

# RESILIENCE AGAINST ANTI-DEMOCRATIC TENDENCIES THROUGH EDUCATION

**Competences for Democratic  
Culture in European Social  
and Youth Work**

**HANDBOOK FOR YOUTH  
AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

Markus Pausch and Patricia Hladschik,  
Rasha Nagem, Filip Pazderski

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No state, particularly no democratic one, can exist without its citizens, who are connected to the state and to each other by a series of bonds. This relationship has been discussed by socio-political thinkers from Plato through Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke or Ferdinand Tönnies (see: Durkheim 1977). They pointed out that the functioning of both the institutions of the state and citizenship is based on the existence of a network of rules, contracts, rights and obligations that are concluded between individuals. In modern democratic societies, in order to build and maintain respect for these rules, there is a need for an embedded conviction in individuals that such a relationship with the group based on its institutions is necessary. Such a conviction must not only be formed in the process of socialisation and the education that is a part of it, but it must also be maintained afterwards. The process of its building is very delicate and especially exposed to external turbulences of social, political or economic nature. The sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf believed that liberal democracy would only survive in the long term if it rested on two things: the rule of law and a well-functioning civil society with its associated attitudes, virtues, and institutions. He also observed that creating social conditions that will allow democracy to function in a way that is not subject to external or internal turmoil in the post-communist societies in Central-Eastern Europe may take up to 60 years (see: Dahrendorf 2004a; idem 2004b). The events of recent years have shown that the fragility of the democratic system also affects societies where it may have seemed more established.

Since the beginning of the millennium, democracy has been confronted with extraordinary challenges. The number of democratic states has been declining since 2005, and even within established democracies, their quality is declining (Freedom House 2019). Many countries face anti-democratic, authoritarian tendencies (e.g. see: International IDEA 2010; V-Dem Institute 2021). The threat comes both from ruling parties that suspend basic democratic principles in order to stay in power and from extremist groups that agitate against state institutions. Rising socio-economic inequality and acute crises like the pandemic are also fuelling polarisation, which is being pushed by authoritarian populists and extremists. Polarisation is already considered to be a defining feature of the early 21st century by some researchers (Merkel 2021). All of these trends undermine the functioning of democratic societies, eroding individuals' faith in the functioning of shared principles and values and diverting individuals' interest towards undemocratic ideas and opinion leaders who point to simple solutions to complex problems.

In this handbook, we focus on competences for democracy and thus on how to prevent and avoid anti-democratic phenomena like authoritarianism, violent radicalisation, extremism, hate speech or conspiracy theories. Without going into the details of the very differentiated academic debates about these phenomena, it is necessary to briefly define them.

**Authoritarianism** is based on the principle of "blind submission to authority and opposed to individual freedom of thought and action. In government, authoritarianism denotes any political system that concentrates power in the hands of a leader or a small elite that is not constitutionally responsible to the body of the people [...] It stands in fundamental contrast to democracy" (*Britannica* 2017, "Authoritarianism").

**Radicalisation** is a very complex phenomenon and not every form of it is dangerous or anti-democratic. For many centuries, democratic movements were classified as radical by authoritarians. Today, radical democratic thought is not a danger but an opportunity for improving the quality of democracy. As dangerous, we consider **violent radicalisation** as "a process of social, psychological, and ideological changes leading to extremism and potentially violent extremism." (EUCPN 2019, 1)

**Extremism** is defined as “an ideological position characterised by a polarised world-view, a distrust in state institutions and democratic decision-making processes, and the legitimisation of the use of violence.” (EUCPN 2019, 1). Added to this is the refusal of dialogue, the desire to dominate and erase other opinions. Political opponents are seen as adversaries and antagonists. The last stage would then be **violent extremism**, which is “the position of an individual who actually has committed one or more acts of violence out of extremist considerations. It is used here as an equivalent to terrorism.” (EUCPN 2019, 1)

**Hate speech** is defined as “any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor.” (UN 2020)

Finally, **conspiracy theories** are attempts to explain events or developments as “the result of actions of a small powerful group” (Reid 2021). Very often these explanations are linked to anti-semitism.

In view of these phenomena, the resilience of democracies and, especially, of their citizens is crucial. But for democracy to sustain itself, we must start by understanding what it really is. Without going deeper into the theoretical debates, it should be pointed out that we mean, on the one hand, the institutional structures and decision-making processes of representative democracies, which include free and equal elections, separation of powers, freedom of opinion and freedom of the press, etc. In our view, however, democracy is more than that. We understand it as a political order in which the freedom of the individual, the right to co-determination and solidarity between equals are central values, not only on the political level in the narrow sense, but in all areas of life. This also centrally includes the right to dissent and rebellion against authoritarianism (Pausch 2019), be it towards state authoritarianism or authoritarianism in everyday life, workplaces, schools or wherever. After John Dewey, then, we understand democracy as a way of life that must be experienced and learned in everyday life (Dewey 2008).

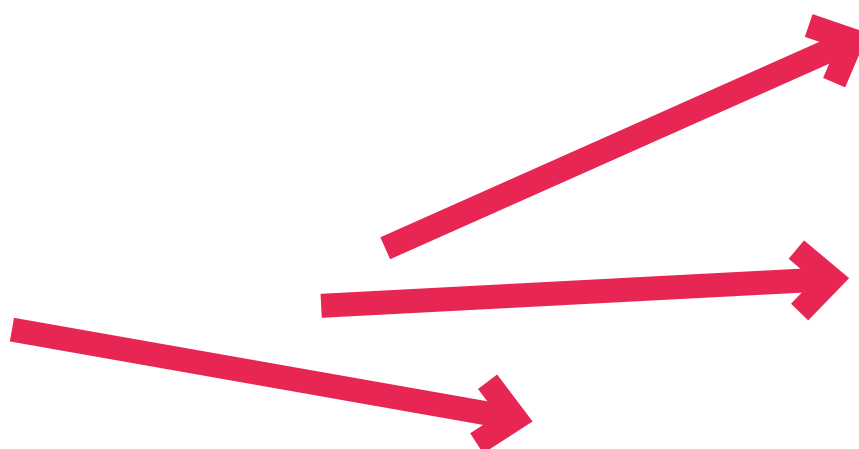
In order to make citizens in democracies resilient to authoritarian tendencies, several things are important. On the one hand, they must have equal opportunities for a good future and the experience of democracy in everyday life. This is a major political task that goes far beyond this project and handbook. Democracy is not about bringing in compliant subordinates, but critical, mature citizens. Being able to resist conformity pressures is one of the central prerequisites for combating authoritarianism. Thus, such citizens must be strengthened in their democratic competences.

This handbook was written in the context of the project “Resilience Through Education for Democratic Citizenship” (REDE; hereinafter referred to as “the project”) funded by the Council of Europe and the European Commission under the DISCO Call (Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation). The groundwork for this activity has already been laid by the institutions of the Council of Europe and the EU that are aware of the dangers and, therefore, promote projects to strengthen democracy. The idea of the REDE project (<https://rede-project.org>) stems from the considerations outlined above and the conviction that citizenship education is an important building block for resilient democracies against phenomena like authoritarianism, extremism, hate speech, etc. However, since there are already many diverse initiatives and activities in the school sector, we focus here on education for democratic culture in youth work outside the formal education system. This handbook, thus, aims to support youth and social workers in strengthening their own democratic

competences as well as those of the young people they work with. It is, therefore, primarily relevant for the target group of social and youth workers, but is also intended to inspire and support other professional groups such as teachers, policy makers or researchers in the field.

In the course of the REDE project, methods for strengthening skills for democratic culture were collected, discussed and further developed over a period of one and a half years. In addition to general citizenship and human rights education, the focus lies on strengthening resilience against violent radicalisation and extremism. It is important to underline here that the methods presented aim at early prevention and are not directed at those who are already in an advanced radicalisation process. They are, therefore, relevant for all social groups, although primarily for young people.

The methods were analysed for their compliance with the different dimensions and indicators of the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) that will be described in more detail in subchapter 1.2. Since the traditions and problems of the participating project countries (Austria, France and Poland) – despite all similarities – also show differences in detail, the first part describes the situation of social work and youth work as well as the RFCDC in Europe in somewhat more general terms before concrete educational methods are presented in chapter 2. In the following table, you will find a list of methods described later in detail.



# LIST OF METHODS PRESENTED IN THIS HANDBOOK

Category	Method	Objectives; target groups
Methods to enhance general political awareness for an open society	Political awareness raising / understanding of the political self	raising awareness among different target groups, mainly those who are less familiar with politics
	Reflecting on the rebellious moment of democracy	raising awareness about their own political socialisation and democracy experiences among professional groups and youth
	Pillars of identity	reflection on one's own identity; esp. youth
	As many as possible	raising awareness on political decision making, participation; esp. youth
	What is or isn't political	raising awareness about politics and its impact; all target groups
	Opinion barometer	reflection on opinions, awareness of polarisation, conflicts; all target groups
	Arbitrary vote	reflection on voting procedures; esp. youth
Methods for reflecting on democratic competencies with educators	Ranking competences of RFCDC	working with competences of the RFCDC; esp. social/youth workers
	Reflecting on competences of educators or social/youth workers	reflection on competences and their importance; social/youth workers
	Reflecting on the role of human rights in the framework of university classes on social work	reflection on human rights in social work; social/youth workers
Methods for strengthening resilience against anti-democratic phenomena	Working with stories 1: The Lonely Duckling	resilience against exclusion and discrimination based on identity; young children
	Working with stories 2: Punch or Political Puppet Theatre	resilience against populism, authoritarianism; young children
	Free associations and prejudice barometer	reflection on prejudice; youth workers and youth
	Deconstruction of hate speech	reflection and deconstruction of hate speech, encouraging resilience among youth and all groups
	Extremism barometer (What is extreme?)	critical understanding of extremism, encouraging resilience; youth workers, youth and all groups
	The District of Legends	deconstruction of conspiracy theories; esp, youth workers, all groups
	Conspiracy video with youth "Le complot nouilles" (The Noodle conspiracy)	deconstruction of conspiracy theories; esp, youth workers, all groups
	Text message to victims of hate speech	resilience against hate speech and encouraging solidarity; esp, youth workers, all groups
	Argumentation training and countering hate speech – role play	resilience against hate speech and training of counterspeech; esp, youth workers, all groups





## SOCIAL WORK AND DEMOCRACY

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Social work, and with it youth work, has a long tradition in Europe but has developed differently in different countries. In relation to the forms of government and questions of power, there are several approaches. Social work is considered first and foremost as a helping profession that supports individuals to cope with their lives. It can also see its role as maintaining a certain social order and trying to guide people into the social mainstream, which is often prioritised by the state. Especially, but not only, in anti-democratic regimes, this tendency promotes the danger of a politically unreflective affirmative attitude towards those in power and towards social inequality.

A modern understanding of social work, on the other hand, is closely linked to democratic goals. Here, the focus lies on strengthening human rights, democracy and individual maturity. Clients, especially young people, are to be empowered and supported on their way to becoming free, competent, but also solidary citizens. This goal may well clash with the goals of the government principals from time to time. For example, the state can commission social work to integrate unemployed people into the labour market. In the theoretical debates on the role of social work, this is discussed as the double mandate and the triple mandate of social work (Staub-Bernasconi 2007). The double mandate refers to the fact that on the one hand, social workers have an obligation to their client – the state, but at the same time, they also have an obligation to the client – the individual – and their well-being. The third mandate is the obligation to fulfill scientific and ethical requirements. This also raises the question of whether social work as a profession should be an actor in the political debate, for example, to advance social and human rights policies.

From an understanding of democracy that places equal opportunities for participation in the foreground, this pressure has a counterproductive effect. However, the dilemma cannot be completely resolved and must be considered and evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The problem can only be briefly touched upon here. However, it is important for social and youth workers to be aware of the possible dilemmas.

Notwithstanding the political conditions indicated above, it must be stressed that those who perform social work on a daily basis also have many opportunities to shape democratic attitudes in the recipients of their work. Often, the sensitivity with which they approach these recipients to different social, cultural, physical, etc. characteristics will determine how they influence the future behaviour of these people. It also influences whether those on welfare will later find it easier to maintain a link with the democratic system, or whether they will continue to lose faith in it and be more likely to adopt radical or even extremist attitudes. In this sense, social workers' interpersonal competences and democratic awareness may also determine the future behaviour of the people they meet in their professional capacity. For this reason, this handbook focuses on the development of such competences and awareness.

## 1.1 Democratic citizenship education and social work: European perspectives

In order to understand the challenges of social work and youth work today, a brief look at its development in Europe is important. At the same time, it is also worth bearing in mind the differences in the development of social work in the various EU Member States. These, together with the current state of social work in the individual countries, are also important conditions which the authors of this guide have taken into account when proposing the educational methods included in this publication.

Social work emerged in the 19th century as a response to the “social question”, a term used to describe this period of pressing social issues (Zappi 2020). The fight against poverty was the central concern. While it was linked to an idea of empowerment from the very beginning (Levy Simon 1994), it took a long time for this concept to become central. In the 20th century, social work professionalised with different foci in European states. The first schools for social work were founded in England, France, Romania and Poland, while it took much longer in other countries. Solving the social question was the main objective of the pioneers: “In their opinion, neither private charity nor state social protection were sufficient. They believed that the response to the difficulties of the working classes called for individualized support provided by social work professionals” (Zappi 2020).

After the Second World War and in the course of the expansion of welfare states, the role and self-image of social work changed. With the emergence of a critical civil society in the 1960s and 1970s, the question arose as to whether social work should be understood as an instrument of control by the state or as a critical and emancipatory profession. Participation, empowerment and critical thinking become new principles of a progressive understanding and self-description. Social work now increasingly sees itself as a profession that supports human rights and social justice. This is also reflected in official documents such as the declaration of the International Federation of Social Work from 2014, which formulates a global definition of the Social Work Profession: “Social Work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work” (IFSW 2014). Democracy is not explicitly mentioned here. This has to do with the complicated relationship between social work and the institutions of representative democracy. In an official statement from 2016, the International Federation of Social Work commits itself to an active role in “building real democracy”: “IFSW promotes the development of legislation in all countries that recognizes the importance of community involvement in building real democratic structures.” (IFSW 2016) The statement also points out that democracy should not be reduced to elections. The mission statement of the European Association of Schools of Social Work refers to similar values: “In fulfilling its mission, the EASSW adheres to all United Nations’ Declarations and Conventions on human rights, recognizing that respect for the inalienable rights of the individual is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace. Members of EASSW are united in their obligation to the continued pursuit of social justice and social development.” (EASSW Website 2021)

In recent years, some authors have pointed out that the relationship between social work and democracy has remained undefined (Geisen et al. 2013, 9) and emphasise their interdependence: “[...] it is not only social work that needs democracy, but also democracy needs social work” (Kamiński 2015, 139). This is where a pedagogical and educational approach comes into play. “The educational dimension in social work is crucial to conceptualise democracy as an open and ongoing process and not as a predefined project” (Bie et al 2013). This perspective on social work fits well with the Council of Europe’s reference framework of competencies for democratic culture that will be described in the next sub-chapter. In 2015, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Families and Youth defined out-of-school child and youth work as a place of learning for democracy and participation that should contribute to self-efficacy (BMJF 2015, 11).

At a time when developments that threaten democracy are very relevant and when both authoritarian politicians or parties and anti-democratic extremist groups are professionalising themselves to misuse and recruit young people for their own purposes, social work has an important role to play (another example of possible activity is “cultural social work” performed in local communities – see Jonas Büchel in Makowski, Pazderski 2011, 90-96).

However, while highlighting the new areas of activity for social workers, we must bear in mind the different conditions of their work and the different models according to which social work has developed in individual countries. Their comparison was the subject of research undertaken in the first stage of the REDE project. It was observed that in Austria nowadays social work is more broadly understood as a "human rights profession" and the idea that social work has a "triple mandate" to fulfill is becoming more and more accepted. The third mandate (mentioned above) is based on reference documents on human rights and refers to professional standards, especially ethical ones, which were adopted by social workers in various international forums and formulated in professional codes (see: Staub-Bernasconi 2018, 114ff). However, it has to be noted that there is a wide gap between aspiration and reality and between practice and effectiveness (Fritsche/Wigger 2016). Moreover, as it is observed for Austria, while there are very concrete and explicit links between social work and human rights, there is no such relation in terms of citizenship education or competences for democratic culture.

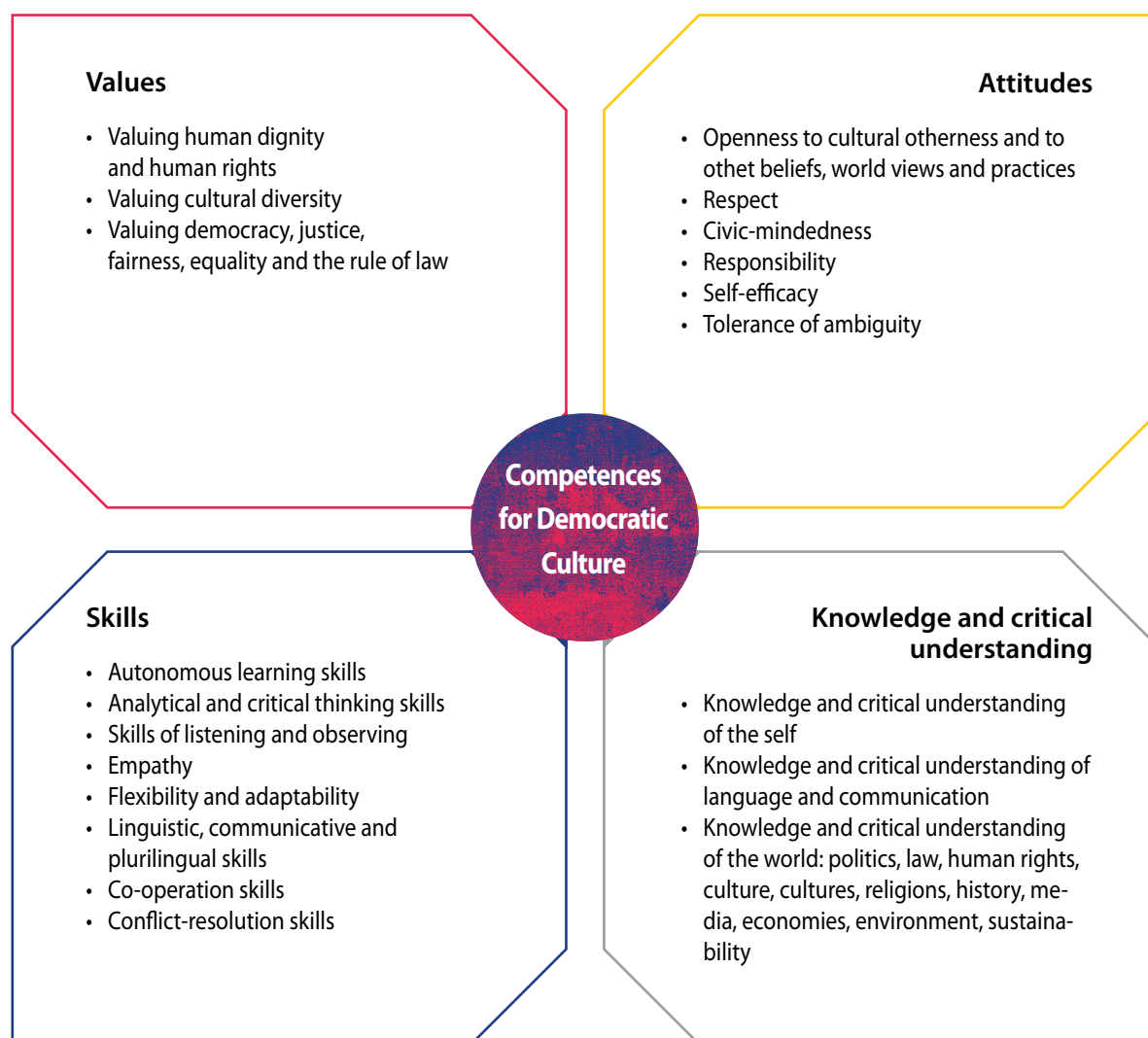
In France, social work has developed according to several separate genealogies (social service, specialised education, animation), each lineage having its own axes of cleavage and historical traditions. Social workers are present in a wide variety of institutions: social centres, early childhood services, institutions for the disabled and elderly, etc. (Autès, 1999). They are employed by state and local authorities, but may also belong to associations. What brings together such varied missions, practices and actors is undoubtedly their aid or service relationship. However, social work in the country faces a number of challenges, namely social workers' loss of sense of purpose while being trapped in segmented and accounting logics and being stuck between systems and professionals who no longer know how to take into account their overall situation. It is only an indication of a wider problem boiling down to a lack of coordination of social policies in the country. In order to respond to these challenges, an inter-ministerial Action Plan for social work and social training has recently been adopted in the country, although its results have yet to be seen.

Social work in Poland has come a long way – from institutions established after the First World War based on European standards referring to the idea of "democratic upbringing", through the abandonment of these principles during the communist period to the construction of a new system in the 1990s after the political transformation in the country. Nowadays, the vast majority of social work in Poland is performed within public welfare institutions and faces significant challenges. The role of most of its functionaries is still reduced to the distribution of public allowances or material help and the completion of other bureaucratic tasks. Social workers, although often very competent and aware of the deficiencies of the system, have little space and time for performing their functions properly (Kozak 2012a). They are overburdened with tasks – each year an average Polish social worker works with 105 individuals from 45 families (NIK 2019). They also deal with inadequate working conditions (such as lack of space for individual meetings with clients) and insufficient salaries. The Polish social assistance system can be described as an emergency welfare state – it is concentrated more on reacting to problems than on preventing them. Polish social work within the official system is based mainly on the method of individual case work. Other methods, like group work or community work, are virtually non-existent (for more information see: Kobylińska, Pazderski 2021).

## **1.2 The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)**

As it was already mentioned above, the most important challenges democracies are facing around the continent and beyond have been recognised by European institutions. In the annual report of the Council of Europe in 2016, then-Secretary General Jagland highlighted the importance of democratic and human rights education for the challenges of today's societies: "Democratic citizenship and human rights are [...] increasingly important in addressing discrimination, prejudice and intolerance, and thus preventing and combating violent extremism and radicalisation in a sustainable and proactive way" (Secretary General Thorbjorn Jagland in his annual report Council of Europe 2016). Based on this conviction, in 2017, the Council of Europe launched the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, which since then has become the flagship project of educational policies within the Council (learn more at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture>).

**Graph 1:** Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture



In this model, essential dimensions of democratic culture are broken down into competences and descriptors. They systematise citizenship education and show that it is not only about knowledge, but mainly about competences. Values, attitudes, knowledge, critical understanding and skills of citizens should be strengthened. This “butterfly” model was initially developed for the more formal setting in the school context. There, it is already being applied, tested and further developed. However, it undoubtedly also provides a suitable framework for less formal educational processes in social and youth work. This is demonstrated in the documentation of the first pilot projects carried out in the framework of a respective focus group on the Reference Framework established within Network of European Civic Educators, NECE (see: <https://www.nece.eu/about-nece/focus-groups/>). More information on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and its applicability in the practice of educational activities in the non-formal sector can be found in Hladschik et al. 2020. Further methods and material can also be found on the website of expert Rebecca Welge (<https://rmwelge.ch/en/about/rebecca-welge>).

Teachers and non-formal educators do not use the same methods and do not always share the same understanding of democratic competences. Teachers have to follow curricula and give grades; students are obliged to participate. Non-formal educators work with learners who take part voluntarily. They have to be well-oriented regarding the interests of the participants because they have to recruit them. So, sometimes, when teachers and non-formal educators meet, they use very different languages. For example, when a schoolteacher combines her teaching activities with a non-formal offer. Here, the RFCDC can serve as a mediating tool (Lorenzen 2020). It seems that the RFCDC can help to find a common language when it comes to preparing such activities. Teachers can describe the needs of their students and non-formal educators can describe what they want to achieve through their activity. Both can then agree on criteria how the impact of the activity should be manifested.

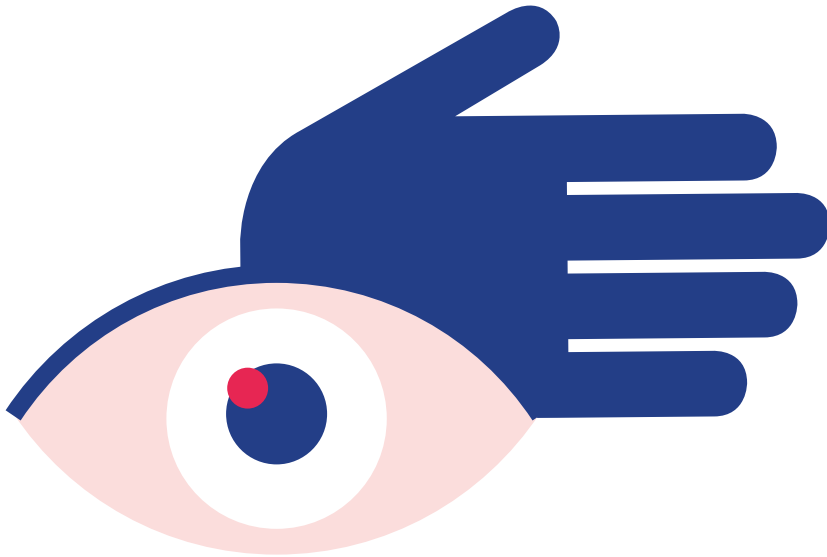
For all the reasons mentioned here, we adopt the Reference Framework as a baseline for the educational methods presented in this handbook. Each of them allows, to some extent, the development of at least one of the competences included in the model proposed by the Council of Europe and often they refer to more than one of them. In the following sections of this handbook, we try to relate the Framework of Competences for a Democratic Culture to the reality of social workers' everyday work.

### **1.3 RFCDC role in daily social work**

Social and youth workers face even greater challenges than non-formal educators. For one thing, the delivery of civic education is not part of the core area of social workers. They are busy with a range of challenges and problems that stretch them to the limit and not infrequently overburden them. Very often, they work with limited resources of time and money. To force on them a further task as democracy educators is actually an unacceptable overload under these circumstances. It is, therefore, extremely important to emphasise at this point that no such claim may be derived from this project and this handbook. Only on the condition that policy makers and institutions improve the framework conditions for social and youth work can they be expected to play a role as civic educators. Apart from that, it is of course very desirable if social and youth workers – as is often the case – take on a role in terms of political empowerment on their own initiative. Very often, they contribute largely, but implicitly, to a fostering of democratic competences of their target groups. This handbook is intended to support them in this endeavour.

As mentioned, youth workers and social workers do not see educational activities at the core of their work. Therefore, they sometimes – or maybe even often – do not reflect that what they do is fostering democratic competences in young people. They know that project-based work strengthens young people and helps them to develop transversal competences, but they do not realise that this is about competences for democratic culture. The Reference Framework of the Council of Europe can help them to understand the democratic impact that their work has on young people. It can contribute to making the great potential for democratic learning processes in the fields of youth work and social work more visible. Moreover, it can help to strengthen the process of self-reflection and professional understanding.

Among the competences that are important here, some stand out in particular. Respect for others and tolerance of ambiguity are particularly important to avoid dangerous polarisation processes. Strengthening self-efficacy is central to equipping people for political participation. Knowledge and critical thinking are necessary to understand power relations, to identify injustice, authoritarianism and one's own position in the political arena.



## EDUCATION/ TEACHING METHODS

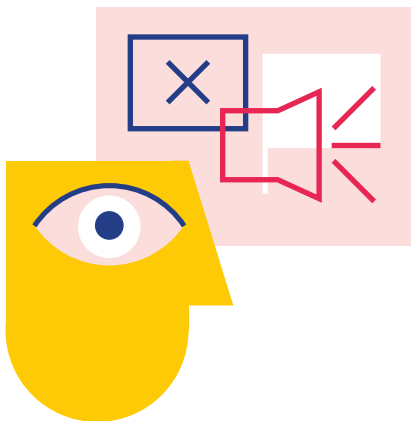
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The following main part of this handbook presents selected methods that are applicable and useful for the strengthening of democratic competences in the context of social and youth work. Here, a method is understood as a systematic procedure for accomplishing a task or for reaching a goal (Schilling 2020, 134 f.). In the debate on methods in social work, Meinhold (1988) rightly points out that methods are never neutral and are embedded in a temporal, personal and institutional context. In this respect, a concept is needed to apply procedures as methods. The concept on which this handbook is based is that of the Reference Framework of Competences for a Democratic Culture. Techniques, practices or tools can be considered as sub-aspects of methods, although we will largely refrain from making a more concrete distinction in the Handbook and will mostly speak of methods (Galuske 2007, 27).

Some of the methods have been collected, tested or discussed within the framework of the REDE project, others have been used by project partners for some time and also outside the project. This is a selection of certain methods and by no means a complete list. Reference is made at the end of this manual to other sources and methods that follow similar goals and lead further. The individual methods are suitable for different institutional contexts, for working with people of different ages and with different levels of life experience. Furthermore, it should be noted that to increase their effectiveness, it is sometimes useful to plan the implementation of individual methods in partnerships with different actors.

As a general note, it can be stated that cooperation between different actors and institutions would be desirable to enable the application of the methods. For some examples, a stronger formal context and preparations are needed, suggesting cooperation with schools or schools of social work. However, it must be kept in mind that the school context can also be an obstacle because for some young people, it is not considered a safe, free space but a constraining framework. This is not the only reason why cooperation with sports or cultural associations is recommended.

Based on the assumptions outlined above, all the proposed methods were classified into three larger categories. First, some methods will be presented which mark the beginning of the civil educational process and aim at political awareness raising, structural and self-reflection and critical thinking. This is followed by a presentation of methods which are, rather, directed to work with other educators or future social workers (in an academic teaching context). This part of the handbook specifically refers to the Reference Framework for Competences of Democratic Culture, and it's worth pointing this out since this direct reference to the RFCDC is still rather rare in civic education. The third group of methods is, then, dedicated to the prevention of anti-democratic phenomena like violent radicalisation or polarisation. They include those dealing with resilience to hate speech and conspiracy theories. These subheadings serve as a rough orientation. As already stated, individual methods usually have an impact on several dimensions and competences of democratic culture. This is tabulated in a short summary of each method.



## 2.1 Methods to enhance general political awareness for an open society

A first important aspect of citizenship education is to create awareness of political structures, processes and contents and, especially, to help people recognise their own individual role in the political system and to reflect on their own political socialisation. This (self-)reflection can be understood as a basis of all citizenship education and democratic competences. It is not reduced to social work or to working with specific target groups, but is about a basis of political awareness that is important for all citizens in a democracy. That's why we start with a few selected methods focussing on awareness raising and sensibilisation, which were partly tested in the context of the project.

### 2.1.1 Political awareness raising / understanding of the political self

#### Aims / objectives

The aim of political awareness training is to strengthen political awareness of one's own possibilities of influence, one's own "political biography" and political socialisation, the role of the individual in society, power distribution, injustice and social structures. This method aims to raise awareness that people have different amounts of power or influence in different situations in their lives and that they may be less or more powerful than others in some areas of life; it calls for reflection on how they act in these situations, what these situations do to them and in what ways they can influence these situations and the underlying structures. The relationship of the individual to the state, their role as a citizen and the relationship between freedom and equality can also be consciously reflected upon.

#### Description of the method

Participants are asked various questions aimed at consciously reflecting on one's own political self and perceiving oneself as a political person:

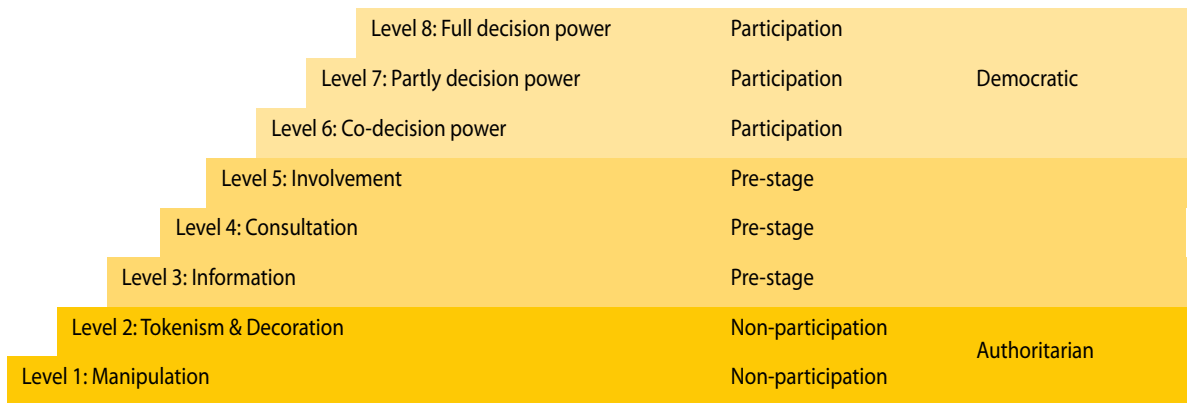
- In which situations can you influence your life yourself? (give several examples like work, school or family, leisure, etc.)
- In which situations of your everyday life do you feel self-efficient, powerful?
- In which situations do you feel powerless? (again, think of concrete life situations at your workplace, in school, other circumstances)

Participants can first reflect on these questions individually, then discuss them in small groups or in the plenary. Depending on the context, they can write down their answers or call them out to the facilitator to categorise and write them down. In a more casual context, such as talking to young people outside a formal context, it is sufficient to discuss these questions. They do not necessarily need to be written down to raise political awareness.

#### Variation: Ladder of participation

You can deepen the exercise by showing the ladder of participation and asking the participants to position themselves on the ladder with regard to different life situations, especially in the context of their workplace and/or school.

**Graph:** Ladder of participation (own, expanded illustration according to Arnstein 1969).



### Usability in social work

Feedback from social workers in pre-tests during the project shows that the method is useful both for their own classification in the political context and in their work with specific target groups. It can be applied relatively easily in any conversation and without formal requirements, and can initiate a reflection process, which is an advantage in open youth work. It can also be used in a more formal context with different variations. The method is particularly effective when it leads to a dialogue about one's own experiences. It can be risky if it only leads to a selective reflection process and is then not followed up. Especially when working with young people, at least accompanying support by social workers is necessary.

**OVERVIEW**

Name of the method	Political awareness / political self
Target group	Especially people with little political experience and knowledge
Duration	30 minutes to 1 hour
Spatial requirements	No special requirements
Competences	Self reflection, critical thinking
Objectives	Swareness raising about own political biography, socialisation and power relations
Method description	Individual exercise between trainer and participant or group exercise with different variations.
Social work context	Method is suitable for different contexts in social and youth work because it can be used in a very informal setting, in bilateral talks as well as in more formal settings like workshops or seminars, etc.
Preparation	Questions need to be prepared in advance; Facilitators should first reflect about their own political self and also about their relation and influence on participants.
Risks	If people are only asked the questions without discussing them with the facilitator or in a group, they can feel left alone with their impressions and, for example, feel very powerless. Thus it is important to accompany the process and to discuss the results of the reflection.
Concept / application	Method used by M. Pausch during the study programme MA Social Innovation and workshops for social workers and educators
References	Arnstein, R. Sherry 1969. A Ladder of Citizen Participation, <i>Journal of the American Planning Association</i> , Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224.

### 2.1.2 Reflecting on the rebellious moment of democracy

#### Aims / Objectives

The aim of this exercise is to sharpen (self-)reflection and critical analysis of the political environment, one's own position in society, possibilities for action and power relations. The method should encourage reflection on courage, oppression,



daily power distribution, structural discrimination, one's own biography in terms of when one stood up against injustice or authoritarianism and what happened as a result. The democratic moment is that moment when a person demands their own rights to have a say and resists oppression – or does so for others.

### Description of the method

There are two variants of this method. In the first variant, the facilitator (youth worker) describes certain situations in which people are treated unfairly, oppressed or discriminated against. This can be shown through short videos, cards, comics or short stories.

One part of the participants then tries to put themselves in the shoes of these people and think about options for action. These are developed in small groups and then presented to the rest of the participants. The others work out scenarios of reactions. What can succeed, what consequences can be expected? This exercise can be illustrated by stories about real cases of resistance. In the second variant, the participants consider for themselves at what moments they were unruly or rebelled against authority, but also when they were not and why. Possible consequences should always be discussed. Following the examples, there should be a general discussion about the question of when it is necessary and possible to democratically rebel against authoritarianism, discrimination and injustice.

### Usability in social work

First feedback from social workers in the context of our project shows that the method can also be applied, at least partly, in an informal context, without many formal requirements. Nonetheless, a more formal context (i.e. at least a room where a group can discuss without disturbance) offers more possibilities. In any case, it is important to point out the possibilities for action that the participants have in a given context. While it is important to raise awareness of unjust power relations, this should not end in the impression of powerlessness, but on the contrary, strengthen the courage to get involved in different situations.

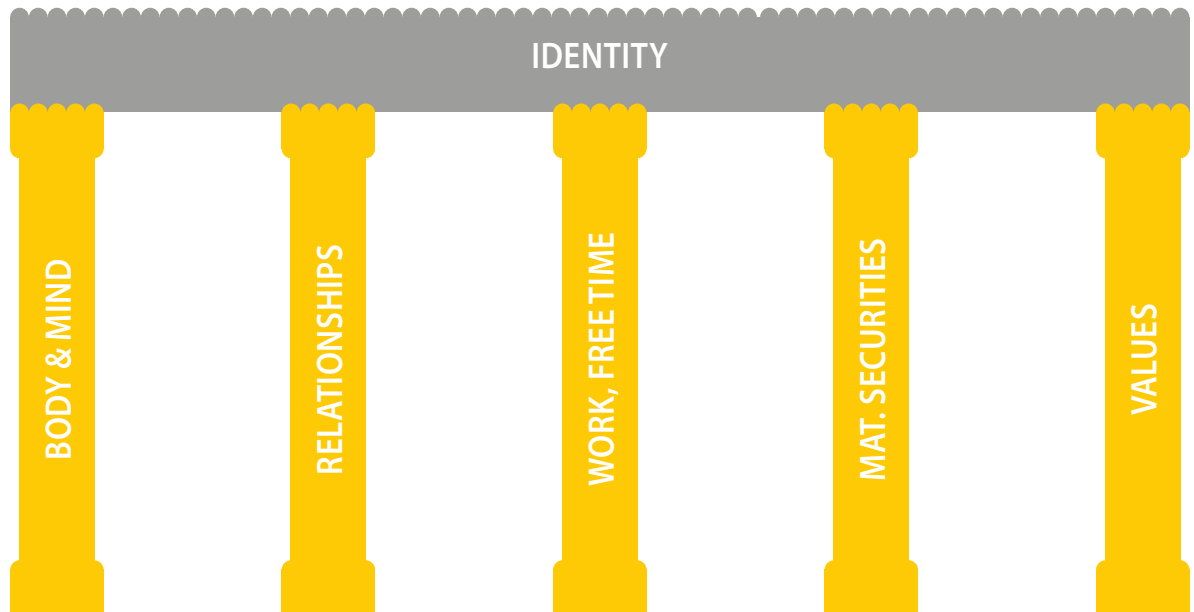
## OVERVIEW

Name of the method	Reflecting on the rebellious moment of democracy
Target group	No limitation, but especially for young people
Duration	30 minutes to 1 hour (depending on context)
Spatial requirements	No special requirements
Competences	Reflection, critical thinking, self efficacy, critical understanding of the world, valuing democracy
Objectives	Awareness raising about injustice, rebellion and democracy
Method description	Individual exercise between trainer and participant or group exercise with different variations.
Social work context	Method is suitable for different contexts in social and youth work, but better in a more formal setting such as group discussion, workshop or seminar, etc.
Preparation	Examples of democratic rebellion against authoritarianism, discrimination, injustice need to be prepared in advance; facilitators should tell about their own rebellious moments of democracy and experiences.
Risks	If the experiences are not discussed, participants could get a negative or wrong impression about their self efficacy. They could over- or underestimate their own power in different situations; thus, it is important to accompany the process.
Concept / application	Pausch, M.; study programme MA Social Innovation and workshops for social workers, educators.
References	Pausch, M. (2019). Democracy Needs Rebellion, <i>Theoria</i> , 66(161), 91-107. Retrieved Oct 17, 2021, from <a href="https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/theoria/66/161/th6616105.xml">https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/theoria/66/161/th6616105.xml</a>

## 2.1.3 Pillars of identity

### Aims / Objectives

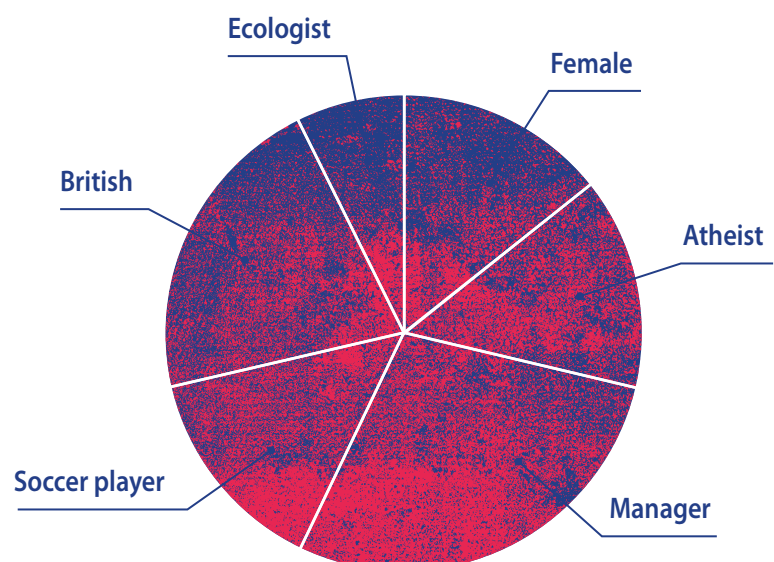
The aim of the Pillars of Identity method is to recognise one's own identities and the fact that identity consists of multiple dimensions. A person is not defined by just one element, such as gender, but by many different ones (profession, hobbies, world view, religion, etc.). If this is recognised, a harm to one part of the identity can carry less weight. Discrimination on the basis of a personal characteristic or (an ascribed) group membership is, then, no less painful and unjust, but it can be more easily endured and rejected. Resilience is strengthened as a result. Tolerance towards other people is also increased by not reducing them to one identity characteristic. The method is based on the concept of the five pillars of identity (Petzold) which are body & mind, relationships, work & free time, material securities and values.



### Description of the method

The participants create an identity pie or pie chart. Different parts of one's identity are represented as pieces of the pie in different sizes, depending on their importance. The more important, the bigger the piece. What is not important is taken out. The trainer can suggest some dimensions (such as gender, profession, education, hobby, religion, etc.), but also lets the participants decide what they want to be represented in the pie.

### MY IDENTITY



## Usability in social work

This method requires a formal framework that allows for reflection and discussion of identity issues over a period of approximately two hours. For the specific challenge of citizenship education and democratic competences, the discussion of identity can be related to the democratic framework and possibilities for action of the participants. The method is used to strengthen identity, promote resilience and also to counter anti-democratic extremism and is, thus, very important and useful for the prevention of extremism in youth work.

### OVERVIEW

Name of the method	Pillars of identity
Target group	Especially young people from 12 to 18
Duration	2 hours
Spatial requirements	Room for a group (seminar or workshop room)
Competences	Self reflection, tolerance, critical thinking, resilience, respect, empathy
Objectives	Strengthening resilience, reflection of identity, early prevention of extremism
Method description	Group exercise; facilitator asks questions about identity, participants create a pie of identity pieces and discuss it
Social work context	Method is important for the strengthening of young people's identity and very suitable for the social work context but has some formal requirements (like room and time frame)
Preparation	Theory of five pillars of identity needs to be known and presented by the facilitator, presentation material.
Risks	Identity questions can be very sensitive. People might not want to talk about different aspects, discriminations or their own prejudices. Facilitator needs to be very cautious.
Concept / application	Method conceptualised and presented in project workshop by Nedžad Močević
References	Petzold, Hilarion (ed.) (2012). Identität - Ein Kernthema moderner Psychotherapie – Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven. Springer VS Wiesbaden Website Nedžad Močević: <a href="http://mocevic.at">http://mocevic.at</a>

### 2.1.4 As many as possible

#### Aims / Objectives

The aim of this method is getting to know the participants in the group. It can also serve as a thematic introduction to any workshop dealing with politics in the broader sense.

#### Description of the method

Ask the participants to pair up in twos or threes. Then, each pair/group is given a cut out "As many as possible" card with different tasks or questions. Each pair should think about the answer to their task among themselves for a short time. Those who don't know the answers to some of the knowledge-based questions can get them from you.

The pairs now have to solve their respective tasks themselves and then question all other people or pairs in the room. The pairs have to memorise how many people were able to solve their tasks. It is not about noting who exactly that was, only the number of people. For this step, the pairs can and should get up and move around in the room in order to be able to question everyone else.

Give the pairs a maximum of ten minutes to question everyone else in the room. Then ask the participants to sit down again.

#### Questions for reflection:

1. Who has identified the most/least people who have solved the task on their card?
2. Which tasks did you have? (two or three pairs should read theirs out)
3. Give additional information on the topic, possibly from the Dictionary of Politics.

## Usability in social work

This exercise is suitable as an icebreaker or for groups who don't know each other very well yet (for instance at the beginning of the school year).

### Printing template: "As many as possible"

Find as many people as possible who

- can explain what characterises a direct democracy
- know the tasks of a parliament
- know what the most recent referendum in their country was about
- have ever been on a demonstration
- know which party their parents vote for
- are a member of a party, an NGO, a special interest group or an association
- can explain why we pay taxes
- know how many parties are represented in your country's parliament at the moment
- can name at least two human rights
- have ever joined a strike
- have ever joined a WhatsApp or Facebook group with political content
- know the difference between a party and an NGO
- watch the news regularly
- know what age you need to be to be eligible to become the President of your country
- know since when women are eligible to vote in your country
- know how many member states there are in the EU
- know what a referendum is
- can name at least three (national or international) politicians

## OVERVIEW

Name of the method	As many as possible
Target group	all groups
Duration	20 minutes
Spatial requirements	Room for a group (seminar or workshop room)
Competences	None
Objectives	Getting to know the participants, thematic introduction
Method description	Icebreaker
Social work context	All
Preparation	Print template
Risks	None
Concept / application	Concept: Sapere Aude. Demokratie vermitteln, applied during the project in a training by The Vienna Forum for Human Rights and Democracy
References	Sapere Aude. Demokratie vermitteln; verstärkt politisch. Peer-Education-Projekt for citizenship education in schools, St. Pölten, Arbeiterkammer NÖ, o.J. (Translation: Brita Pohl); <a href="https://sapereaude.at/material-1">https://sapereaude.at/material-1</a>

## 2.1.5 What is or isn't political

### Aims / Objectives

The objective of this method is to recognise the importance of politics in one's own everyday life. The aim is to counteract the impression that politics is something far removed that has nothing to do with one's own life.

### Description of the method

- 1) Ask the participants to name terms that they think have nothing to do with politics. The mentioned terms are recorded on a flipchart (whiteboard or blackboard) until there are at least six terms on the board or until it is full.
- 2) When the flipchart is filled, each individual term is examined with the participants. You start with the question: "Are there any objections concerning one of the terms on the flipchart, things that may have something to do with politics, after all?"
- 3) Cross out all the terms for which links to politics have been identified. Ideally, you end up with all the terms on the flipchart crossed out.
- 4) In the end you ask why we can identify so many links to politics, no matter what term you name there.

### **Questions for reflection:**

To begin with: Are there any objections concerning one of the terms on the flipchart, things that may have something to do with politics, after all? When you or the participants can't think of any unpolitical terms or things: Think about what you did yesterday evening or for your last holidays. At the end: Why can we find something political about practically everything? Can anyone explain the word politics?

For some links of various terms to politics, have a look at the glossary below.

#### **Glossary: What is or isn't political**

##### **Examples of the way in which different terms can be linked to politics:**

- **Air:** Politics limits the volume of traffic in order to protect air quality and the environment (e.g. 100 km/h limit for the environment on the motorway) and to curb fine dust pollution. This includes a variety of driving bans for heavy goods transport, or the requirement for certain vehicles to have a label with their emission values.
- **Alcohol:** The age from which you are allowed to drink alcohol has to do with politics. The age limit is defined in the Youth Protection Act. In Austria, for instance, you are allowed to drink at least some alcoholic drinks (wine and beer) from the age of sixteen. In the United States, the consumption of alcohol is only allowed from the age of twenty-one. Another difference to Austria is that in the US, people have agreed that alcohol cannot be consumed in public, which is why you will often see people in movies drinking from "brown bags" in which they hide alcoholic drinks.
- **Clothes:** When you buy clothes in a store, you have to pay taxes, as you do with food. Many goods and products – for example, cheap garments – are produced abroad, where workers earn low wages and face poor working conditions. In Austria, for example, there are laws protecting employees – like minimum paid leave, maximum working hours, or supplements for working at night. Garments with the "Fair Trade" logo show that the product has been produced abroad under fair conditions. This explains why these garments are sometimes more expensive than those from discounter chains. Clothes may convey political messages, like loving a country, affiliation with a group, or the desire for individual freedom or peace.

- **Computer Games:** Some games have a political content or their storyline tells a background story with political relevance. For computer games, there are age ratings, and these are defined in the course of political processes. Some games with contents that violate a law can be taken off the shelves. This process is called “indexing”. It mostly happens because the games glorify violence or in the case of politically extreme content (e.g. violations of the Prohibition Act for Nazi propaganda or Nazi symbols, etc.).
- **Drinking:** see “going out”.
- **Family:** The Austrian state pays families a financial subsidy for each child – the so-called family allowance. The state also defines who is allowed to marry whom. In Austria, homosexual couples are allowed to register a partnership, but not to marry – in the Netherlands and the US, they can marry.
- **Films:** Here, too, there are legal provisions regarding age ratings and the possibility of indexing (see also “computer games”). In addition, privately downloading films is illegal because it violates the (human) right of authorship.
- **Food:** When you buy something at the supermarket or elsewhere, you automatically pay a tax, the so-called value-added tax which was defined by the politics that regulate tax revenues. What is taxed and to what extent varies in different countries. Politics also determine which foods can be traded, or which ingredients are prohibited. When you order food in a restaurant, they have to adhere to hygiene regulations that are checked on a regular basis (food control administration). Only recently, the menu or staff also have to provide information on allergenic substances on request.
- **Football:** Many football or other sports clubs receive financial support from the state. At important football games, just like at other large events, safety regulations have to be implemented. These are defined by politics and executed by the police (e.g. alcohol in the stadium, number of spectators in a stadium, etc.). Important international matches are sometimes attended by high political representatives in order to cheer for “their” country. In these cases, the national team doesn’t only represent a country’s performance in football, but the whole country as such.
- **Friends:** Many people meet their friends at school; regulations associated with politics may be the maximum number of pupils governed by politics, or politically defined compulsory education. Political ideas and projects are nearly always first discussed or implemented with friends. And also among politicians, friendships and trusted people play an important part.
- **Going out:** For underage persons, going out is regulated by politics. What underage persons are allowed to do and what they aren’t is the result of political processes of negotiation: what you may drink, and at what age you may drink alcohol; whether and from what age you are allowed to smoke; how long you are allowed to stay out unaccompanied. Even adults are affected by rules of going out: They pay taxes on alcohol, cigarettes, food and drink. They, too, have to abide by rules like rest periods (e.g. outdoor dining areas) or non-smoker protections.
- **Leisure:** Your options in your leisure time (for instance, skater parks, football fields, or cinemas in your neighbourhood) are governed by (municipal) politics which decide on their construction. Also the extent of free time, school holidays or leave days for employees are ruled by laws.
- **Masturbation:** see “sex”.
- **Moon:** The moon as a symbol can be used politically, like many other things. The crescent moon, for example, is used in many national flags, such as in the Turkish and Singaporean ones. International treaties regulate what may or may not be done in space.
- **Religion:** The Vatican is an independent state and the Pope is its head of state. Teachers of religion are paid by the state in Austria. Some political parties also derive their ideas from religion. Some countries have state religions; in other countries, there is religious freedom (i.e. religion is a private matter which the state may not interfere with).

- **Sex:** There is a legal rule as to who may have sex with whom. In Austria, it is normally legal from the age of 14. There are also age-related legal rules on who may watch pornographic content, just as there are rules whether and until what time a pregnant woman may have an abortion. You are also not allowed to have sex everywhere because this might make other people uneasy (“indecent behaviour”).
- **Sleep:** We often don’t decide for ourselves when we sleep. There are state requirements, e. g. compulsory education with its more or less fixed class schedules. And it is similar with the sleep of working people. There are fixed or flexible working days and (at least, in Austria) legally required leave and rest periods. You could also mention a set maximum of driving hours for truck drivers.
- **Sport:** see “football”.
- **Vacuum cleaning:** As vacuum cleaners can be quite noisy, there are rules here, too, as to rest periods or times when their use is not allowed (unless you have a vacuum cleaner the noise of which does not exceed room volume). When buying a vacuum cleaner, you again pay value-added tax. As with any product, there are rules as to how it may be produced, and whether similar foreign products may be imported.

## Usability in social work

This method is useful in social work in the sense that it strengthens the awareness of political relevance in everyday life. It can sensibilise participants for political structures and power relations and show the potential for political participation. The method is more suitable when embedded in a context, for instance, something like a small project on “politics in everyday life”.

### OVERVIEW

Name of the method	What is or isn't political
Target group	All
Duration	20 minutes
Spatial requirements	Room for a group (seminar or workshop room)
Competences	None
Objectives	To recognise the importance of politics in one's own everyday life
Method description	Political competences
Social work context	All
Preparation	Flipchart and markers (alternatively, a blackboard or whiteboard)
Risks	None
Concept / application	Applied by the Vienna Forum for Human Rights and Democracy in a training during the project
References	Sapere Aude: <a href="http://sapereaude.at">sapereaude.at</a> (translated by Brita Pohl)

## 2.1.6 Opinion barometer

### Aims / Objectives

The aim of the method is to discuss controversial issues. The different opinions on the barometer lead to discussion and a reflection process. Critical thinking and tolerance of ambiguity can be promoted in this way. Respect for other opinions is also a goal of this method.

## Description of the method

Stick a long strip of tape to the floor. Now write "0%" on one facilitator card and "100%" on a second one and put the labelled cards at each end of the tape – this is your opinion barometer. Make sure the barometer is long enough so the participants don't have to crowd around it. Now explain to the participants that you will read different statements about politics to them. Ask them to move around the room quietly during the first and also in the intermediate rounds. Now read two to three statements from the worksheet "Opinion Barometer Statements" one after the other.

Tell the participants to position themselves according to their level of agreement with the statement that is read, namely if they stand next to 0%, this means they do not agree at all. When they stand next to 100%, they agree completely. They can also stand in any other place inbetween, depending on their level of agreement. Once all participants have found their place after a statement is read, ask individual participants where they stand and why. At this point, also add that they are allowed to change their position during the exercise if they hear arguments from others that cause them to reconsider their position.

### **Reflection questions:**

1 *First through third question:*

- Where do you stand and why?
- You are standing in the same place as participant XY, does this mean you both think alike?
- You are standing at the other end of the barometer, does this mean you think what participant XY said is absolutely untrue?

2 *If a short discussion should arise:*

- Has participant XY convinced you with their explanation?
- Would you like to change your position?

### **Final reflection:**

Does a 100% democratic situation exist at all? If so, what does it look like?

*The controversial neighbour:* When the group is very united in one issue, you could use a little trick to incite controversial discussion: Take up your position at the other end of the barometer from the group and invent an opposing point of view. Say that this (invented) point of view is that of a neighbour you know and ask the group to tell you what they think about this neighbour's opinion. In the end, you can confess you only invented the neighbour to introduce a different point of view.

### **Usability in social work**

The method is well suited for discussing controversial topics in everyday life. Somewhat modified, the method could also be played out on a sports field. It does, however, require certain formal framework conditions and the willingness of the young people to engage in a longer exchange. It is very important to ensure that individual opinions are not isolated or excluded and can also be articulated. The exercise needs to be done in a safe space with a trustful relationship, so that the participants are ready to express their opinions openly and without fear.



Name of the method	Opinion barometer
Target group	All target groups
Duration	20 to 30 minutes
Spatial requirements	Seminar room or sports field
Competences	Tolerance of ambiguity, respect, critical thinking
Objectives	Discuss controversial issues; foster mutual understanding and dialogue
Method description	Participants position themselves in the room along a marked out barometer according to how much they agree or disagree with a statement; followed by discussion
Social work context	Can be applied in social work especially in polarised groups, but needs some preparation and space
Preparation	Adhesive tape, facilitator cards, pencils, Opinion Barometer Statements
Risks	Isolated opinions could be excluded or could be difficult to express due to social pressure. Thus, a safe space and trustful context needs to be assured.
Concept / application	Applied by the Vienna Forum for Human Rights and Democracy in trainings during the project
References	Variation by Sapere Aude: <a href="http://sapereaude.at">sapereaude.at</a> (translated by Brita Pohl)

### 2.1.7 Arbitrary vote

#### Aims / Objectives

The aim is to strengthen the participants' competences for discussion of the pros and cons of different decision-making processes, to help them in understanding political decisions and to strengthen their critical thinking skills. It also aims to raise awareness of exclusion and democratic participation. The method is suitable for all target groups. In the context of youth work, the examples might need some more concrete relation to their daily life.

#### Description of the method

Explain to the participants that they may now play the parts of politicians in a little game. Two participants each get a printed sheet (Arbitrary Choice master copy); ask them to read the proposed solutions. Then the plenum will discuss the pros and cons of each decision given in the master copy (duration: 5 minutes). Afterwards, the class chooses a solution using the two following methods:

**Simple majority:** The participants decide by a show of hands which of the four is their favourite alternative. Write 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the blackboard and record how many people have voted for which.

**Right to vote based on personal characteristics:** You now tell the participants that the decision will be taken in a different way: Now, it is only those who wear glasses, or only women, who are allowed to vote (decide on one of the two characteristics). Now ask for the votes of the franchised wearers of glasses or women, and record the result on the blackboard.

#### **Reflection and questions:**

- Were the decision-taking methods used democratic/undemocratic, and why?
- Do you know other options for taking decisions in a group?
- Which are the circumstances that may facilitate decision taking in a group of people?
- What characterises a good (political) decision?
- What is the most (un)fair method of decision taking of all?
- Does the method of decision taking matter for the result, and why?

You can also try a number of other methods of decision taking (e.g. unanimity, one person decides, least resistance or chance) with the group. Another version, instead of the methods given above, is for educators, facilitators, teachers to simply leave the room and give the group five or more minutes to decide. Afterwards, you can reconstruct how the class has come to the result. For closure, you can refer to the fact that fat or sugar taxes (see description below) have been considered or introduced in many countries.

### Master Copy: Arbitrary Vote

Introductory story: Politics always means solving problems in society and thinking about how decisions impact different people. Imagine you are a government, and you are confronted with the problem that the costs of the public health system are increasing steadily because the citizens are becoming more and more prone to ill health and eat more and more unhealthy food. You now have to solve the problem, because this is what you are supposed to do as politicians, after all.

**Option 1:** The consumption of foods that are especially rich in fat and sugar (Coke, knuckle of pork, etc.) will only be allowed from the age of 16; violations will be fined (up to 880 Euros). The consumption of these foods will also be prohibited for people with serious health issues like high cholesterol or cardiac insufficiency.

**Option 2:** All foods will be taxed based on their content of saturated fatty acids. You will hazard the consequence that many enterprises have announced major protests against this idea and, possibly, even their relocation to other countries (where these taxes don't exist).

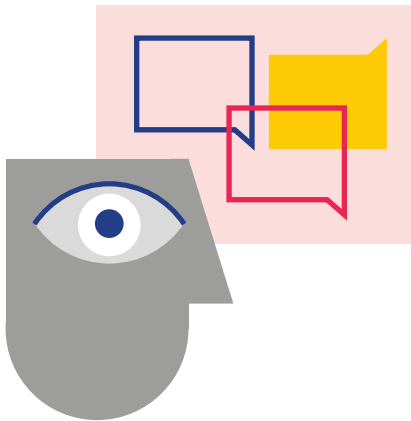
**Option 3:** All taxation of foodstuffs is abolished, which also reduces the cost of cigarettes and alcohol by two-thirds. What people eat and drink should not be influenced by politics. The financial loss will not be recovered in food taxes but by savings in education (higher university tuition fees and larger classes in schools).

**Option 4:** You levy higher social security contributions: All workers and employees now pay 4% more of their wages on average and they have to undergo preventive medical check-ups every six months. Those who fail to go or fail to achieve the health goals agreed at the check-up have to pay another 3% of their wages in health insurance.

### Usability in social work

This method can show very nicely how exclusion mechanisms work and also how complex decision-making processes are. This is definitely very useful for the context of social work, but examples would have to be found from the lifeworld of the young people. It could work especially in a youth centre context where decisions actually have to be made – as a preparation. The method can be used with students in class, especially if it is embedded in a thematic complex in a lesson. It is also suitable for younger pupils (9-10 years) if they are well prepared. In the field of open youth work, it could be used with a group of interested young people. Here, too, contextualisation is important.

Name of the method	Arbitrary vote
Target group	Students of social work, young people
Duration	20 to 30 minutes
Spatial requirements	A normal room
Competences	Critical understanding, respect, tolerance of ambiguity
Objectives	Discussion of the pros and cons of different decision-making processes, understanding political decisions
Method description	Role play with solutions for a policy decision; "politicians" played by participants read solutions and people take a decision; then only certain groups (e.g. all who wear glasses) are allowed to decide, etc.; discussion
Social work context	Usable and useful, but topic needs to be of relevance to young people
Preparation	Flipchart and pencils (alternatively, blackboard or whiteboard), printed master copy for the participants (one for two people)
Risks	Risk that the examples are too difficult, complex or not suitable for different target groups.
Concept / application	Presented and applied by the Vienna Forum for Human Rights and Democracy in training during the project.
References	Sapere Aude: <a href="http://sapereaude.at">sapereaude.at</a> (translated by Brita Pohl)



## 2.2 Methods for reflecting on democratic competences with educators

The methods presented in this subchapter are explicitly related to the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) and aim to contribute to self-reflection on the part of educators and multipliers. Democratic culture is not something that one can learn once – it cannot be installed, it has to be developed and constantly adjusted to new situations. This process of adapting one's own democratic professional ethos demands (self-)reflection. We know that framework conditions for teachers or youth/social workers are not always supportive; in this regard, (self-)reflection can help them to explore their room for manoeuvre in their specific educational setting. "Teachers and other educators have a massive impact on learners as significant others, role models and facilitators of learning processes and are far more than transmitters of knowledge. Educators can support learners in becoming independent thinkers, good co-operators, and self-confident participants in dialogue, discussion and decision making. They can support learners in becoming active citizens." (Lenz et al. 2021).

### 2.2.1 Ranking competences of RFCDC

#### Aims / objectives

The aim is to find out which of the competences are particularly relevant in one's own work or for one's own target group and which are, perhaps, less relevant.

#### Description of the method

- Every educator looks at the "butterfly" model of the RFCDC individually and works on the following question: Which five competences are especially relevant for your educational work? Write down the five competences you have chosen. (10 minutes)
- Reflection in groups of four educators on some guiding questions. (35 minutes)
- All groups come together to share the results of their discussions. (15 minutes)

#### Usability in social work

The method is relevant for social workers and can be used in their training. Through awareness raising, more targeted competences can be strengthened and tasks are concretised and adapted to real problem situations.

Name of the method	Ranking competences of RFCDC
Target group	Social and youth workers / teachers
Duration	1 hour
Spatial requirements	Seminar room with possibility to work in small groups
Competences	Self-reflection; depending on the choice of social/youth workers
Objectives	Awareness about the concrete needs and use of the competences
Method description	Participants choose their 5 most relevant competences, reflection in groups and discussion in the plenary
Social work context	Useful for social and youth workers
Preparation	Chart of the "butterfly" model of competences (see p. XX of this handbook); (see p. XX of this handbook); moderation cards, flipchart
Risks	No special risks
Concept / application	Used by the Vienna Forum for Human Rights and Democracy
References	Ole Jantschek and Hanna Lorenzen, as applied in: The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture in the Non-formal Educational (p. 74)

## 2.2.2 Reflecting on competences of educators or social/youth workers

### Aims / objectives

The aim is to strengthen awareness of one's own competences and to find alternative solutions to difficult problems already experienced in one's own work.

### Description of the method

Individually, each educator or social/youth worker should think of four situations in their professional work and write them down. The first two situations should be examples of when they managed to solve a difficult situation in a group in a positive manner. The second two situations should be examples of critical situations when the educator or social/youth worker had the impression he or she could not find a good solution to deal with the situation (20 minutes).

The educators or social/youth workers team up in pairs of two and present the situations to each other. Together they look at the "butterfly" model of competences of the RFCDC. They reflect on the competences that helped them as educators to manage the positive situations. While doing that, they try to answer the question, "What competences helped me to solve these situations?" The competences that helped to solve these situations are the personal strengths of the educators or social/youth workers. Everyone writes his or her personal competences for critical situations on an index card.

### Usability in social work

The method is relevant for social workers and can be used in their training. It can help to reflect about daily work experiences and situations where they can use the competences. It also allows to one to contextualise social work methods in terms of the RFCDC competences. It does so by enabling participants to identify which method promotes which democratic competences?

Name of the method	Reflecting on competences of social/youth workers
Target group	Social and youth workers / educators
Duration	1 hour
Spatial requirements	A room with the possibility to work in small groups
Competences	Self-reflection
Objectives	Awareness about own competences
Method description	Participants reflect on their own competences and concrete experiences from their work; then, they reflect which competences helped them in the concrete situations and write them down on index cards
Social work context	Useful for social and youth workers in their training
Preparation	Chart of the "butterfly" model of competences (see p. XX of this handbook); moderation cards, flipchart
Risks	No special risks
Concept / application	Used and applied by the Vienna Forum for Human Rights and Democracy
References	Ole Jantschek and Hanna Lorenzen, as applied in: The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture in the Non-formal Educational (p. 75)

### 2.2.3 Reflecting on the role of human rights in the framework of university classes on social work

#### Aims / Objectives

The aim of the method is to encourage young trainees (students in social work and social policy) to think in terms of social work based on human rights. At its core is an appreciation of universal principles such as the equality of all human beings, inherent dignity, the right to self-determination and living in peace and security. In this approach, social workers are not just "agents of the state" but become "agents of exchange".

#### Description of the method

This educational approach is used in classes by a lecturer from the University of Gdansk, Dr. Marcin Boryczko, during teaching human rights in the context of social work. In particular, three methods of teaching have proved fruitful among his students.

1. Action research, based on the following activities to be undertaken successively by students:
  - Select a social group, a group of people (possibly a person) whose human rights have been restricted, violated or denied;
  - Describe the situation of this group through micro, meso and macro level analysis. While doing so, consider: In what sense are their human rights violated? What rights have been violated?
  - Then, try to answer these questions: What should be done to change the situation of this group? What goals should be pursued? Are these goals consistent with international documents defining the protection of human rights? Do the objectives comply with Polish law? What kind of limitations stand in the way of realising the goals formulated in this way?
  - When planning the intervention modalities, the student should consider the following suggestions/additional questions:
    - We usually deal with multiple issues of human rights violations in one case. Which issues and objectives do you consider to be priorities?
    - How can you respond in this particular situation as a social worker based on human rights?
    - Plan a real (can be virtual) action that aims to achieve the goals you have set for yourself in relation to tackling human rights violations.

Based on the above, the student should prepare a paper/presentation consisting of the following elements:

- description of the strategy of action,
- explanation how the action was performed,
- presentation of documentation of the action,
- description of effects.

## 2. Case study analysis (Multi-Level):

In this assignment, the student is given a case description of a situation of a person with social problems or of a situation related to the whole community. In relation to this case, the student is asked to reflect on how to intervene in this situation and to describe his/her conclusions by answering the questions:

- What human rights issues were raised in this case study?
- How would you respond as a social worker who works in a social care centre?

## 3. Writing an essay based on a critical reflection method:

The aim of this assignment is to produce and apply professional knowledge based on the analysis of a critical incident that occurred during a student's internship or the professional work of those participating in the course. While working on their assigned essay, students are asked to explore their preconceptions about educational knowledge and social work practices through critical thinking. This type of thinking is one of the more highly valued competences in this field of education, which aims, among other things, to promote human rights or ideas of social justice (Havig, 2013).

This work is based on a model of critical deconstruction of experience (based on Jan Fook, 2002, "Critical Deconstruction and Reconstruction", p. 96) consisting of four stages:

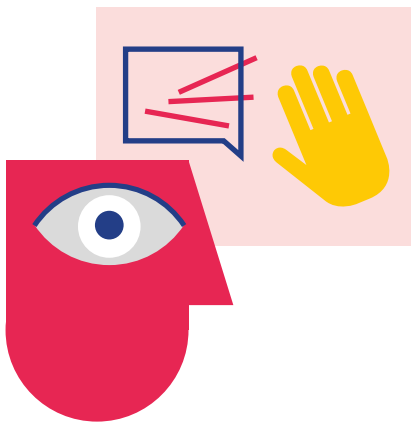
- Critical deconstruction, or the search for contradictions, diverse perspectives and interpretations;
- Resistance, consisting of a refusal to accept and participate in various aspects of dominant discourses that disempower people and sometimes make the situation hopeless;
- The challenge of identifying in defining the existence and operation of hidden, mystified or preconceived discourses;
- Reconstruction, based on the formulation of a new discourse, leading to narrative as well as structural change.

### Usability in social work

The method is used to train future social workers. It allows them to become aware of their own prejudices and stereotypes and then to look at the future recipients of their support from a different angle, respecting their human rights. It also helps young professionals to develop self-reflection and critical thinking skills and enhance their tolerant attitudes. By increasing the awareness of future social workers for the practical application of human rights and on socio-cultural diversity, it also helps to familiarise them with the RFCDC competences.

Name of the method	Reflecting on the role of human rights in the framework of university classes on social work
Target group	Social and youth workers / students
Duration	Few weeks (to be carried out during subsequent university classes)
Spatial requirements	Practice room and own work (possibly in small groups)
Competences	Critical understanding of the self, critical thinking, tolerance
Objectives	Awareness about the role of human rights in daily social work
Method description	Participants reflect on how particular human rights can be applied to the situations they can face as social workers and, later on, try to find solutions to those situations which are based on the application of these laws; at the same time, identify and redefine stereotypes held, including about the future recipients of their professional activities
Social work context	Useful for social and youth workers in their training
Preparation	Various case studies descriptions taken from social work practice
Risks	No special risks
Concept / application	Used and applied by Dr. Marcin Boryczko from University of Gdansk during teaching human rights in the context of social work
References	<p>Marcin Boryczko (2020), "Critical thinking in social work education. A case study of knowledge practices in students' reflective writings using semantic gravity profiling", <i>Social Work Education</i>, DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2020.1836143;</p> <p>Jan Fook (2002), "Critical Deconstruction and Reconstruction", in: idem, <i>Social Work: A Critical Approach to Practice</i></p>





## 2.3 Methods for strengthening resilience against anti-democratic phenomena

Although the methods presented in the following part of this publication also aim at raising awareness and political consciousness, they are more concretely related to the prevention of more specific anti-democratic phenomena such as extremism, authoritarianism, violent radicalisation, hate speech or conspiracy theories. In particular, they help raise awareness of mechanisms such as discrimination, stereotyping, hate speech, disinformation, conspiracy theories and manipulation. As a result, they not only make it possible to counteract the adoption of extremist views (to which all the mechanisms mentioned above may lead), they also make it possible to shape the competences included in the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. Each method refers to several of the competences included there.

As the methods presented in this section often address very sensitive issues, it is important to be careful when using them. First of all, care should always be taken to create a safe environment for the participants where none of them can feel hurt or even verbally attacked. So, if, as a trainer, you feel that the group you are working with does not yet have the right level of trust, it is better to start working with them on more basic issues. For this matter, you can use the methods presented in the first of the subsections of this guide in the part with educational methods (sub-chapter entitled “Methods to enhance general political awareness for an open society”).

### 2.3.1 Working with stories 1: The Lonely Duckling

#### Aims / Objectives

The aim is to develop a story-based approach for children of a younger age as a basis for talking about discrimination, justice, courage, identity, etc. without using these technical terms. In this way, children can be encouraged to stand up against prejudice or discrimination when they or others are laughed at, ridiculed or bullied. The questions, which can be expanded, also show the importance of solidarity and justice and how to support them.

#### Description of the method

The facilitator tells the following story: *Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, there was a farm with many animals: cows, pigs, chickens, cats, mice, dogs, geese and ducks. But one of the ducks had a very hard time because the other animals did not like it. Some of them thought it wasn't pretty enough to play with them, others thought it was not big enough, others thought it was too clumsy, and the older ones thought it was too young to spend the day with them. And so it came to pass that no other animal wanted to have anything to do with it. It was mocked and laughed at and felt very, very, very lonely. Instead of sleeping, it cried at night, until it decided to simply run away. While all the other animals on the farm were still asleep, the little duckling set off. But the duckling soon found out that it was lonely alone in the deep forest and that there were many dangers waiting for it.*

After having told the story, the facilitator asks impulse questions: - What does the duckling need on its journey? - Who will make sure it gets it? - Does it have a right to it? - What would the duckling have needed at home? - Who could have made sure it got that? - Does it have a right to it? - Is it fair how the others treated the duckling? - What would you do or say if you see someone like the duckling or the other animals?

The story, an adaptation of Hans Christian Anderson’s tale “The Ugly Duckling”, can of course be accompanied by images, comics, pictures, videos or other visualisation material. It can also be played out in its different roles by the children themselves.

### Usability in social work

As this method is intended for smaller children, it would be well applicable in the context of school social work in primary schools or kindergartens. In this case, in order to avoid a frightening ending, the children may be motivated to find a positive solution together with the “Lonely Duckling”.

## OVERVIEW

Name of the method	The Lonely Duckling
Target group	Children from 4 to 10
Duration	30 minutes
Spatial requirements	Room without special equipment (if videos, video screen and laptop)
Competences	(Self-)reflection, tolerance, values
Objectives	Children should be strengthened in their own identity and in their social competences, solidarity and fairness.
Method description	Facilitator tells the story of the lonely duckling, and children are asked several questions about fairness, social interaction, etc.
Social work context	Best for social work in school and kindergarten
Preparation	Read the story, prepare questions, eventually further material (pictures, videos, etc.)
Risks	No special risks to expect
Concept / application	Presented by Reinhard Leonhardsberger of the association SOS Menschenrechte (SOS Human Rights)
References	<a href="http://www.sos.at">http://www.sos.at</a>

### 2.3.2 Working with stories 2: Punch or Political puppet theatre

#### Aims / Objectives

The aim is to show in the playful way of puppet theatre, suitable for children, how manipulation and seductiveness work and how to counteract them.

#### Description of the method

One of the characters taking part in the performance is overdrawn as a populist who tries to become president through lies and deceit. At the same time, the main character of the play, Punch, and his friends see through these lies and try to stand up against the populist. Punch, in full Punchinello, Italian Pulcinella, is a hook-nosed, humpbacked character – the most popular of marionettes and glove puppets. He is known in many countries and cultures under different names like Guignol in French or Kasperl in German.

For more information, see: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Punch-puppet-character>.

Concrete story: Punch appears and asks the children in his usual manner, “Have you heard of the Populistifax? He would like to become president. He lies like a trooper and would like to decide everything all by himself. He wants to throw all those who contradict him out of the country. Whoever does not follow him, he wants to disappear. Oh, wait, kids. Here he comes.”

Populistifax: "Hello children! I'm Populistifax. I'm so beautiful and smart. I have a good, good heart. Everyone can see that easily. A real superman, that's me. I only like people who clap for me. Those who don't clap, they get a slap. Whoever criticises me gets squashed like a bumblebee. But hush, be quiet. First the people have to elect me. Afterwards, they need to respect me – as their president for all time. That's a nice rhyme."

Afterwards, the Populistifax tries to hand out sweets to get votes. He lies about Punch and others and tells evil stories. The scenes can be played as videos or played directly. The children are then asked what they think about the Populistifax. Questions:

- What does Populistifax want to achieve?
- Is it fair if only one person decides and the others always have to do what he/she wants?
- What would you say to someone like Populistifax?
- How could we help Punch?
- What would be courageous?

In a variation, other stories can be told or shown with puppets, Punch and his friends. Children can find certain qualities. Who acts bravely or courageously and why? Who acts unjustly?

### Usability in social work

As this method is intended for smaller children, it would be well applicable in the context of school social work in primary schools or kindergartens.

## OVERVIEW

Name of the method	Punch or Political Puppet Theatre
Target group	Children from 4 to 10
Duration	30 minutes
Spatial requirements	Room, puppets and a puppet stage (or video)
Competences	Justice, critical thinking, tolerance, values
Objectives	Raising childrens' awareness about lies and their consequences; strengthening reflection on justice, solidarity, fairness and power relations in a suitable way (without using these terms)
Method description	Facilitator plays with the puppets and tells the story of the populist and Punch. Children are asked several questions about justice, fairness, social interaction, etc.
Social work context	Suitable for social work in school and kindergarten
Preparation	Puppets, storyboard, puppets play or video (see German example: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqSc48AnMns">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqSc48AnMns</a> ); preparation of questions; eventually, further material
Risks	In children's plays, the characters are often very one-dimensional. Good and evil are usually easy to distinguish. When choosing characters / puppets, great care must be taken not to serve stereotypes and promote prejudices.
Concept / application	Markus Pausch; presented in adult education for teachers and social workers
References	KASPERL und POPULISTIFAX TEIL 2: POLITISCHES KASPERLTHEATER KINDER BILDUNG POPULISMUS DEMOKRATIE - YouTube

### 2.3.3 Free associations and prejudice barometer

#### Aims / Objectives

The aim of this exercise is to recognise prejudices, own resentments and the possible consequences of them. The exercise should therefore encourage critical reflection, promote tolerance and help one to stand up against prejudice. It thus strengthens resilience against the stereotypes and devaluations that are dangerous for democracies.

#### Description of the method

The participants are shown pictures from advertising that depict various subjects with people of different ages, gender, skin colour, etc. These can be more or less implicitly judgmental pictures. In a first exercise, the participants should freely associate what comes to their mind about these pictures or the people depicted. These associations are then discussed in the group (or in smaller groups) and checked for prejudices or stereotypes. In a second round, the participants evaluate which of these people is closest to them, could be their friend, and why. Again, the results are discussed. The intention is to deliberately develop a counter-position, so that strategies to combat prejudices are also practised in the discussion.

#### Usability in social work

The exercise should be easily applicable in the context of social work or youth work because it has few formal requirements. It only needs pictures that can also be shown via mobile phone or from billboards. It should be possible to discuss in a group setting.

#### OVERVIEW

Name of the method	Free associations and prejudice barometer
Target group	Youth and adults (from 13)
Duration	1 hour
Spatial requirements	Workshop room with screen
Competences	Self-reflection, critical thinking, analytical skills, tolerance, intercultural competences
Objectives	Participants should get aware about their own prejudices and analyse where they come from and where they lead to; they should also learn how to counter prejudices in discussions
Method description	Participants give their impressions and associations to pictures of different people; then, they discuss their prejudices
Social work context	Can be used in groups with strong and open prejudices or help to make them more explicit; some formal requirements, like a room and a group to discuss
Preparation	Selection of pictures; preparation of questions; theoretical background for discussion of prejudices
Risks	Prejudices could be confirmed if they are not discussed; i.e. if many people in the group have similar associations; group should be heterogeneous.
Concept / application	Presented by Reinhard Leonhardsberger of the association SOS Menschenrechte (SOS Human Rights)
References	<a href="http://www.sos.at">http://www.sos.at</a>

## 2.3.4 Deconstruction of Hate Speech

### Aims / Objectives

The aim is to deconstruct hate speech in order to take the wind out of the sails of extremist forces, to strengthen the ability to act against discrimination, prejudice, etc. and to develop positive counterspeech. This is done through the analysis of common stereotypes, hate messages, insults and swear words that are deconstructed.

### Description of the method

The trainer asks the participants to brainstorm the most common swear words and insults they know or have heard themselves. These are categorised (possible categories: animals, appearance, sexuality, religion, intelligence, social origin, ethnic origin, faeces, etc.). The words are then deconstructed: What do they actually mean exactly? Why are they offensive, in which context and to whom? Why are they used as insults by various people? Participants can then reflect and discuss how they might respond to various swear words, for example, by asking questions or by not taking the swear word as an insult. If, for example, the word "pig" is used, a response can be given: "A pig is useful, intelligent and clean. So what is there to be insulting about one?"

This forms the basis for possible responses, counterspeech or alternative speech. First and foremost, however, the aim is to reflect on the emotionally striking insults in a cognitive way and thereby reduce their impact.

### Usability in social work

The exercise is particularly suitable for social and youth work because it addresses the realities of young people's lives, which makes it easier to access. The formal requirements are rather low, even if it is not easy in a purely bilateral discussion. Small groups of young people who know each other are most suitable. A certain basic mutual trust is necessary for the exercise as well as trust towards the trainer.

### OVERVIEW

Name of the method	Deconstruction of hate speech
Target group	Especially young people from 12 to 18
Duration	30 minutes to 1 hour
Spatial requirements	No special requirements, room for group work useful
Competences	Critical reflection, critical thinking, tolerance of ambiguity, respect, empathy
Objectives	Deconstruction of hate speech and discussion of counter or alternative speech; strengthening resilience
Method description	Individual or (better) group exercise; collection of hate speech, swear words, categorisation and deconstruction; discussion of possible counter or alternative speech
Social work context	Method is suitable for social work context because it is close to the life experiences of young people; they can talk openly about own experiences and use their language with a critical reflection
Preparation	Facilitator should have a collection of swear words and categories, prejudices and possible reactions
Risks	Swear words can hurt even if they are analysed, so there needs to be a good level of mutual trust and safe space
Concept / application	Method was presented by Reinhard Leonhardsberger in a national workshop during the project
References	<a href="http://www.sos.at">http://www.sos.at</a> variants of the method can be found in Bookmarks ( <a href="https://rm.coe.int/168065dac7">https://rm.coe.int/168065dac7</a> ) - saying it worse, pp. 112-117 or in Compasito, words that wound ( <a href="http://www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/chapter_4/4_40.asp">http://www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/chapter_4/4_40.asp</a> )

## 2.3.5 Extremism barometer (What is extreme?)

### Aims / objectives

The aim is to reflect on the term "extremism" and to discuss what is to be classified as extreme, when and why, and at what point something is violent and dangerous.

### Description of the method

The participants are shown pictures and asked to evaluate which of them represent something "extreme" from their point of view. This can be, for example, an extreme sport, an extreme weather situation, but also pictures of political extremism. Then, the participants are to discuss in groups or in pairs what is not extreme in this topic area and bring examples of this (e.g. a sport that is considered a non-extreme sport or popular sport). They rate on a scale (barometer) of 1 to 10 or 1 to 5 how extreme they think something is. They also discuss in which areas they would classify themselves as extreme or which extreme opinions they themselves hold. Afterwards, they present these in plenary. Then, they discuss with the facilitator and the entire group at what point the extreme is dangerous and for whom. Which extreme positions, attitudes or behaviour are acceptable and where is the tipping point where participants (and society) need to say "stop" and counteract? In this way, the question of political violence is introduced and discussed.

### Usability for social work

The method can help participants to talk about delicate issues that are usually not easy to address in a school context. What is needed is a trustful relation between the facilitator and the participants and a safe space to carry out the exercise.

## OVERVIEW

Name of the method	Extremism barometer
Target group	Youth from 13 years
Duration	1 hour 30 minutes
Spatial requirements	A room for a group, screen
Competences	Critical thinking, self-reflection, tolerance, knowledge
Objectives	Participants should reflect on what "extremism" is in order to better understand the term and social discourse
Method description	Facilitator shows pictures and asks what is extreme. Participants discuss in small groups, rate extreme positions on a scale and then discuss in plenary session (also, consider where is the tipping point to violence)
Social work context	Trustful relations and a safe space are important; probably easier than in school context
Preparation	Selection of pictures; questions need to be prepared
Risks	The topic is delicate and needs time and trust. If this is not guaranteed, the exercise shouldn't be carried out
Concept / application	N. Mocevic; presented in workshop during the project
References	<a href="http://www.mocevic.at">http://www.mocevic.at</a>

## 2.3.6 The District of Legends

### Aims / objectives

A tool for civic engagement and the prevention of extreme violence and radicalisation. With the aim of creating a space for dialogue, e-journalism, and games, "The District of Legends" was created because it aims to promote civic actions by young people and also to show that collectively we can act against digital risks. It was created to promote civic behaviour to counter existing virtual legends (fake news, conspiracy theories, rumours, recruitment) by showing that only by mobilising all citizens can we protect, educate and act.

### Description of the method

The project "Legends District" is a Web TV project structured around two axes: A game series in the form of a visual novel that offers young people the opportunity to participate in a thematic investigation online by taking the place of one of five young people (principle of "the Club of 5") who must in each episode solve a riddle, seek solutions, learn about events. The episodes are centred on elements structuring the components of cyber-violence and cyber-stalking that include:

- the fight against rumours and dangerous games
- the fight against conspiracy theory
- the fight against sexist and homophobic discrimination
- the fight against online harassment
- the fight against extremist recruitment

In each episode, the Club of 5 is confronted with an enigma, an event, a problem. They will have to inform themselves, debate online, look for experts and choose virtual actions. The civic engagement of young people online is highlighted and valued.

The game was developed by the PlayCurious company. Each episode is designed by a group of young people who develop their scenario, participate in writing the storyboard and play the other parts. The role of the facilitator is to accompany the young people during the writing of the scenarios and the storyboard. The platform "The District of Legends" (<https://play-curious.games/games/quartier-des-legendes/>) aims to become a space located online useful for young people, families, educators, social actors and teachers. The beneficiaries are primarily young people from 14 to 18 years of age, their parents, educators and teachers.

Name of the method	Serious game (visual novel): THE DISTRICT OF LEGENDS (le quartier des légendes)
Target group	Youth (13- 18 years)
Duration	6 half-day sessions
Spatial requirements	Computer equipment, internet network
Competences	Promotion of active citizenship, the value of chivalrous civic behaviour, citizen involvement
Objectives	A tool for citizen engagement and the prevention of extreme violence and radicalisation
Method description	<p>A serious game in the form of a visual novel that invites young people to take part in an on-line thematic investigation by taking the place of one of five young people (the Club of 5) who must solve an enigma, look for solutions, and learn about events in each episode. The episodes are centred on elements on the topics of cyber-violence, cyber-stalking, rumours and dangerous games, conspiracy theories, sexist and homophobic discrimination, online harassment, grooming and recruitment.</p> <p>Each episode is designed by a group of young people who develop their scenario, participate in writing the storyboard and play the other parts. The role of the facilitator is to accompany the young people during the writing of the scenarios and the storyboard.</p>
Social work context	Method is suitable for different contexts in social and youth work: it can be used in informal settings as well as formal settings like workshops
Preparation	In order to create a space for dialogue, the facilitator explains to the young people that the objective of the District of Legends is to promote the civic actions of young people and to show that collectively we can act against digital risks. The facilitator explains that the choice of the name of this game – "Legends" – is because we value chivalrous civic behaviours, because virtual legendary dangers (fake news, conspiracy theory, rumours, recruitment) exist and we must fight against them, and also, because we want to show that it is by mobilising all citizens that we will protect, educate and act.
Risks	No risks evaluated yet.
Concept / application	Rasha Nagem/ Séraphin Alava / David A. Luesa Ngandu Association Les Militants des Savoires
References	<a href="https://playcurious.games/games/quartier-des-legendes/">https://playcurious.games/games/quartier-des-legendes/</a> <a href="https://playcurious.games/fr/quartier-des-legendes/">https://playcurious.games/fr/quartier-des-legendes/</a>

### 2.3.7 Conspiracy video with youth "Le complot nouilles" (The Noodle conspiracy)

#### Aims / objectives

Developing counter-discourse materials with young people. The goal is to empower youth to take a more prominent and effective role in countering conspiracy theories. A production workshop is set up for young people to enrich their critical thinking and to acquire the necessary tools to protect themselves against conspiracy theories and other dangers of the Internet.

Through working out the concept and creation of a conspiracy video by the youth, it is possible to achieve the following objectives:

- To strengthen young people's critical thinking skills
- To encourage them learn to compare and evaluate information sources
- To help them identify the processes involved in conspiracy theories

#### Description of the method

The workshop is divided in 6 sessions:

**1st session:** Information session on the risks and dangers of the Internet.

**2nd session:** Analysis of the mechanisms of conspiracy theories.



Viewing a conspiracy video such as “The Conspiracy Cats” – see: <https://youtu.be/II91bxLH1V0>.

Discussion with youth: Have they ever watched conspiracy videos? If so, where did they find them? How is this video false? Why are young people interested in conspiracy theories? etc.

Highlight the mechanisms of conspiracy videos through the following criteria:

- the choice of music (sound, tone)
- the vocabulary used
- the secret revealed (we don't tell you everything)
- the images that are used, etc.

**The other four sessions:** Creating a conspiracy theory video with/by youth.

During these sessions, the young people will become involved in the creation of the whole mechanism. It includes the following stages of work:

- They will elaborate a conspiracy theory by using all the recurrent mechanisms of conspiracy videos such as:
  - the choice of music
  - the vocabulary used
  - the secret being revealed
  - the images used to create a conspiracy video.
- Video editing.

OVERVIEW

Name of the method	Counter-discourse video. (The Noodle Conspiracy)
Target group	Youth (13-18 years)
Duration	6 sessions minimum
Spatial requirements	Computer equipment, internet network
Competences	Critical thinking, awareness raising about conspiracy theories and other dangers on the internet.
Objectives	Strengthening young people's critical thinking skills; helping them learn how to compare and evaluate information sources; helping them to identify the processes involved in conspiracy theories
Method description	The workshop is divided in 6 sessions: -1st session: Information session on the risks and dangers of the Internet. -2nd session: Analyse the mechanisms of conspiracy theories after viewing a conspiracy video such as The Conspiracy Cats. Discussion with youth regarding any experience they may have had with conspiracy videos. Highlight the mechanisms of conspiracy videos through their form and certain criteria. In the remaining sessions: Creating a conspiracy theory video with/by youth. During these sessions, the young people will use all the recurrent mechanisms of conspiracy videos. They will additionally learn how to do video editing.
Social work context	Method is suitable for different contexts in social and youth work; it can be used in informal settings as well as in formal settings such as workshops.
Preparation	The facilitator explains and exchanges information with youth about the risks and dangers of the Internet. The session on the mechanisms of a conspiracy video should be supported by the projection and analysis of previous conspiracy videos.
Risks	Density of sessions
Concept / application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association Les Militants des Savoirs: Rasha Nagem/S�raphin Alava</li> <li>• Association J'ouvre l'�il.</li> <li>• Coll�ge George Sand.</li> <li>• Le service pr�vention jeunesse du Conseil D�partemental 31</li> </ul>
References	<a href="https://youtu.be/JixHKDCflsc">https://youtu.be/JixHKDCflsc</a>

## Description of the method

### 2.3.8 Text message to victims of hate speech

#### Aims / objectives

The aim is to put oneself in the shoes of victims of bullying, or victims of hate speech, and threats or discrimination, and to consider what words might give comfort. Empowering victims is an important aspect of combating hate speech and building resilience.

#### Description of the method

The trainer describes a case of hate speech, a young person being discriminated against or insulted. The participants think about and formulate text messages to comfort and give strength to the person. They show their solidarity through these texts. Afterwards, they discuss which text messages are particularly successful and what mistakes to watch out for.

#### Usability for social work

The method is suitable for social work and can be tried out in that setting using real examples. The formal framework is not very important, but care should be taken to ensure that there is space for discussion.

## OVERVIEW

Name of the method	Text message to victims of hate speech
Target group	Children and youth
Duration	30 minutes
Spatial requirements	No special requirements other than room for discussion
Competences	Critical analysis, empathy, values, counterspeech
Objectives	To learn how to empower victims of hate speech or discrimination
Method description	A real or fictional story about someone who has been bullied or discriminated against through hate speech is told to the participants. They then formulate text messages and afterwards discuss what is empowering and what should be avoided.
Social work context	Suitable for social work context because there are no strong formal requirements
Preparation	Example needs to be prepared in advance; knowledge of what is empowerment and how to empower
Risks	Messages need to be discussed, and the trainer needs to know about empowerment; otherwise, counterproductive messages could do more harm than good
Concept / application	Presented by Reinhard Leonhardsberger of the association SOS Menschenrechte (SOS Human Rights)
References	<a href="http://www.sos.at">http://www.sos.at</a>

## 2.3.9 Argumentation training and countering hate speech – role play

### Aims / objectives

Argumentation training against stereotypes (developed by the political scientist Klaus-Peter Hufer) seeks answers to hate slogans and offensive speech. It is intended to strengthen awareness, sensitivity and competences for counter strategies (Hufer 2012).

### Description of the method

Participants collect discriminatory, generalising, catchphrase-like statements and slogans full of prejudice. Then, a host is chosen and six participants simulate a situation in a restaurant or bar among friends. Three persons use the discriminatory hate speech. Three others try to counter this hate speech. The host who brings the fictitious drinks keeps fuelling the discussion and provoking. The rest of the participants are a kind of jury or analysts. They watch the discussion, pay attention to the arguments, to the mood, and evaluate, from their point of view, what works and what doesn't. Communication strategies are developed through subsequent analysis on an emotional, rhetorical and factual level as well as through the development of accurate arguments. In addition, the political, socio-psychological and social contexts of the slogans are examined together in the training. The course is rounded off by examining the question of which motives motivate us individually in which situation to intervene and counter the slogans.

### Usability in social work

The method needs some formal requirements to be fulfilled, such as a room where the bar situation can be enacted and time for preparation and reflection. It was actually developed for adult education, but could also be used with older adolescents in cooperation with schools, associations or clubs.

## OVERVIEW

Name of the method	Argumentation training and countering hate speech – role play
Target group	All groups
Duration	1.5 to 2 hours or a two-day training, depending on context
Spatial requirements	Room, table, seats to imitate a bar / restaurant situation
Competences	Rhetorical skills, critical analysis, counterspeech
Objectives	Learn how to react against hate speech and stereotypes
Method description	Imitation of a meeting in a bar involving role play in which 3 are using stereotypes and hate speech and 3 others try to counter-argue; one person is the host or bartender. The rest of the group analyses. Which counter arguments worked, which didn't? What were the reactions? How did participants feel? Strategies of counterspeech are discussed
Social work context	Suitable for social work context, especially for social workers, but also for youth; can be played out in a youth centre
Preparation	Host needs to be prepared; context and analysis with examples should be introduced by facilitator
Risks	Stereotypes could hurt participants
Concept / application	Klaus-Peter Hufer, source: Hufer 2012
References	„Die Ausländer nehmen uns die Arbeitsplätze weg“ - Argumentationstraining gegen Stammtischparolen   bpb

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

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The challenges in strengthening competences for a democratic culture are manifold. This handbook is intended to be an initial guide for dealing with the topic in the context of social work and youth work. It is a start for further necessary research, testing and evaluation. The RFCDC, developed in 2017, is a recent tool that can be used in different areas of formal and non-formal education, but always needs further development. In this context, exchange with the target group is of central importance. In the future, a participatory approach should make it possible to involve social and youth workers as well as young people themselves in the further discussion about the needs and possibilities of strengthening their resilience against anti-democratic phenomena. Regular exchange among different actors is just as important as building mutual trust and paying special attention to vulnerable or structurally disadvantaged groups. There is much to do. The solution cannot be found in educational issues alone. It is also and above all a matter of combating structural inequalities, making democracy more inclusive and representative, enabling equal opportunities, institutionalising participatory dialogue forums and strengthening democratic skills.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT AND PARTNER ORGANISATIONS:

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This handbook was developed in the project "Resilience through Education for Democratic Citizenship" (REDE), implemented in the programme "Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation" (DISCO) of the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The project aims at strengthening the democratic competences of social and youth workers and young people in times of polarisation and radicalisation. It aims to identify, evaluate and disseminate innovative methods for democratic competences of teachers, social workers and trainers (from CSOs) who work with young people with the aim of strengthening resilience against radicalisation and anti-democratic extremism. The framework of competences for democratic culture of the Council of Europe is an important reference in these endeavours. Project partners include:

**The Salzburg University of Applied Sciences** offers interdisciplinary Bachelor and Master programmes geared to the needs of the labour market in the innovation-oriented areas of Engineering, Business and Social Sciences, Media, Design and Arts as well as Health Studies. It has around 500 lecturers and researchers and over 2000 students. Its special shareholder constellation with the social partners – the Salzburg Chamber of Labour and Salzburg Chamber of Commerce – guarantee a direct transfer into socially and economically relevant fields of society. The University actively participates in the European Higher Education Area and the international scientific community to assure and increase its academic quality within the framework of its strategic objectives in accordance with the European Union as a peacekeeping community.

The Research Group on Social Innovation of the Department of Social Work brings together sociologists, political scientists, social workers, education scientists, etc. It has carried out a high number of research projects on the local, regional, national and European levels. Main fields of research are social and political inclusion, democracy and participation, migration, labour, public health and social cohesion. The Research Group is intensively involved in the teaching programme of a Master Curriculum on Social Innovation and the Bachelor Curriculum on Social Work.

**Institute of Public Affairs, IPA (Warsaw)** is a leading Polish think tank and an independent centre for policy research and analysis, established in 1995 (website: <https://www.isp.org.pl/en>). Its mission is to contribute to informed public debate on key Polish, European and global policy issues. Its main areas of study include European policy, social policy, civil society, migration and development policy as well as law and democratic institutions. The IPA has a team of in-house researchers/policy analysts and an extensive network of associate experts from academia and other paths of life. We publish the results of our projects in research reports, policy papers and books, which are broadly disseminated among members of parliament, government officials and civil servants, academics, journalists and civil society activists. The IPA has extensive research experience. Every year, dozens of projects are being carried out, out of which numerous involve the coordination of the research process and application of both quantitative and qualitative methods (including opinion polls and focus group interviews). Our experts regularly comment on current policy issues in printed and electronic media. The IPA works with key international institutions such as the European Commission and Parliament as well as OSCE, Council of Europe and Community of Democracies. IPA is active as members of many international networks and associations, including Policy Association for an Open Society PASOS, European Civic Forum and European Partnership for Democracy.

**“The Conveyors of Knowledge” (“Les Militants des Savoirs”)** is an association which aims to contribute to popular education and open up academic knowledge to the urgent needs of the population. The association was created 10 years ago by three academics, and has always been committed to the Anna Lindh Foundation for Peace and Culture in the Mediterranean. In response to the needs of society, it has gradually developed tools to prevent digital violence and radicalisation. For the past six years, the association has worked hand in hand with the UNESCO Chair for the Prevention of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism elaborating training programmes, audit tools and educational tools in order to closely assist local actors. For more information, visit <https://militantsdessavoirs.org/en/>.

**The Vienna Forum for Democracy and Human Rights** is a non-university research and training institute committed to the promotion and implementation of democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights at a national, European and international level (<https://www.humanrights.at/>). The Vienna Forum focuses on practice-oriented academic research and teaching involving a wide range of disciplines. The Vienna Forum is the home of *polis* - the Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education at Schools (<https://www.politik-lernen.at/>). The centre helps teachers and multipliers to bring citizenship and human rights education into the classroom. It serves as an information platform and advisory centre, develops new educational materials on a regular basis, plays a part in the European and Austrian discussions on citizenship education, has an influential role in teacher training and organises events. Since 2017, *polis* has been involved in the implementation of the Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture on the national and European levels via the Council of Europe’s EPAN Network, a NECE focus group on the RFCDC (<https://www.politik-lernen.at/necefocusgroupcdc>) and various European projects (e.g. [https://www.politik-lernen.at/citized\\_en](https://www.politik-lernen.at/citized_en)).

### **Information about the project Resilience Through Education for Democratic Citizenship REDE:**

#### **Duration:**

June 2020 to November 2021

#### **Overall objective**

The project is intended to identify, evaluate and disseminate innovative methods for democratic competences of teachers, social workers and trainers (NGOs) who work with young people with the aim of strengthening resilience against radicalisation and anti-democratic extremism.

#### **Specific objectives**

REDE brings together university teachers, trainers and social workers who work with young people outside the school environment with the aim of further developing their competences for democratic culture (CDC) and knowledge on human rights and intercultural dialogue, contributing in this way to a higher resilience to radicalisation and extremism among social/youth workers and young people.

#### **Outputs**

- Country reports
- Development of a methodology to strengthen resilience against conspiracy theories, hate speech, anti-democratic radicalisation and extremism
- Handbook for university teachers and social workers
- Training sessions, roundtables, conferences

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