heard**, it is worth speaking **the language of benefits and common goals**.



Such direct contact increases the chance that the issue will not get lost in the clerical maze. It is equally important to adapt the language: it is better to avoid emotional slogans and activist jargon and to focus on specifics, impacts and benefits – both for residents and for the institutions themselves.

## THE POWER OF FORM AND CONTENT



*short document*  
*visual forms*  
*storytelling*

A good tool for communicating recommendations is a *short document* – a so-called policy brief. It should contain a title, a short description of the problem, a quote from the debate, a clear proposal for a solution, an indication of who is responsible for its implementation, and a suggestion for further steps – for example a working meeting.

*Visual forms* have additional power: infographics, photos from the debates or *storytelling* based on a real life story of a resident. Sometimes it is also worth inviting such a person to speak to an official – nothing works better than first-hand testimony.

Each of these forms has a different function – a policy brief makes it easier to make a decision, an infographic draws attention and organizes information, while storytelling evokes emotional involvement and helps to “see” an issue from the residents' perspective.

An effective presentation does not end with the speech itself. It is also about being able to build an invitation, book a meeting, include documentation (photos, quotes, statistics) and afterwards, propose next steps, such as a working meeting, a workshop or a site visit with residents. It is important to be prepared and responsive to questions and objections from decision-makers (‘how much does it cost?’, ‘do residents really want it?’, ‘can it be done this year?’) and to know how to prepare for the lack of answers – e.g. by contacting the assistant, the secretariat or the local media.

## GOOD PREPARATION IS THE KEY





## MEETING AS A MOMENT OF CHANGE

The presentation of recommendations is not an exam, but a moment of alliance building. For this reason, it is worthwhile for the meeting – if possible – to also include someone from the local population to speak personally about the problem. The presence of a local witness lends authenticity to the statement and shows that there is a real need behind the recommendation.

Facilitators are encouraged to support participants not only in preparing the content, but also in getting used to the meeting situation – by rehearsing, talking about emotions, rehearsing key issues together and building confidence.

As part of the European CIVITAS RENAISSANCE project implemented in Szczecinek (Poland), citizens and local authorities jointly identified the problem of dangerous pedestrian crossings in the vicinity of primary schools.

In response, the city authorities implemented a number of measures:

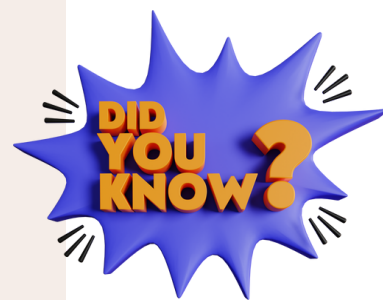
- traffic lights were installed at two crossings and LED lighting at four others,
- a sensitive intersection was secured,
- information and consultation activities were conducted with residents.

Surveys showed that 88% of pedestrians rated the new lighting positively and that the level of safety in the school area had noticeably increased.

Based on these activities, a sample training recommendation could read:

“By September 2026, install active LED lighting at three pedestrian crossings near Primary School No. 4 on the Green Valley estate, in cooperation with the City Roads Authority and using civic budget or EU funds to improve safety.”

The recommendation could be accompanied by: photos of the crossings, quotes from parents and pupils and an invitation to a meeting with the City Council's infrastructure committee.





During the exercise, participants take on three roles: representative of an initiative, decision-maker and observer. In a five-minute presentation, they are asked to make a convincing case for their recommendation. The observer then gives feedback: what was convincing, what needs fine-tuning, whether the language was appropriate and the message clear.

Speaking so as to be heard is not only a matter of courage, but also of strategy and empathy. The right message – clear, specific and aimed at the right person – can be the first step towards real change. Participants in this module learn not only to speak ‘on behalf of residents’, but also to act with them – together, wisely and effectively.

## CONCLUSIONS

### *4.3. Ensuring sustainability of civic initiatives*



-Street Debate realized by Fattoria Pugliese Diffusa APS

Every community initiative, even if it starts with a single debate or a joint walk around a housing estate, has the chance to develop into something more – something that will survive a momentary spurt and become a permanent feature of local life. For this to happen, you need not only goodwill, but also a plan, consistency and the ability to build relationships. Sustainability of an initiative does not mean that everything has to happen at once and on a large scale. On the contrary, it often starts with a few people, simple actions and slow but systematic development. By sustainability we mean the group's ability to continue its activities after the project or event has ended – without the need for ongoing external support. This means that the initiative is able to operate independently, using local resources: time, competences, acquaintances, spaces and the natural motivation of the participants.

## BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE GROUP

The first step in building sustainability is to create the core of the initiative – a few people (usually 3 to 5) who will take on the coordination of activities in the following weeks. They do not have to be leaders “by profession”. – it is enough that they have a willingness to act and a basic sense of ownership of the process. They will be responsible for communicating within the group, planning the next steps, documenting progress and nurturing relationships with the community.

*It is a good idea to establish common channels of communication right away – perhaps a group on WhatsApp, a folder on Google Drive, a task sheet or a simple mailing list. **Transparent and regular communication is one of the most important pillars of long-term performance.***

### SMALL STEPS, REAL GOALS

Meanwhile, the experience of many grassroots initiatives shows that it is best to act right away, even if it is small things – *organising a mini evaluation debate, creating an information poster, contacting the local media or conducting a neighbourhood survey*. Action begets more action. Visibility builds interest. And small successes attract new people.

**Equally important is the sharing of responsibility.**

When all the energy and organisation rests on one person, a project quickly loses strength. Therefore, it is useful to **establish who is responsible for what** – even when it comes to things as simple as publishing a Facebook post or contacting a local school.

## PARTNERS IN THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

*Local institutions (such as libraries, community centres, estate councils, schools, community centres or parishes) play a key role in building sustainability. **Establishing relationships with these actors can open up access to space, equipment, organisational support and sometimes microfinance.*** But just as importantly, it gives the initiative legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of residents and officials.

It is good practice to organize *regular working meetings*, even if they are just short meetings every month. At these meetings it is possible to discuss what has been successful, what needs to be improved, plan the next steps and share tasks. It is also a good idea to keep simple records – photos, short reports, a summary of activities – which can be useful when applying for grants or talking to institutions.

## example

As part of the project “Youth councils for democracy and climate”, funded by the Active Citizens Fund of the EEA (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), youth councils were in place in several Polish municipalities (e.g. Łomianki, Mysłowice, Wołomin).



Young people, carried out climate audits in 25 schools, organized intergenerational climate consultations with citizens and experts, formulated recommendations, e.g. concerning the creation of flower meadows, installation of a solar park, introduction of waste segregation in schools and encouraging the use of public transport

### Results:

- 25 schools audited,
- more than 500 people attending school climate assemblies,
- 247 residents took part in public consultations.

The example shows how the youth council – initially involved in one-off activities (audit, consultation) – has evolved into a permanent structure for local dialogue and action. The project not only strengthened the sense of empowerment of the young participants, but also created sustainable channels of communication with institutions, an action plan for the following months and real results visible in the public space, which corresponds to the key assumptions of building long-term civic activity.

## CONCLUSIONS

The sustainability of an initiative is not a one-off act, but *a daily practice – based on relationships, consistency and collective action*. It is the ability to transform the energy of the moment into a long-term process of change. It is not necessary to change the world right away – it is enough to take good care of your street, park or neighbourhood. And it all starts with someone deciding: **‘We act on it’**.



# Learning objectives



By the end of this module, the facilitators will:

- Understand the purpose and potential impact of Street Debates and LARC in fostering civic dialogue and participatory democracy.
- Be equipped to organize and lead role-playing activities and simulations that prepare participants for real-life public engagement.
- Facilitate group discussions that encourage respectful exchange and critical thinking.
- Integrate both online and in-person tools to deliver effective hybrid training sessions and events.
- Confidently implement Street Debates and LARC using practical tips, templates, and facilitation techniques.

## Training Methodology

– @musninkai rural community (Lithuania)

# Module 5

## 5.1. Experiential learning

### *Hands-on activities, role-playing, and simulations*

This activity is designed to stimulate participants' critical thinking and to introduce them to the structure and flow of formal debates. It serves as a quick and engaging way for participants to understand how debates work. By experiencing this more structured format, participants will become more confident in expressing their ideas independently, particularly in less formal or street-style debates.

*The purpose of this activity is not to judge or compete, but to encourage open thinking, respectful exchange of ideas, and practice in argumentation.*

#### YOUR FIRST DEBATE

#### STEPS OF IMPLEMENTATION

1

Pick a list of short, punchy statements that people can reasonably debate. Mix serious and light-hearted ones. Examples of the statements::

*"Public transport should be free for everyone."*

*"Smartphones should be banned in schools."*

*"Voting should be mandatory."*

2

Pair everyone up, and assign one person in each pair to argue for and the other against the statement—regardless of their personal beliefs.

3

Give them 1 minute each to make their case. Then, switch roles: they argue the opposite position.

4

After two rounds, rotate partners so people hear new styles and viewpoints.



### *Materials needed:*

- A printed list of debate topics
- A stopwatch or timer
- (Optional) A bell or sound cue to signal time's up



### *Debriefing:*

- What was easier—arguing your own view or the opposite?
- How did it feel to defend something you did not agree with?
- What surprised you about your partner's argument?

This interactive exercise lets participants step into the shoes of different community members—and try their hand at running a town hall meeting. It is all about learning to balance voices, manage emotions, and guide a group toward shared understanding or at least respectful disagreement.

## **SIMULATING A PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

### **1. The Scenario**

“There’s a new proposal to pedestrianized the city center—no cars, more walking space, and greener public areas. As the facilitator, your job is to run a community consultation where local residents and stakeholders share their views.”

### **2. Assign each participant a role with a brief description of their concerns or interests**

Roles:

- City Official / Moderator – You are running the meeting. Stay neutral and make sure everyone gets a turn.
- Business Owner – Worried about delivery access and losing passing trade.
- Elderly Resident – Concerned about reaching key services like the pharmacy or hospital.
- Environmental Activist – Strongly supports the idea for its sustainability benefits.

Parent – Thinks a car-free zone would make it safer for kids, but wonders about school drop-offs.

## **STEPS OF IMPLEMENTATION**



### 3. Instructions:

- The Moderator opens the meeting and explains the topic.
- Each stakeholder shares a brief 1–2 minute statement from their perspective.
- The moderator opens the floor for a Q&A or open discussion, helping manage the conversation and keep it respectful.
- The session wraps with the group either working toward a shared direction—or clearly identifying areas where more discussion is needed.

### 4. Debriefing

- What was the hardest part of moderating the conversation?
- How did you handle emotional or conflicting opinions?
- Did the mood of the discussion change over time? What influenced that?

## STREET DEBATE WORKSHOP

The Street Debate Workshop is an interactive training session designed to introduce participants to the principles, techniques, and practicalities of facilitating public debates in open, urban spaces.

Rooted in participatory democracy and civic engagement, the workshop equips future facilitators with the tools to spark meaningful conversations on social, political, and everyday issues—directly in the street, where diverse voices intersect.

To organize a street debate, begin by selecting a public space where people naturally gather—such as a park, plaza, or outside a cultural center. Make sure you check any local regulations or permits needed to host public activities. Choose a clear and engaging topic that invites diverse opinions without being overly polarizing. Prepare visual materials like signs or boards with your main question written in large letters to catch attention.



Examples of good debate questions include:

*“Should voting be mandatory?”*

*“Is social media helping or harming democracy?”*

*“Would you trust artificial intelligence to make laws?”*

Gather **basic materials**—markers, tape, a portable speaker if needed—and set up a visible, open circle to invite participation.

*As a facilitator*, your role is to *stay neutral, guide the discussion, rephrase questions if needed, and make space for all voices, including quieter participants*. Begin by introducing yourself and the topic, then invite passersby to share their views by asking, *“What do you think?”* or *“Would you like to add your voice to this?”* End with a short reflection or summary to honor everyone’s input, and consider documenting insights or interesting points that could inspire local projects or policies.

- A1/A2 paper/boards, markers, post-its
- printed topic cards (controversial, common and neutral themes)
- Visual signage (the topic of the debate written in large letters on a single board)
- Phone for timekeeping/photos/videos
- Street permits if required
- Camera/smartphone for documentation

## *Materials needed*



## *Reminders*



stay neutral and encouraging.

- keep it short—let the public lead.
- document takeaways (photos, notes).
- make space for disagreement without conflict.

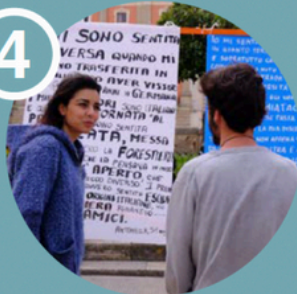
# the STEPS of a perfect STREET DEBATE

1



Find a public space where you feel well

4



The first passersby arrive, stop, read and you can start the first discussions

7



Write the answer in big letters on the board

2



Choose a question about our society that is accessible to everyone

5



The exchanges start, between people and the facilitators

8



Hang the boards on the wall of opinions

3



Install the first answers that you collected before among your relatives or neighbours

6



The facilitators summarise the discussions and write down the answers

9



Keep the exchange going until planned

## LOCAL AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS (LARC)

Local Awareness Raising Campaign (LARC) is a powerful extension of a Street Debate, designed to turn public dialogue into sustained visibility and action.

While street debates spark raw, open conversations among everyday people, a LARC helps collect and amplify those voices—especially the ones rarely heard in formal settings. It raises visibility around a shared local concern, whether it's youth mental health, transport inequality, or climate anxiety, and presents that issue in a way that decision-makers can't ignore. By documenting opinions, transforming them into clear messages or creative materials (like posters, reels, or public exhibitions), and sharing them with local institutions, youth councils, or media, a LARC builds a bridge from informal public space to formal influence. This process not only empowers citizens but also gives local authorities grounded, real-life input from their communities. To reach decision-makers effectively, facilitators should involve them early (e.g., invite to street debates), deliver a short, visual summary of community input, and request a meeting or public response. In this way, LARCs don't just raise awareness—they translate street-level talk into civic change.

### for a STREET DEBATE



#### BEFORE

1. Pick a central location: Choose busy public areas like parks, markets, or school entrances.
2. Use a strong visual prompt: Write your main debate question clearly on a big sign or board.
3. Have a team of 2–4 facilitators: One leads, one documents, others invite people to join.
4. Prepare 2–3 warm-up questions: These help participants ease into the discussion.

#### DURING

1. Stay neutral: Don't argue—facilitate. Let diverse opinions emerge.
2. Encourage short inputs: “What do you think—in one sentence?”
3. Use prompts to involve quieter people: “Would you add something different?”
4. Create a visual element: Use sticky notes, yes/no boards, or a vote line for interaction.
5. Document ideas: Assign someone to write down key comments or take pictures (with permission).



## for a LOCAL AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN

### FROM DEBATE TO CAMPAIGN

1. Identify a theme that got strong reactions at the street debate.
2. Gather quotes or stories shared by participants (anonymized if needed).
3. Pick a clear goal: Raise awareness, shift public opinion, or push for change.

### CAMPAIGN TOOLS

1. Posters or street art with quotes: “We want safer streets at night!”
2. Video reels or vox pops: Quick clips of people answering your debate question.
3. “Community Wall” exhibitions in schools, cafes, or libraries
4. Online polls or interactive Instagram stories to keep the topic alive

### ENGAGING DECISION-MAKERS

1. Invite them to a debate: Even just to listen, not speak
2. Send a visual summary (1 page) with quotes, statistics, and key asks
3. Frame the ask clearly: “We want [X] to be discussed in [Y] meeting”
4. Follow up: A polite email or visit goes a long way

### EXTRA TIPS

1. Use local language and accessible words—make it easy for all to join.
2. Always end with a call to action—“Do you want to help us follow up?”
3. Partner with local youth centers, NGOs, or schools for reach and credibility
4. Use creative formats—music, art, theater—to make street debates more inviting
5. Experiential learning: Hands-on activities, role-playing, and simulations.
6. Collaborative learning: Group discussions and peer exchanges.
7. Blended learning: Online and in-person sessions.
8. Practical application: Implementation of Street Debates and LARC.



# Conclusion

Fostering civic engagement is not just about education; it is a dynamic process that requires trust, dialogue, and consistent local efforts. This curriculum shows that meaningful participation starts with listening, continues through dialogue, and leads to shared responsibility for our future. The Street Debate methodology and the related practices described here are accessible and effective tools for building democratic understanding and empowering marginalized voices. Whether by creating policy recommendations based on public discussions, working with institutional partners, or ensuring grassroots initiatives continue over time, participants are encouraged to take their knowledge beyond the training setting and into everyday civic areas.

Ultimately, this curriculum aims to help create a Europe where all citizens, no matter their age, background, or experience, have the chance and ability to influence decisions that impact their lives. By investing in inclusive, community-led engagement, we take an important step toward building a more participatory, fair, and resilient democracy.



*-Street Debate, The Word Carrier*



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„Those who do not know where they come from  
do not know where they are heading, for they do  
not know where they are standing.“

–Karl von Habsburg

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