The Methodological Guidelines for
Participatory Actions

The Project

HATE-LESS

Harnessing Awareness to End Hate Speech and Disinformation for a More Diverse Youth using Media Literacy and Technology

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Introduction

In today's digitally interconnected yet socially fragmented world, youth work faces an increasingly complex set of challenges. Hate speech, racism and disinformation have found fertile ground in both online and offline spaces, influencing how young people perceive themselves, others and the world around them. At the same time, young people are also among the most agile digital users - with immense potential to become critical thinkers, creative storytellers and active agents of change. This set of methodological guidelines has been developed in response to this context, aiming to empower youth workers and educators with the tools, strategies and conceptual frameworks to navigate these issues through the lens of media literacy and participatory practice.

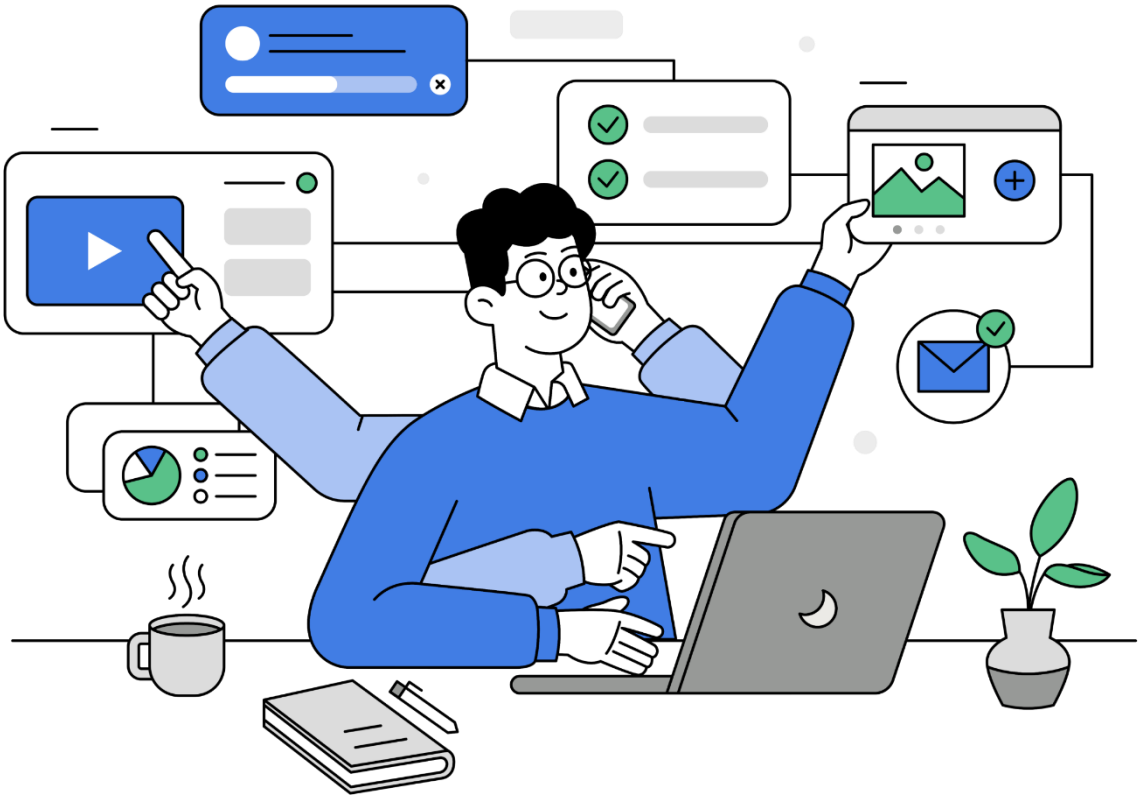
HATE-LESS project methodological guidelines are part of a broader project involving six European partners, each contributing expertise in youth participation, education, media and social justice. The project's overarching goal is to strengthen the role of media literacy in combating hate speech, disinformation and racism, while promoting inclusive, youth-led approaches to storytelling and civic engagement.

The objectives of the project are:

- To combat hate speech and disinformation via media literacy to counter fake news and advocate for diverse migration narratives.
- To enhance media and digital literacy in youth work, empowering youth to critically analyse hate speech and disinformation.
- To mobilise youth workers and organisations for inclusive societies through participatory methods and technology.
- To strengthen social and civic competencies by promoting fundamental values, mutual respect, intercultural dialogue and combating discrimination.

These guidelines are designed to equip youth workers with practical, creative and forward-thinking methods that enhance inclusive storytelling and support anti-racism efforts through digital tools. In today's social world, youth work is a platform for empowerment, building identities and promoting social transformation. Hence, the need for innovative practices is regarded as a matter of relevance. Innovation in youth work is not only about adopting the latest technology for the sake of novelty, it's about finding meaningful, accessible and culturally sensitive ways to connect with young people and amplify their voices. Methods such as storyboarding, autoethnography and soundscape creation offer powerful entry points for participants to reflect on personal experiences, explore shared struggles and narrate their own truths. These guidelines reflect this vision by combining theory, practice

and reflection into an accessible and modular format designed for direct use in youth work settings.



The methodological guidelines represent a comprehensive educational and practical resource designed to support youth workers, educators and trainers in implementing inclusive, technology-enhanced participatory practices aimed at countering hate speech and disinformation. With the use of these resources, youth can create, hear and see realities that challenge current beliefs and promote a stronger sense of community.

One of the core premises of this guidelines is that media literacy is not just a skill set - it is a form of critical empowerment. Through a deeper understanding of how media narratives shape perceptions of race, migration and identity, youth workers can support young people in becoming more discerning consumers and producers of content. By fostering reflection on bias, power and representation, media literacy becomes a tool for inclusion, resilience and democratic participation. Each chapter in the guidelines focuses on a different dimension of this work, combining conceptual insight with hands-on methodologies:

- **Chapter 1** introduces participatory actions. These frameworks center young people as equal co-creators of knowledge and highlight the value of collective agency, empowerment and inclusion.
- **Chapter 2** focuses on how to deconstruct hate speech and disinformation, offering reflective methods and strategies to help youth critically engage with biased or manipulative narratives. It emphasizes resilience-building through education, dialogue, and counter-narratives.
- **Chapter 3** serves as a practical guide to conducting Participatory Action Research (PAR) with young people. It outlines a step-by-step approach to engaging youth in

meaningful, ethical inquiry through tools such as empathy maps, interviews and storytelling of significant change.

- **Chapter 4** presents a range of creative and digital tools - such as storyboards, soundscapes and autoethnography - used to promote inclusive storytelling. It offers guidance on how youth workers can implement these methods to foster anti-racism, participation and active citizenship. The chapter also lays the groundwork for participatory video creation in later stages.
- **Chapter 5** is a technical guide that walks youth workers through the process of producing participatory videos - from planning and storyboarding to filming, editing and publishing. This chapter includes tips on engaging youth in collaborative visual storytelling while ensuring ethical and inclusive practices.
- **Chapter 6** wraps up the guidelines by focusing on training and facilitation. It offers suggestions on how to translate the methodologies into applicable training formats, build the capacities of youth workers and create ripple effects through multiplier activities and follow-up actions with youth participants.

An **Annex** offers a list of materials and digital tools recommended by participants during project focus groups. This resource pool reflects the lived experience and digital realities of the target audience, making the methods more relevant and adaptable.

An analysis of the structure and content highlights several key areas of focus:

1. Youth Engagement through Participatory Actions and Approaches (Chapters 1, 3, 6)

The project is grounded in a philosophy of active youth involvement at every stage - from planning and research to content creation. Participation is combined with democratic education and empowerment-oriented approaches.

2. Analysing and Deconstructing Hate Speech and Disinformation (Chapter 2)

Hate speech is understood not only as something to be countered, but as a symptom of broader socio-cultural issues that can be addressed through participation and education.

3. Media Literacy and Innovative Practices (Chapter 4)

This chapter serves as a bridge between theory and practice. Technology is presented not merely as a tool, but as a means of fostering critical thinking, media competence and agency.

4. Technical Support for Participatory Video (Chapter 5)

This is one of the most valuable chapters for the practical implementation of media projects with youth.

5. The Role of the Youth Worker (Throughout the Chapters)

The final chapter emphasises the importance of the training component, which complements the methodological guidance with practical exercises.

General Conclusion

The methodological guidelines create a holistic ecosystem of learning, co-creation and transformation.

Chapter 1: Participatory Approaches in Youth Work

This chapter explores **Participatory Action** as a transformative approach in youth work, with a focus on media-based practices in the context of rising online hate speech, discrimination and racism. By engaging young people as equal partners in the co-creation of knowledge and storytelling, participatory action empowers them to critically reflect on their realities and actively shape their communities. Participatory methods offer youth workers a powerful framework to foster inclusion, amplify marginalized voices and promote civic engagement through collaborative media production.

1.1 Why Participatory Action?

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a research-to-action approach. It converges knowledge and experiential learning with a call to action, co-collaboration and change. According to Cornish et. al., PAR is “an approach to research that prioritizes the value of experiential knowledge for tackling problems caused by unequal and harmful social systems, and for envisioning and implementing alternatives.” Further descriptions and definitions of key terms are provided in Chapter 2, but to offer some introductory context:
PAR is an important contribution to youth work, especially in times of social transformation. The method, while centering on participation, enables passive recipients to become active co-creators. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and philosopher who was well-known for his contribution to PAR theory, criticized traditional education as a “banking model,” where teachers deposit information into passive students. His view was that this approach dehumanized learners, discouraged critical thinking and reinforced oppressive structures. Freire instead proposed a “problem-posing model” of education grounded in dialogue, mutual respect and co-creation of knowledge. In this model, teachers and learners engage as equals, both teaching and learning from one another, and education becomes a practice of freedom. Through dialogue that combines reflection and action (praxis), young people gain the ability to critically question their world and actively transform it. Freire saw this as the first step toward empowerment and liberation, especially for those in marginalized or oppressed positions. This framework underpins participatory methods like PAR, where youth are not passive recipients of support, but active agents shaping their learning and their communities.
Key principles of PAR:

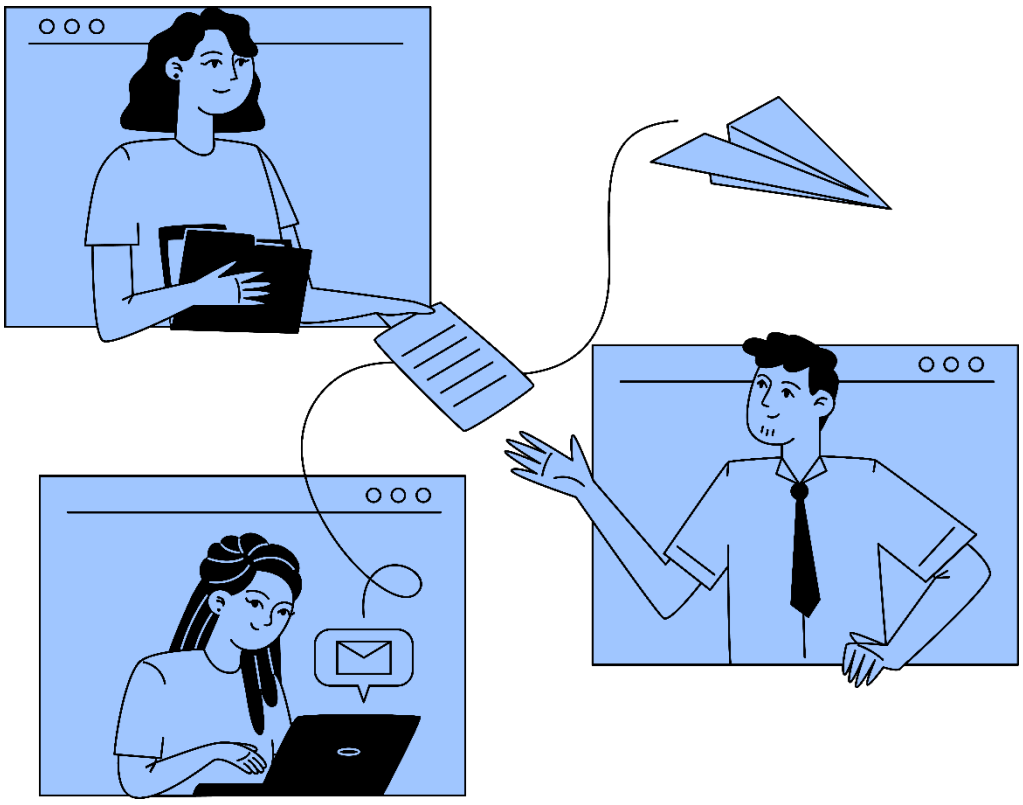
- Dialogue as love, humility and trust.
- Education rooted in learners’ real experiences.
- Thematic investigation: uncovering and exploring the problems youth face in their own lives.
- Collective knowledge creation: no hierarchy but shared discovery.

Taking into consideration the importance of PAR, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides a Guide for Adolescent Participation and acknowledges “participation

as a fundamental human right."
Link: Guidance on Child and Adolescent Participation as part of Phase III of the preparatory action for a European Child Guarantee Version 1.0 (December 2021)

1.2 Co-Creation and Collaboration with Youth

(Non-formal) youth education faces particular challenges in the context of the use and reception of social media and real social experiences against the backdrop of numerous ethnic, social and political lines of conflict. In view of growing internal tensions in European democracies, the search for 'identity' is becoming increasingly important. According to Lucius-Höhne's definition, "identity describes the way in which people perceive and understand themselves based on their biographical development (biography) in constant interaction with their social environment. Important factors that contribute to the constitution of one's own identity include gender, age and social background, ethnicity, nationality and group affiliations, occupation and social status, but also personal characteristics and skills." Identity development is a lifelong process of learning and adapting to changing life circumstances, with the youth phase being particularly important because this is when significant influences on one's value system are formed.
This is precisely where projects such as *Hate-Less* must come in, so that the formation of value constructs is supported that contribute to personality development based on one's own strengths and not on the aggressive exclusion of "others". It is therefore necessary that the young people in the target group of the *Hate-Less* project are treated with respect, are heard and are involved in the project work on an equal footing. The main goal here is to convey that developing one's own positive identity is authentic, while disparaging other social groups leads to the opposite development.



1.3 Inclusion and Empowerment Through PAR & Media Work

The increasing importance of digital influences requires not only working with media, but also organising real encounters in order to open up a personal, real space for experience. This is all the more true as media work usually yields the best results when done as a team. A good film requires a well-functioning team in front of the camera and microphone, working closely with the team members responsible for the technology and the smooth running of the production. Media work as teamwork is therefore not only a valuable tool for practising respectful interaction, but the result (film/audio) is only convincing if all team members are deployed according to their skills and knowledge. This also makes it clear that a wide range of qualifications and skills at different levels are necessary for the success of the media project. The spectrum ranges from planning skills, for example in concept and script development, location scouts, media law knowledge, acting skills in front of the camera, a good eye for images and technical understanding in the field of camera and sound technology to complex skills in the field of post-production.

During and after completion of production, social media and PR measures for the finished media products are also required. This simultaneously sharpens the technical and conceptual skills required for their use.

Another significant effect of such projects is that the project participants enter into processes of mutual learning and usually pass on their own knowledge about specific parts of the project to other group members. The realisation of a media project is therefore also a multidimensional learning project on a number of different levels.

However, media work - as envisaged in the *Hate-Less* project - offers further great opportunities for imparting values. Identity-forming processes are triggered by the media treatment of a social or more private problem area, the questioning of opinions disseminated in the media or personally, etc. and the need to build a successful media project on fact-based or emotionally comprehensible authenticity. The positive effects are based on one's own (team) performance and not on negative differentiation from others (groups).

Media work therefore not only offers the opportunity for personal development, but also encourages reflection on one's own actions and the examination of one's own (pre)judgments. After all, at the end of the project, it is necessary to present the results to an external audience.

At the same time, media work offers the opportunity to support the mostly young project group members on an equal footing in terms of content and technology. Responsibility for the final media product will lie primarily with the young producers during the conceptual practical phase of the *Hate-Less* project. Media work in the sense described above is therefore also democratic work. It teaches basic skills in research, exposing fake news and democratic coordination of work steps within the team.

After the successful completion of a media project, there is often a change in perspective regarding one's own media use and reflection on the content received. Active media project work thus offers a great opportunity for all participants to learn how to deal with media constructively and to open up a broad field for critical thinking in the media world.

In summary:

- Media work is a form of social intervention and expression.
- Participatory media fosters identity, voice and agency, ensuring accessibility and inclusive practices for marginalized youth (e.g., linguistic, cognitive, physical, etc.)

1.4 Practical Application: From participatory learning process to implementation

There are many ways to apply participatory action and Participatory Action Research (PAR) within youth work, particularly through creative and collaborative methods. Young people thrive in environments where they can explore relevant topics collectively, drawing on their own experiences and perspectives. Co-creating knowledge through methods such as storytelling, community mapping, role-play, and digital platforms enables youth not only to engage with complex issues but also to develop critical thinking and social awareness. Youth-led productions, such as participatory video projects, campaigns or podcasts, serve as powerful tools for self-expression and community impact. In this process, the role of the facilitator shifts from instructor to collaborative guide, ensuring that decision-making is shared and inclusive. This fosters a sense of ownership, responsibility and agency among young participants, making the learning process both meaningful and action-oriented.

1.4.1 Examples of Co-Creation and Peer-led Media Work

An illustrative example of participatory media work can be found in the Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFD) programme at the Bennohaus in Münster, Germany. Each year, young people aged 17-24 take part in a voluntary service that functions as a transitional and orientation phase before entering higher education or vocational training. Within this framework, volunteers become integral members of the team, gaining access to professional media training and technical equipment, and are encouraged to explore societal topics through creative media production.

Co-creation is not merely encouraged but embedded in the structure: volunteers work collaboratively on multimedia formats taking collective responsibility for concept, production and dissemination. Topics are introduced by staff, yet interpretation, tone and format are shaped by the volunteers themselves. The peer-to-peer learning dynamic

unfolds organically, as each individual brings unique skills and perspectives, enriching the team's process through shared discovery and dialogue. The low-threshold hierarchy enables trainers to act as companions rather than instructors - advising when needed, while respecting and learning from the volunteers' voices. Through this model, young participants not only develop technical competencies but also engage in value-oriented reflection, take ownership of their media narratives and cultivate interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution and collaborative decision-making. The result is a deep sense of responsibility for their work and a strengthened belief in their own agency - a lived experience of participation, self-efficacy and democratic practice.

BFD Video Projects:

"Peace Chain" between Münster and Osnabrück:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXx3H8NPl1E&t=49s

Quarter to East - Children on Social Media & LWL Art Museum:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sfoE5HMg-4

1.4.2 Reflecting on Participatory Themes

Participatory Action fosters a profound sense of empowerment and ownership among young people by positioning them as active contributors to decision-making processes. It challenges traditional hierarchies within educational and social structures, emphasizing horizontal collaboration, collective responsibility and equitable power-sharing. Through the collective engagement in participatory projects, such as the *Hate-Less* initiative, youth are enabled to develop context-specific, anti-discrimination guidelines and codes of conduct, directly addressing issues of exclusion and injustice within their communities. This approach is inherently rooted in democratic principles and participatory ethics, making it a powerful tool for promoting inclusion and social justice. Therefore, PAR reinforces the importance of diversity sensitivity and critical agency.

Reflective practices such as journaling, group storytelling, narrative documentation and feedback loops support both youth and facilitators in examining their roles, learning from experience and reinforcing the impact of their actions. By embedding reflective practices, both participants and facilitators are encouraged to critically engage with their experiences and continuously adapt their strategies. In doing so, participatory action not only contributes to personal and collective transformation but also equips young people to become effective agents of social change, particularly in efforts to counter hate speech, discrimination and systemic inequality. In principle, these approaches prepare youth for civic engagement and leadership.

Reflection Question: "How do you currently involve youth in decision-making? What would need to change for youth to become co-creators in your context?"

Chapter 2. Why Deconstructing Hate Speech and Disinformation Matter

In recent years, the internet has become both a platform for open dialogue and a breeding ground for hate speech and disinformation. The rapid growth of digital communication, while offering unprecedented access to information and connection, has also made it easier for harmful narratives to spread widely and instantly. Young people, who spend a significant part of their lives online, are particularly exposed to these influences. As they navigate digital spaces to form their views about society, identity and politics, they become both the targets and potential vectors of manipulative content.

The increasing normalisation of online hate, alongside the sophistication of disinformation tactics, poses a direct challenge to democratic societies. These phenomena erode trust, fuel polarisation and undermine critical thinking. In this context, education becomes not only a matter of knowledge transfer but a vital tool for equipping the next generation with the skills to identify, resist and counteract these threats. By fostering media literacy, empathy and a culture of respectful dialogue, we strengthen democratic resilience and help young people reclaim their agency in shaping the digital spaces they inhabit. Deconstructing hate speech and disinformation is therefore not only a defensive strategy but a proactive investment in a more inclusive, informed and democratic future.

2.1 Core Concepts and Definitions

To build a solid foundation for understanding how participatory actions can address hate speech and disinformation, it is essential first to clarify the key concepts involved. These concepts are interrelated yet distinct, each playing a crucial role in shaping the social and digital landscape that young people navigate today.

Hate Speech refers to expressions, gestures or conduct that demean, threaten or incite violence against individuals or groups based on attributes such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or other identity markers. Hate speech is not merely offensive language; it is a form of communication that undermines the dignity and safety of targeted communities. It can foster division and hostility, often escalating into real-world discrimination or violence. Understanding hate speech is critical because it challenges the principles of equality, respect and human rights at the heart of democratic societies.

Closely linked to hate speech are the phenomena of **disinformation** and **misinformation**. Disinformation is the deliberate creation and sharing of false or misleading information intended to deceive an audience. It often serves political, economic or ideological goals and can be spread by various actors, including foreign entities seeking to influence democratic processes. Misinformation, on the other hand, consists of false information

shared without harmful intent, often due to ignorance or error. Both disinformation and misinformation contribute to confusion, mistrust and polarization, undermining public debate and the informed decision-making that democracy depends on.

Critical Thinking emerges as a vital skill in this context. It involves the ability to analyse and evaluate information objectively, questioning assumptions and recognizing biases. Critical thinking enables individuals to discern fact from falsehood, to appreciate nuance and to resist manipulation. Developing critical thinking goes beyond acquiring knowledge; it requires cultivating a mindset of curiosity, reflection and skepticism towards simplistic narratives, especially in the fast-paced and often emotionally charged world of online communication.

Participatory Action represents a methodology and philosophy inclusive of those affected by social issues through the process of understanding and changing their realities. Specifically, Participatory Action Communication (PAC) is a practice that encourages communities, particularly young people, to become active agents in creating media and narratives that reflect their experiences and perspectives. PAC challenges traditional, top-down approaches to education and communication by fostering dialogue, collaboration and empowerment. By engaging participants directly in media production, PAC nurtures critical awareness, collective reflection and agency - essential tools for resisting hate speech and disinformation.

Together, these core concepts provide the intellectual framework for the participatory approaches explored in this chapter. They reveal how communication practices, social dynamics and educational strategies intersect in the ongoing effort to build resilient, democratic communities in the face of growing online hostility and manipulation.

2.2 Intersections and Entanglements

Understanding how hate speech and disinformation are intertwined requires a grasp of their combined effects. Each one feeds the other, and together they thrive in climates of algorithmic amplification and low levels of critical literacy. Both hate speech and disinformation depend on emotions that give them legitimacy and earned attention.

The veracity of misleading content plays on a level of fear, anger and/or distrust. This is the kind of strategy the European Parliament calls, "playing on emotions." In practice, this could mean a post that suggests immigrants are "stealing jobs," or that some targeted social group threatens public safety. This framing can lead to visceral reactions that push readers to accept false premises or share content without considering its validity.

Additionally, there is a relationship in the intentional amplification of disinformation or hateful narratives in digital ecosystems. This often manifests as an information overload - half-truths or speculations pushed into the information space over and over across media and social media alike, leaving users disoriented and confused. Flooding the information space distorts the reasons people respond in ways that are not based on mutual interest. Hate-laden disinformation can then be distributed as floods of indistinguishable quotes or imagery depicting targeted communities as dangerous or threatening to the social order, which accelerates social polarisation and makes a coherent, public response difficult.

This kind of manipulation is also further amplified when engaging with confirmation bias. Audiences will tend to consume and share content that reinforces what they already

believe. Hate-driven or misleading content can find willing listeners and promoters among users that hold prejudice or irrational projected beliefs when circulated uncritically. This reiterates the European Parliament's observation of exploiting confirmation bias; misinformation feeds fears or stereotypes while hate speech fuels emotional investment and group divisions.

Efforts to decontextualize or distort quotes, speeches or statistics pave another bridge between hate discourse and disinformation. The European Parliament highlights how "manipulating context" is being used to mislead audiences with cherry-picked or wrongly framed snippets. For example, a statement advocating humane immigration policy may be edited to seem as though it praises criminals at the country's expense. Such distortion creates false narratives that feed both distrust and hatred. By framing issues like migration, gender equality or religious expression as zero-sum games between "us" and "them," disinformation amplifies social division, reinforces group bias and transmits hate speech into the mainstream. Finally, a strategy frequently overlaps both: targeted assaults on individuals or institutions that challenge normative narratives. Disinformation campaigns can tar journalists, activists and community leaders in the context of conspiracies, foreign influence or financial impropriety/fraud. These assaults serve to de-legitimize specifically valid criticism and reinforce hateful stereotypes. In digital spaces, all of these tactics are interdependent. Algorithms favoring hyper-engagement, often emotional or sensational engagement, no matter the truth of the content, help explain this interdependency. Hate becomes the vehicle for disinformation and vice versa. Critical thinking and dialogue remain, perhaps, the only intervention to confront these decoupled dynamics. Key interventions that people themselves can incorporate into their daily lives include media literacy skills, self-awareness of your own biases and the use of spaces fostering respectful dialogue.

By understanding how hate speech and disinformation intersect through tactics, such as emotional manipulation, context manipulation, flooding, confirmation bias, polarisation and targeted attacks, we will be able to better devise interventions as educators and youth workers.

2.3 Participatory Action as a Methodology to Counter Hate

Participatory methodologies, in particular Participatory Action Communication (PAC), can provide a robust approach to countering hate speech and disinformation. The principal premise of PAC is that the people most impacted by an issue should play a key role in understanding and changing it. In PAC, young people do not consume pre-packaged messages; rather, they become active contributors and help create narratives of their own that relate to their lived experiences.

PAC puts youth in a position of power by transitioning from being receivers of information to being the storytellers. In PAC context, it is not just about critiquing existing media but about creating content. This can be youth-produced media, community awareness campaigns or simply a short narrative video. In doing so, youth reflect critically, express

directly and build an awareness of agency, which in turn fosters resilience and self-expression.

There are not only researchers and educators claiming this approach is effective. Funding for training programs supported by the European Commission are also recognizing the value of media literacy in combatting online hate and disinformation (highlighted in national reforms like Germany's NetzDG and BZKJ frameworks). In these contexts, youth are encouraged to not only deconstruct harmful messages but to also help produce creative counter-narratives which are grounded in their local reality - the ideal of PAC.

At the European level, media literacy initiatives by both the Council of Europe and the European Digital Media Observatory explain that developing cognitive and analytic skills provides learners with the tools to locate and critique manipulative content - whether it is categorically hateful or factually false. Participatory video, in particular, allows participants to critique their media ecosystems, while also developing a sense of collective responsibility. This twin capacity, to gain critical consciousness regarding media structures as well as to physically create their own counter material, is what gives PAC its impetus and what makes it a method of active resistance.

The literature on critical youth engagement tells us that youth are more motivated to be civically engaged if they are involved in the research process, with youth organizing their own inquiry, reflection and collective action - all of which are central to Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a method. In anti-hate contexts, PA-based activities allow youth to make visible the micro-aggressions, coded language and sources of misinformation, and eventually, to compose shared messages and measures with empathy and social cohesion. Youth will gain some sense of resilience and ownership in these processes; they are not just being 'protected' against hate but are empowered to transform hate.

This distinction between passive reception and active engagement shifts how young people begin to think of themselves in relation to democratic life. Through making their own stories, young people begin to understand that their own voices matter. They understand participation democratically is not only considered abstractly but also existentially, relational, and in media. In a sense, PAC can be employed as both a method to deconstruct harmful speech and put in place a measure for a stronger and better conversation that is more inclusive for the public sphere.

2.4 Practical Reflective Tools and Exercises

PAR and PAC become most potent, not only in intention, but in action. Bringing participatory values into the everyday realities of schooling and education allows young

people to recognize and resist the hate speech and disinformation inside their own contexts. This section foregrounds one way that students' reflective activities which take place in classrooms or youth groups can become support structures for thinking critically and developing democratic resilience in youth; and, they do not require pricey resources or expert knowledge.

One of the easiest entry points to PA practice is media reflection journalism - a form of a reflective journaling where students keep a regular log of online content (i.e., memes, videos, comments and articles) that they feel emotionally impacted by. Instead of making the emotional response the subject of the journal, they are encouraged to write on what they saw, how they felt about it and how they may have experienced that emotion. Over time through regular journaling, students begin to see patterns emerge regarding the emotional techniques used in these manipulative pieces of media as outlined in institutional resources of disinformation: over-simplified viewpoints, appeals to emotions (feeling sad, loyal, outraged, etc.), scapegoating (us vs. them), and so on. This experience is gradual and repetitive, resulting in an intrinsic filter, based *not* on distrust but awareness.

Dialogue-based analysis could be a super useful way to consider whether examples of online speech (anonymized or fictionalised) might be deemed hate speech or disinformation in a small group setting. Drawing on the speech, people work together to think through the language used - potential intentions of the language - and whether someone or group was affected by it. The task here is not to arrive at one "right" way of interpreting speech but to develop skills useful for asking the right questions. Narrative rewriting can also offer a practical way to engage. Students take existing hostile or misleading messages and rewrite them with empathy, complexity or factual nuance. A headline that scapegoats a minority can be reconstructed with broader context. A viral conspiracy theory can be broken down and presented as a timeline showing how it spread and who benefits. This exercise reinforces both the power and responsibility of storytelling.

These education tactics highlight that being resilient is not about sheltering young people from false or hateful messages but preparing them to confront and make sense of the issue(s). The participatory methods - whether role-playing debates, producing podcasts or creating short video essays - invite participants to challenge public opinions within a society while thinking about how others may perceive and counter those messages.

These are not just tools for "raising awareness," they also build analytical muscles. By collectively creating, deconstructing and discussing messages, youth envision themselves as performers in the media landscape. This shapes their collective power to question language, to respond and reject suggestive and/or aggressive speech.

2.5 Final Takeaways and Next Steps for Youth Workers

When working with young people on hate speech and disinformation, one-off workshops or theoretical explanations are not enough. The best way to contribute to positive outcomes - by way of agency, reflective practices and dialogue - is to create opportunities for continued engagement as part of an ongoing process. The PAC approach is a commitment to active agency, not passive reception. It is crucial to engage in ongoing opportunities for

involvement with young people to build resilient democratic societies.

Today's youth occupy multifaceted roles as media producers, influencers, interpreters and amplifiers. However, when their media engagement remains critically unexamined, there is a risk that they may inadvertently reproduce the same dynamics of exclusion and division that are frequently highlighted in EU institutional reports. The challenge lies in the fact that even youth-led, co-creative projects can unconsciously reinforce dominant societal narratives or mask exclusionary practices in more subtle and insidious ways. Yet, the cultural and political relevance of young people is undeniable. In the context of rapid social transformation, youth are not merely adapting to existing systems - they are reshaping the landscape of public discourse, asserting new forms of power, voice and agency. When equipped with the analytical tools to deconstruct dominant media narratives and the creative means to reconstruct them, young people are uniquely positioned to contribute to a more inclusive and equitable public sphere; or, conversely, to replicate harmful paradigms. The PA approach recognizes this dual potential and intentionally creates process-oriented spaces in which young people can not only critique hostile or exclusionary texts but also formulate and disseminate meaningful counter-narratives.

In terms of implementing this into educational practice, this does not necessitate moving the entirety of the educational system away from exam-driven pedagogy and youth programs or from structured to more fluid systems. It *does* require commitment from educatorsand youth facilitators who are prepared to allow their students to explore their own reflective and collective practices. This can range from student video or podcast production around social issues, moderated discussions about current events or even campaigns in the classroom around digital media. How they explore this represents the final layer, which must include discourse, dialogue and co-creation.

A recurring message from European Parliament and Commission initiatives is that democratic resilience cannot be built by only identifying threats (or harmful content). It has to be practiced through democratic participation. When learners are asked to think critically, to speak from their own experiences and to challenge what they see online, they become more than informed, they become engaged. The next step for youth workers is not to aim for perfection but to start somewhere. Small, consistent efforts to bring PAC into the classroom can gradually change how young people see media, interact with difference and respond to manipulation. Over time, these practices become habits, and those habits become the backbone of a more resilient civic culture. In a time when digital platforms are saturated with emotionally charged and misleading narratives - particularly targeting young people - education must go beyond cultivating awareness. It must employ empathy, resilience and active resistance. Participatory action can be a meaningful, practical response.

For youth workers, the message is clear: meaningful engagement matters more than exposure to facts alone. When young people have space to reflect, express and co-create, they are far better equipped to resist manipulation and reject hateful narratives. Embedding participatory methods in everyday practice is not a luxury; it is an urgent, practical step toward safeguarding democracy, social cohesion and informed public discourse.

Chapter 3. How to Do Participatory Research with Youth

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is best considered as an approach to research rather than a research method. It is done with or by the people who participate, rather than *on*, *about or to* them. Grounded in the rights-based approach of 'nothing about us, without us,' PAR aims to disrupt power imbalances. This means it is especially useful when researching with young people who are marginalised within their communities, such as young people living in poverty, young people with migrant background, young people who experience online and/or onsite bullying or 'mobbing,' children and youth not in school, and any other groups who may be vulnerable and often left on the margins of research endeavors. When used effectively, PAR can support youth agency and activism by promoting inclusion as well as help to unearth key themes affecting young people or solutions to help them thrive, which would have otherwise remained hidden.

In PAR, adults typically partner with young people to identify questions to study, provide them with training in research methods, support them in conducting research and facilitate them using their knowledge, experience and research findings to inform positive change on issues relevant to their lives. Authentic power-sharing between adult facilitators and youth researchers is a cornerstone of PAR. This represents a major shift in how adults and youth typically interact. PAR also offers opportunities for youth to use their research findings and lived experiences to provide input on their schools and communities.

This chapter offers youth workers a practical, step-by-step guide for designing and facilitating inclusive, youth-led research processes. It introduces accessible tools such as empathy maps, interviews and the "stories of most significant change" to help young people explore and express their lived experiences. The *Hate-Less Guidelines* intend to support youth workers, youth trainers, youth program coordinators, educators or social workers to effectively work together with young people to plan a research project on issues relevant to their lives which belong to the main themes of the HATE-LESS project (i.e., media awareness, hate speech, disinformation, fake news and how these affect the lived experiences of young people). The chapter emphasizes ethical considerations, sensitivity in facilitation and reflective practice, ensuring that research is both empowering and respectful. It supports youth workers in guiding young people through collaborative planning, data collection and analysis, enabling them to shape narratives that directly reflect their perspectives and realities.

3.1 Step-by-Step Guidance

Intentional design of a PAR project helps to ensure that both youth and adult partners maximize the benefit of engaging in this work and that the action from PAR projects create

meaningful change in the world. It also helps to ensure that we continue to build the body of knowledge and corroboration of the participatory action approach. As we are more intentional about the design of PAR projects, we can better capture the impact and outcomes of this important work.

The following identifies the 5 key steps to ensuring meaningful participatory research with young people:

3.1.1 Define Purpose and Research Questions

Young people bring invaluable insights when they take on the role of co-researchers, helping to shape both the focus and goals of a participatory study. Involving them early on ensures that the research addresses topics they find important. By consulting youth from the start, adult facilitators gain a deeper understanding of the issues at stake and can confirm that the chosen methods and expected outcomes resonate with participants' real concerns.

Adult researchers should be thoughtful in determining which young people to include. It's important to avoid bias - for example, favoring young people with more advanced education and English language skills. Make strategic efforts to include vulnerable young people (e.g., those who may be marginalised due to poverty, disability, gender, ethnicity or other intersectional barriers) through financial and non-financial support to ensure that their experiences directly inform the research objectives and agenda-setting process.

To uncover research topics, facilitators can use open-ended approaches: invite youth to describe what "community" means to them and to highlight strengths worth reinforcing and challenges they wish to address. Depending on participants' experience, this exploration might be a broad discussion of impressions or a more targeted activity such as interviewing key individuals or running small surveys.

Key steps include:

a. Co-identify risks, problems, vulnerabilities and deprivations that young people encounter in their everyday lives.

b. Prioritise these issues in order of severity or significance to the co- researchers.

c. Answer basic research questions using the "**5W1H**" method: 'What?' 'Who?' 'When?' 'Where?' 'Why?' and 'How?'

Example questions:

WHAT? - What are the changes we ultimately want to achieve? What are the broad questions we want to answer? What information do we need to understand the issues at hand?

WHO? - Who is involved? Who has power to support these changes? Who are allies on this issue?

WHEN? - When did the subject of events occur? When to address the issues or under what timeline?

WHERE? - Where did the subject of events take place? Where will the results of the research be displayed?

WHY? - Why is the topic important, and why will a certain line of research be useful in contributing to change in our community?

HOW? - How will the information we obtain be used?

If we want to contextualise this to the scope and themes of the HATE-LESS project, we can ask: “What kinds of misleading narratives do young people encounter most often in our community?” “Why do these narratives persist, and how do they influence attitudes or behaviors?” “Who holds influence or power to address these harmful narratives - peers, educators, platform moderators, local organizations?” and “How can the findings be used to reshape media literacy initiatives or inform community actions against hate speech?” By co-creating questions in this way, youth develop critical thinking and research skills, and the study remains focused on actionable outcomes. This collaborative definition of purpose and inquiry paves the way for ethical, impactful participatory research that empowers young people to drive change in media practices and social inclusion.

Before moving on to the next stage, check that you have:

✓ Clearly stated why participatory research is needed and what you hope to achieve.

✓ Engaged youth in identifying issues relevant to their lives and communities.

✓ Used an inclusive and intersectional approach to involving youth researchers with familiar and accessible technologies and materials.

✓ Used an inclusive approach to identifying the research goals.

✓ Developed and finalised clear research questions.

✓ Set out a well-defined purpose underlying the research questions - clearly stating why the particular approach you’re taking is necessary.

✓ Made sure that none of the participants’ ideas or inputs were overlooked.

✓ Clarified that the discussion is intended to guide the next steps of the research project.

3.1.2. Plan and Design Research Tools

Participatory action research demands that young people are included meaningfully in the research design process. For this reason, adult facilitators need to ensure that their younger co- researchers have the context and vocabulary to shape that design, alongside their more experienced collaborators. Adult researchers should begin this stage by carrying out a needs assessment to find out what their younger co-researchers know (if anything) about research approaches. They can then identify their co-researchers’ strengths and where they may need support to develop their knowledge of collaborative research approaches.

When we develop the research tools, we need to keep in mind both young participants and

a young audience. Adults should consult with their co-researchers about themes and tools that are accessible to young people who haven't had any formal training in research design. Approaches can be wide-ranging, but typically involve a mix of audio and visual tools such as mapping exercises, focus groups, observations and small-scale surveys.
Key steps include:

a. Decide what kind of data you need:

Is there already some useful data that the team can analyse together? Or do the researchers need to generate their own new data?

b. Identify interviewees:

Where and when will the research take place? Who should we talk to and why?

c. Choose a research method:

What types of information or insights are needed?
What are the constraints we need to be aware of? For example: budget, timeframe, cultural sensitivities or political sensitivities.
What sorts of research methods can help us to generate that information or those insights? For example: perceptions or prevalence statistics and trends over time.

d. Discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of potential research methods.

There are quite a lot of promising practices that can be used to collect data or simply tell one's own story, and you can find a number of those in Chapter 4; however, a significant tool can be that of 'Photovoice.' As a PA research method, photovoice gives young researchers a chance to think about and express their priorities within the context of a participatory action research project. By using audio-visual technology they are already familiar with, young co-researchers can help children and adults to see the world through their eyes, in a way that many participants feel is more familiar than traditional media. Photovoice can also be used in a variety of ways, to document daily life, or take photographs that represent the issues that are important to young people by simply developing captions for their photographs to explain the context to their audience and peers.

Using online research tools allows participants to take part, according to their own situation, and within any time and space constraints they face. Popular online tools include:

- **Virtual community mapping.**
- **Group discussions** (both within communities and where language capacities permit across international contexts).
- **Audio journaling** (this is useful not only for conducting PAR in which researchers document their own experiences, but it can also be used as a means of self-reflection and assessment by participants in PAR projects).
- **Arts-based participatory research** (such as hip-hop-based research) allows participants to reflect on their social identities within society. You can see the example of the following song that was developed in the context of the Horizon2020 project "NEW ABC - Networking the Educational World: Across Boundaries for Community-building" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxZVXyxzd8Q

Other examples of research tools designed and tailored for young people include:

Tool/Method	Purpose/Use Case
Empathy Maps	Explore feelings, perceptions and experiences of youth or their peers
Peer Interviews	Enable youth to collect data from peers, increasing trust and authenticity
Stories of Most Significant Change	Gather narratives about impactful experiences or changes
Community/Body Mapping	Visualize environments, relationships and lived experiences
Focus Groups	Facilitate group reflection and collective analysis
Social Network Mapping	Understand community connections and influences
Timeline/Life-Course Mapping	Reflect on personal and collective journeys and milestones

Before moving on to the next stage, check that you have:

✓ Identified useful types of data.

✓ Developed tools and exercises to make the research aims clear for co-researchers.

✓ Gathered feedback from all participatory researchers to identify strengths and weaknesses of each potential approach.

✓ Ensured that all researchers understand and are comfortable with the scope and content of subject matter being investigated on an ongoing basis.

✓ Co-created a research plan with youth, ensuring shared decision-making.

✓ Selected or adapted tools for youth-friendly data collection.

3.1.3. Collect Data Collaboratively

After you have co-created the research design and methodology with young researchers, the data collection process can begin. Again, you should enable young people to lead during this stage. Peer-to-peer interviewing, a qualitative participatory method where youth researchers design, collect and report on interviews held with other young people, is one approach that enables young people to lead and allows us to get to the heart of issues young people face. It puts young people center stage in collecting primary data but also makes the most of their unique access to their own communities. Peer interviews are a valuable tool for accessing 'hidden' populations - young people who may be harder to reach and less responsive to adult researchers' questions.

Key steps include:

a. Ensure every participant has an equal opportunity to contribute. Since not every young

researcher feels at ease with the same approaches, offer diverse tools and methods so that everyone's perspective can be captured.

b. Recognize and address any power differences between adults and youth. Actively invite young people to voice their suggestions and priorities regarding both the study focus and how data are gathered.

c. Protect young researchers as they work within their communities. Because they may be exposed to risks tied to their backgrounds or identities, develop a clear safety plan, identifying referral points or support services, to keep them secure throughout the research process.

d. Leverage young researchers' insider knowledge of their communities. Encourage them to conduct interviews among peers and across generations, tapping into their unique access to gather deeper, more meaningful insights.

Before moving on to the next stage, check that you have:

✓ Confirmed that every participant had an equal opportunity to engage while accommodating different roles and responsibilities and striving for balanced involvement.

✓ Embedded skill-building opportunities within the data collection phase so that young researchers can gain specific competencies that help them gather high-quality data.

✓ Employed multiple data collection techniques that leverage the unique abilities and perspectives of all members of the research team.

✓ Made sure co-researchers understand and practice reflexivity, reflecting on how their own perspectives may influence the research.

3.1.4. Analyze and Interpret Data

To do participatory research well, participants should be involved in and/or lead in analysing and interpreting the data collected. Data analysis and interpretation is a critical stage, as it helps to ensure that research findings accurately reflect participants' perspectives. Once data has been collected, analysis and interpretation can be a lengthy process that presents an imposition on young people's daily lives and responsibilities, and so this needs to be carefully negotiated and planned, including options for more or less in-depth involvement of youth researchers from the outset. Young researchers' capacities are also a factor in their ability to participate in data analysis and interpretation - or at least in adult researchers' decision to include them. This should ideally be addressed during the capacity, strengthening element of the research design stage.

Key steps include:

a. Involving youth in coding, categorizing and interpreting data.

b. Agreeing on a systematic way to arrange the material gathered, including transcripts, photographs, observational notes or additional non-textual data.

c. Using visual models to identify themes.

d. Reflecting on positionality and intersectionality, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered.

Before moving on to the next stage, check that you have:

✓ Collated and organised all data sources, whether text- or image-based.

✓ Used a consistent methodology to categorise data points.

✓ Developed a model, visual or otherwise, to display emerging themes.

✓ Considered how data will be stored and managed safely.

3.1.5. Share Findings in Youth-Friendly Ways

Keeping young people closely involved at this stage is really valuable because it maximises the benefit of the research to young people and promotes their ownership not just over the process, but the outcomes.

Key steps include:

a. Share research findings to encourage others to engage with those findings.

- Produce materials that are translated into the language(s) used by participants, so that they can use those resources in their own work within their communities.
- Make findings more accessible to young people by providing summaries, alongside visuals that can be readily showcased and replicated.
- Use videos that are conducive to social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.
- Make sure to have safeguarding procedures in place for young people to feel safe and represented in both online and in-person events.

b. Take action and advocate for change

Before moving on to the next stage, check that you have:

✓ Identified the change young people want to see and used this for developing strategies for dissemination.

✓ Collaborated with co-researchers so that they have been able to develop ownership over how and where they share their results.

✓ Facilitate youth-led advocacy and follow-up actions.

3.2 Ethics, Facilitation, and Sensitive Topics

Effective participatory research with youth requires careful attention to ethical considerations, facilitation strategies and the handling of sensitive content. Below is an expanded discussion organized into key areas. This guidance can serve as a stand-alone one-page reference to help youth workers, facilitators and co-researchers navigate complex issues responsibly and inclusively.

3.2.1 Equity and Power Sharing

At the core of ethical participatory research is treating young people as equal partners rather than passive subjects. From the outset, involve youth in decision-making about research design, methods, and how findings will be used or shared. Co-create roles and responsibilities together: ask youth what tasks they want to lead (e.g., designing interview questions, facilitating focus groups, analyzing data, etc.) and where they prefer to contribute as team members. Explicitly discuss power dynamics: acknowledge that adult facilitators hold institutional authority and may influence decisions and invite youth to speak up if they feel their voices are overshadowed. Establish ground rules collaboratively - such as rotating facilitation, shared agenda-setting and consensus-based decision-making - to ensure that all perspectives are respected. By embedding equity in every step, the research environment becomes more transparent, trustworthy and reflective of participants' real interests.

3.2.2. Informed Consent and Safeguarding

Safeguarding youth participants is paramount. Before any activity begins, provide clear, age-appropriate explanations of the research purpose, processes and potential risks or benefits. Obtain informed consent from youth (and, where required, from parents or guardians) by sharing written or verbal information in accessible language. Emphasize that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time without penalty. Discuss confidentiality measures: explain how data (notes, recordings, images) will be stored, who will access it and how anonymity or pseudonyms will be used, if needed. Anticipate potential risks (e.g., emotional distress, privacy concerns or unintended disclosures) and develop a safeguarding plan. Identify referral services (counselors, support hotlines, trusted adults) and procedures if a participant discloses sensitive issues (e.g., harm or discrimination). Train all facilitators and co-researchers on these protocols, so they can respond promptly and appropriately.

3.2.3. Compensation and Accessibility

Meaningful participation often requires time, effort and resources from youth. Allocate a portion of the project budget for fair compensation - this might include vouchers, stipends or covering transport and refreshments - ensuring that no young person is excluded due to financial constraints. Clearly communicate compensation policies at the start, so youth understand how and when they will be reimbursed. Equally important is addressing accessibility: choose meeting locations (physical or online) that accommodate diverse needs (e.g., mobility, hearing, vision, language). Provide materials in multiple formats (large print, audio, translated summaries) and allow flexible scheduling or asynchronous participation options when possible. Proactively ask youth about any special requirements (e.g., assistive technologies, quiet spaces, childcare) and incorporate their suggestions. Prioritizing these elements promotes inclusivity and signals respect for each participant's circumstances.

3.2.4. Dealing with Sensitive Topics

Participatory research often explores challenging issues - inequality, discrimination, mental health or trauma - that can evoke strong emotions. Prepare youth researchers through orientation sessions: discuss potential emotional triggers and set expectations about the content they may encounter. Offer guidelines for self-care and mutual support, such as taking breaks, using check-ins at the start and end of sessions and encouraging peer listening. During data collection or analysis, monitor participants' well-being. If distress arises, pause activities and provide immediate support or referrals as outlined in the safeguarding plan.

After sensitive sessions, schedule debriefing opportunities - individual or group - where youth can reflect on their feelings, share coping strategies and suggest adjustments for future activities. Facilitators should model empathy, active listening and non-judgmental responses. By anticipating and planning for emotional challenges, the research remains respectful and supportive of youth well-being.

3.2.5. Reflexivity

Ongoing reflection is crucial for ethical rigor. Encourage both adult facilitators and youth co-researchers to examine their own assumptions, biases and positions of privilege. Integrate brief reflexive exercises - such as journaling prompts, group reflections or "check-in" discussions - at regular intervals. Questions might include: "How might my background

influence how I interpret these findings?" or "Whose voices are we hearing most, and who might be missing?"

Documenting reflexive insights helps the team adjust methods or outreach to ensure diverse perspectives are included. Facilitation should remain flexible: if reflections reveal power imbalances or blind spots, revisit roles or adapt strategies. By embedding reflexivity throughout the process, the research stays ethically grounded, transparent and responsive to emerging challenges.

3.2.6 Facilitation Tips

✓ Start by building trust through a brief icebreaker or sharing session.

✓ Create and agree on team norms together so everyone feels safe.

✓ Use arts-based or interactive activities to keep sessions engaging.

✓ Rotate between discussion, drawing, role-play or digital tools to include diverse learners.

✓ Be clear about who does what and how decisions are made.

✓ Explain roles and expectations at the start of each activity.

✓ Offer short training segments on new methods before practice.

✓ Pair youth with mentors or co-facilitators so they can learn by doing.

✓ Gradually hand over leadership tasks to youth as they grow more confident.

✓ Check in regularly on how youth feel about their responsibilities.

✓ Give positive feedback and celebrate small wins after each milestone.

✓ Acknowledge contributions publicly (e.g., in a group chat or brief announcement).

✓ Encourage youth to suggest improvements and adapt methods as you go.

✓ Use accessible language and visuals so everyone understands.

✓ Provide quick how-to guides or cheat-sheets for digital tools.

✓ Plan short breaks and informal check-ins to maintain energy.

✓ Remind participants that making mistakes is part of learning.

✓ Close sessions by reflecting on what worked well and what to try next.

In summary, this chapter underscores participatory research as a rights-based, collaborative approach that positions young people as co-researchers rather than subjects, fostering agency and unearthing insights that might otherwise remain hidden. By outlining five key stages -from defining purpose and co-creating research questions, through tool design, collaborative data collection, joint analysis and youth-friendly dissemination - the chapter provides youth workers and facilitators with a clear roadmap for meaningful engagement. Emphasis on inclusivity and intersectionality ensures that diverse voices, especially those of marginalised youth, inform each step.

Ethical considerations, facilitation strategies and reflexive practice permeate the guidance, highlighting the importance of power-sharing, informed consent, safeguarding and support when addressing sensitive topics. By building trust, offering hands-on training, and gradually shifting leadership to young researchers, facilitators create learning environments where participants develop critical skills and ownership over outcomes. Ultimately, this approach not only strengthens research quality and relevance but also empowers youth to drive positive change in their communities.

Chapter 4. Innovative Practices and Digital Tools

This part of the methodological guidelines serves as an active instrument for social cohesion, empathy and resistance through practical and innovative tools.

4.1 Key Challenges and Opportunities

There are several challenges in integrating media literacy into youth work. One major issue is the growing "neo-illiteracy", a term Tapio Varis (2004) uses to describe the gap between people who have access to media but lack the critical skills to interpret it. This can lead to the spread of misinformation and the reinforcement of harmful stereotypes (Varis, 2004). Another challenge is the simplification of digital literacy to mere technical know-how. José Manuel Pérez (2004) argues that digital literacy should not be reduced to using devices. Instead, it should be seen as a holistic process involving emotional, cognitive and practical competencies (Pérez 2004). This comprehensive view opens up more meaningful ways to engage youth.

On the other hand, there are great opportunities. The shift from an industrial society to an information society brings new possibilities for youth engagement. When supported by media-literate youth workers, young individuals can tell their own stories, reflect on their identities and advocate for justice. Moreover, the multicultural nature of today's world calls for media literacy that values diversity and inclusion. Youth work that embraces media literacy can become a space where different voices are heard, respected and empowered. By developing both critical and creative abilities, young people are better equipped to navigate the digital world and shape the society they live in.

4.2 Approaches to Inclusive Storytelling

4.2.1 Principles of Anti-Racist and Inclusive Storytelling

When young people from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to tell their stories using methods that center their lived experiences, it validates their identities and also challenges systems of inequality and bias. In this situation, storytelling turns into a tool for speaking out against discrimination, ending silence and fostering understanding among people of different backgrounds. By combining creative approaches with innovative digital tools, this guide aims to support youth workers in designing workshops and interventions that are engaging, inclusive and grounded in the realities of the communities they serve. It offers a set of methods and a mindset that embraces experimentation, emphasizes equity and believes in the transformative power of story.

According to Ladzekpo, Amekor, and Davi (2024), storytelling is an effective technique for influencing attitudes, establishing empathy and creating inclusive societies. When utilized purposefully, it may dispel negative perceptions and provide voice to those who are

frequently disadvantaged or ignored. By acknowledging the diversity of human experience, inclusive storytelling makes sure that tales represent a broad spectrum of identities, cultures and viewpoints.

At the heart of anti-racist storytelling is intentionality, the deliberate choice to represent people fairly and respectfully, while acknowledging and addressing power imbalances and histories of oppression (Morettini, Abraham, and Wilson-Hill, 2022). This means moving away from stories that portray marginalized communities only through trauma or struggle, and instead sharing stories that also highlight joy, resilience, creativity and everyday life.

Curfman (2021) claims that inclusive storytelling offers "windows, mirrors and sliding glass doors." People may see into other people's lives (windows), consider their own experiences (mirrors) and enter other people's viewpoints (doors). These metaphors remind us that storytelling must be accessible and meaningful to all, not just those who have traditionally or historically controlled the narrative.

To make storytelling inclusive and anti-racist, youth workers and facilitators must:

- Encourage co-creation, rather than speaking for others.
- Respect cultural ownership of stories.
- Challenge biases in language, visuals and framing.
- Provide context that helps audiences understand the systemic issues behind personal experiences.

Furthermore, freedom should be at the heart of inclusive storytelling; it's not enough to only convey tales about disadvantaged people, we must also empower young storytellers to share their *own* experiences in their *own* words.

4.3 Creative Methods for Storytelling

According to Heinemeyer (2020), storytelling becomes more powerful when it is supported by creative, participatory methods that allow young people to express themselves in diverse and meaningful ways. These methods are not just tools for communication, they are also approaches that encourage critical reflection, cultural awareness and emotional engagement. Among the most effective storytelling methods are storyboards, autoethnography and soundscapes. Each of these offers unique possibilities and suits different contexts. Storyboards, for instance, are visual plans that help structure narratives before producing videos or animations. They are especially helpful in group settings where planning and collaboration are needed, and they work well with participants who feel more comfortable sketching or organizing ideas visually.

Autoethnography, on the other hand, invites individuals to use their personal experiences as a starting point for storytelling and analysis. It is deeply reflective and ideal for personal growth, identity exploration and exploring connections between self and society.

Soundscapes use ambient sound, voice and music to evoke emotion and place, offering an accessible, non-visual medium that engages the senses and includes those who might struggle with writing or drawing.

Every approach has advantages and disadvantages. Autoethnography is insightful but emotionally draining, storyboards are extremely organized but can hinder spontaneity and soundscapes are immersive but may need technical assistance or supervision to create (Mou, Jeng, and Chen, 2013; Winkler, 2018; Rajguru, Obrist, and Memoli, 2020). The secret is to adapt the approach to the participants' requirements, abilities and situation. Ultimately, these methods can be combined or adapted to fit different goals. Used thoughtfully, they empower young people to craft authentic stories, build media skills and participate actively in shaping narratives that reflect their lived realities.

4.3.1 Storyboards

Storyboards are a sequence of drawings or frames that visually outline a story or concept before it's turned into a video, animation or presentation (Hart 2013). Each frame typically includes images, short text or notes about actions, emotions and transitions. In youth work, storyboards are used to help young people organize their thoughts, plan their narratives and collaborate on creative projects (Kuczynska, Goncalves, and Guerri, 2019). They act as visual scripts that clarify ideas, ensure inclusive participation and provide a safe structure for exploring sensitive topics such as identity, discrimination and inclusion.

Using storyboards allows youth to brainstorm and co-create stories that reflect their experiences and viewpoints. Because they are visual, they also help reduce language barriers, making them especially useful in multicultural or multilingual groups. Youth workers can use storyboards to guide discussions on anti-racism, anti-discrimination, stereotypes and empathy through diverse representations.

4.3.2 Steps to Create an Inclusive Storyboard

Step	Title	Visual Guide / Notes
1	🎯 Define the Theme: Begin by discussing the central message or issue, e.g., a personal experience with discrimination or a vision of a more inclusive community.	📌 Choose a topic (e.g., exclusion, justice, community). 💬 Discuss: "What message do we want to share?"
2	🎬 Break the Story into Scenes: Identify key moments, emotions or turning points. Discuss how each part connects to the larger message.	🧩 Identify story beats: - Beginning (Setup) - Middle (Conflict) - End (Change) 🗺 Use a 3-6 box storyboard layout.
3	🖍 Draw or Describe the Scenes: Participants sketch, collage or describe what happens in each frame, using visuals or simple notes.	🎨 Sketch or write each scene. 🖼 Use drawings, magazine clippings or written notes. 📷 One scene per frame.
4	🧑‍🤝‍🧑 Include Diverse Perspectives: Make sure all voices are heard. Encourage youth to include multiple characters or viewpoints to reflect real-life diversity.	🌍 Encourage multiple characters/views. 🗣 Ask: "Whose voices are missing?" 👥 Show diversity in age, culture, gender, abilities, etc.
5	💬 Discuss and Reflect: Talk about the choices made, what's being shown, who is represented and how. Is the story fair, inclusive and respectful?	🔍 Talk through scenes: - Are they respectful? - Who is included? - What emotions are shown? 💭 Prompt: "How does this story make people feel?"
6	🔁 Revise as Needed: Allow space for feedback and changes. Inclusion often means rethinking parts of the story to better reflect shared values.	🖍 Get feedback from peers. 🩹 Edit images or scenes for clarity. 🔄 Check: Does it align with inclusion and fairness values?

Sample Storyboard Template (A Six-Box Grid with six boxes, ideal for short stories or first-time users). Others include;

- Scene-by-Scene Layout: A more detailed version with space for notes on camera angles, dialogue and sound.
- Character Journey Board: Focuses on one character's development and perspective, useful for exploring identity and growth.

Youth workers can adapt these templates to fit the group's needs, ensuring the process remains accessible, inclusive and engaging for all participants.

4.3.3 Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a form of self-reflective storytelling which invites young people to write about their own life experiences and link those stories to culture or community (Harrison et al., 2022; Rodriguez, 2024). According to Harrison et al. (2022), in practice this process "unites autobiography (telling one's life) and ethnography (studying culture)." In youth programs, teachers explain that autoethnography makes use of each student's unique background, languages and traditions as strengths in the narrative. By focusing on personal memories or family history, students see how their identity (family, culture, race, etc.) has helped shape their story and how it connects to larger social themes.

4.3.4 Promoting Identity and Voice

- First-person voice: Autoethnography gives youth the chance to speak in their own voice. Students write in the first person ("I") about themselves, literally centering their personal perspective (Harrison et al. (2022). This validates their experience and helps them feel heard.

- Exploring identity: It encourages reflection on who they are. For example, a student might write about a family tradition or a school event and then ask themselves, *"What does this memory tell me about my heritage or values?"* This process turns private experiences into stories of identity.
- Counter-narratives: Sharing personal stories can challenge stereotypes. In research on marginalized students, autoethnographic "counter-stories" have helped shift views from seeing students as having deficits to seeing them as carrying strengths and knowledge (Martin and Garza, 2020). In other words, youth become recognized as experts of their own lives, and their stories add new perspectives to classrooms and communities.

4.3.5 Structuring an Autoethnographic Narrative

- Start with a vivid episode: Choose an important event or moment (often called an "epiphany") that had a big impact on you (Tyner-Mullings, 2019). It could be anything from a family celebration, a personal challenge or a turning point in your life.
- Tell it like a story: Describe the scene in detail, who was there, what happened and how you felt. Use sensory details (sights, sounds, feelings) to make the memory come alive. Writing it like a narrative (with a beginning, middle, and end) helps readers follow along.
- Reflect on meaning: After narrating the event, add a reflection. Explain why this moment mattered: *How did it change you or teach you something? What did you learn about yourself, your culture, or the world?* This part connects the personal story to bigger ideas.
- Connect to culture or community: Think about how your story ties to your cultural or family background. You might compare your experience to others' or explain traditions. For example, *"Growing up, my family told a lot of stories about our ancestors. Recording my own story adds another chapter to our family history."*
- Use creative elements if you like: Autoethnography can include dialogue (maybe quotes from family members) or even non-traditional forms (a poem or letter) as long as it comes from your real experience. The key is honesty and insight. Listeners/readers should learn something about your identity or culture.

4.3.6 Reflective Questions for Youth

- What is a memorable event from your life (at home, school, or elsewhere) that helped shape who you are? Describe it and why it mattered.
- Can you think of a family story or tradition you love? Write it down and explain what it tells you about your background or values.
- Recall a time when you felt different from others (for example, because of your race, language, beliefs, or abilities). What happened, and how did that experience affect how you see yourself?
- Has there been a moment when someone misunderstood you or made an assumption about you? How did that feel, and what would you like them to know about you instead?
- Imagine your life as a movie. What would be a key scene (with sound and setting) that really shows who you are or where you come from? Describe that scene in detail.

4.3.7 Soundscapes

A soundscape narrative is an audio story created by arranging recorded sounds instead of just words or pictures. Students can layer environmental sounds, music and voice recordings to paint an auditory picture of a place or story (Miller, 2020). For example, one exercise asks learners to arrange layers of sound to convey a sense of place and story (Miller, 2020). You might record birdsong, footsteps and wind to tell the story of a walk in the woods, or mix school bell chimes and playground laughter to evoke a day at school - all without showing any images.

4.3.8 Inclusive Audio Storytelling

Audio-based projects are very inclusive. They let young people tell their stories using their own voices and sounds, which can be easier for those who struggle with writing or have different language skills. Anyone can speak, sing, hum or record everyday sounds. Classrooms use audio to bring out diverse perspectives: for instance, an “Inclusion” storytelling project had students produce short podcast episodes about experiences of belonging, encouraging each student’s personal voice in the narrative (Inclusive Schools Network, 2025). Likewise, digital tools like Soundtrap are built for all ages and ability levels, so everyone from beginners to advanced learners can create together. Because students listen as well as speak, audio stories can build empathy: hearing someone’s accent or laughter directly can be powerful.

4.3.9 Accessible Audio Tools

- **Audacity (free software):** A popular, open-source audio recorder and editor that runs on Windows, Mac, and Linux. It lets students record voice tracks and layer sounds.
- **Soundtrap (online studio):** A web-based music and podcast studio that works on any device. Teachers note it empowers students, and is for all ages and ability levels. It also supports collaboration (students can work on a project together online).
- **Voice recorder apps:** Most smartphones and tablets have a built-in voice recorder. These apps (like Voice Memos on iPhone or Recorder on Android) let students capture sounds quickly on the go without extra equipment.
- **Free sound libraries:** Websites such as Freesound.org offer free sound effects (check licenses). Students can safely download ambient noises, instrument notes, or Foley effects to use in their stories if needed.

4.3.10 Sample Activities for Workshops

- **Soundwalk:** Take a silent walk outside or around the school. Ask students to focus on and note or record the sounds they hear (birds, traffic, voices, etc.). Back in class, play the sounds and let each student describe how the soundscape made them feel or what story it tells about the place. This activity (inspired by the World Soundscape Project) trains conscious listening (C4K, 2021).
- **Soundmap:** Give students a map of the neighborhood or a room. Have them mark spots and collect sounds from each spot (using phones). For example, record a car engine on the road, a fountain at the park, footsteps in the hallway. Then play back the clips while pointing to each location, creating a sonic map of the space.
- Audio Diary / Journal: Encourage students to keep a daily audio journal. They can use their phone to record a short voice clip about something that happened or an

interesting sound (e.g., rain on the window, family dinner chat). Later, they select a few clips and mix them into a mini-narrative day in the life. This lets them reflect on what their everyday environment sounds like.

- **Podcast or Radio Story:** Have students pick a topic (their favorite day, a myth from their culture, etc.) and write a short script. In pairs or small groups, one student can be the “host” reading the script, while others provide background audio: ambient noise, sound effects or music. They record and edit this like a radio segment or podcast episode (similar to the “Voices of Inclusion” example where students recorded personal stories (Inclusive Schools Network, 2025).
- **Sound Collage (Group):** In teams, students choose a theme or scene (e.g., busy market, stormy night, celebration). Each student records 2-3 sounds related to the theme (chopping vegetables and chatter for market, thunder and rain for storm). Using Audacity or Soundtrap, they layer all the sounds to create a 1-2 minute audio collage. Then each group shares their collage and explains how the sounds combine to tell a story about the chosen theme.

4.4 Innovative Digital Tools

Incorporating digital tools into youth work enhances engagement, fosters creativity and supports inclusive storytelling. When selecting tools, consider accessibility, ease of use and the ability to facilitate collaboration and expression. Below is a curated list of recommended tools, along with tips for ensuring accessibility and inclusion.

4.4.1 Criteria for Selecting Tools

- User-Friendliness: Tools should have intuitive interfaces that are easy for youth to navigate, regardless of their technical skills.
- Accessibility: Ensure tools are accessible on various devices, including smartphones and tablets, to accommodate different user needs.
- Collaboration Features: Choose tools that allow for real-time collaboration, enabling youth to work together and share ideas seamlessly.

- Cost-Effectiveness: Opt for free or low-cost tools to make them accessible to all participants.

- Support for Diverse Media: Select tools that support various forms of media, such as text, images, audio and video, to cater to different storytelling methods.

4.4.2 List of Recommended Tools

1. **Miro:** A collaborative online whiteboard platform that facilitates brainstorming, planning and storyboarding. Miro's intuitive interface and real-time collaboration features make it ideal for group activities and visual storytelling projects.
2. **Canva:** A user-friendly graphic design tool that allows users to create visually appealing content, including posters, presentations and social media graphics. Canva offers a wide range of templates and design elements, making it accessible for beginners.
3. **Soundtrap:** An online audio recording and editing platform that enables users to create music, podcasts, and other audio projects collaboratively. Soundtrap's cloud-based nature allows for easy access and collaboration from any device.
4. **Padlet:** A digital canvas that allows users to post notes, images, links and other media in a collaborative space. Padlet is versatile and can be used for various activities, including brainstorming sessions, storytelling and sharing resources.
5. **Twine:** An open-source tool for creating interactive, nonlinear stories. Twine is particularly useful for developing choose-your-own-adventure narratives and can be customized with variables and conditional logic for more complex storytelling.
6. **Dedoose:** A cloud-based application designed for analyzing and visualizing qualitative and mixed methods data. Dedoose is useful for coding and analyzing narratives, making it suitable for autoethnographic projects.

4.4.3 Tips for Accessibility and Inclusion in Digital Environments

- Provide Training and Support: Offer tutorials and guidance to help youth become familiar with the tools and their functionalities.
- Ensure Device Compatibility: Select tools that are compatible with a range of devices, including smartphones, tablets and computers, to accommodate different access levels.
- Encourage Diverse Expression: Promote the use of various media forms to allow youth to express themselves in ways that are comfortable and meaningful to them.
- Foster Collaborative Environments: Utilize tools that support real-time collaboration, enabling youth to work together, share ideas and provide feedback to one another.
- Be Mindful of Language and Content: Ensure that the language used within the tools is inclusive and that content is appropriate for all participants.
- Adapt to Individual Needs: Be flexible and willing to adapt activities and tools to meet the

diverse needs of youth participants, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to engage meaningfully.

By thoughtfully selecting and utilizing these digital tools, youth workers can create engaging, inclusive and empowering storytelling experiences that resonate with young people and promote anti-racism and active citizenship.

4.5 Guiding Principles for Youth Workers

Planning and facilitating storytelling workshops with young people offer a powerful opportunity to promote anti-racism, inclusion, and active citizenship. To maximize the impact of these workshops, youth workers need to thoughtfully design sessions that are engaging, respectful and supportive of diverse voices (Cluskey et al., 2021). Below are some guiding principles to help youth workers plan and manage storytelling activities that center equity, cultural respect, and psychological safety.

- Start by defining clear objectives that highlight not only storytelling skills but also fostering awareness of systemic racism and celebrating diverse identities. Consider the backgrounds and experiences of participants, ensuring activities reflect their realities and empower marginalized voices. Use icebreakers and introductions to build trust and create a welcoming environment where every participant feels valued.
- Structure the workshop in phases, starting from story discovery and identity exploration, to scriptwriting and media production. Embed discussions around power, privilege and representation throughout to encourage critical thinking and empathy. When selecting story topics or themes, prioritize issues relevant to anti-racism and inclusion, such as challenging stereotypes, recognizing bias and celebrating cultural diversity.

4.5.1 Script Development and Pre-Production Tips

Script development is a key moment for reflection and inclusion. Encourage participants to write stories that challenge racism, highlight underrepresented perspectives, or share personal experiences related to identity and belonging. Youth workers should guide participants to critically examine their narratives for unconscious biases and encourage respectful language. Provide prompts that foster critical thinking about societal structures, discrimination and community resilience. Use collaborative scriptwriting, when possible, to ensure multiple voices shape the story. In pre-production, discuss ethical considerations such as consent, representation and the potential impact of the story on participants and audiences.

4.5.2 Ensuring Psychological Safety and Cultural Respect

Creating psychological safety is essential for authentic storytelling. Youth workers should foster an environment where participants feel safe to express themselves without fear of ridicule or backlash. This involves active listening, validating experiences and being mindful of cultural differences in communication styles. Respect for cultural practices, identities and histories should be central to all activities. Avoid tokenism by ensuring stories are not reduced to stereotypes or oversimplified narratives. Instead, support participants in telling complex, nuanced stories that honor their lived realities. Ongoing reflection and feedback sessions can continuously help participants process emotions and reinforce a

culture of respect and inclusion. Youth workers themselves should engage in continuous learning about anti-racism and culturally responsive facilitation techniques to better serve diverse groups.

4.6 Practical Templates and Prompts

4.6.1 Storyboard Template

Storytelling is described as a powerful medium that can amplify youths' voices and strengthen social connection. Use the prompts below to outline each scene, making sure to include characters of different backgrounds and to avoid stereotypes:

- Story Title: _____
- Main Character(s) (identities/cultures): _____
- Supporting Character(s) (backgrounds): _____
- Setting & Time Period: _____
- Scene 1 (Beginning - Setup): _____
- Scene 2 (Middle - Conflict/Development): _____
- Scene 3 (Climax - Turning Point): _____
- Scene 4 (Ending - Resolution): _____
- Representation Check: *Who is included in this story? Are all characters (of different races, cultures, abilities, etc.) portrayed respectfully?*

4.6.2 Autoethnography Reflection Sheet

This sheet guides youth in reflecting on identity, culture and personal experience. Personal history is treated as a cultural reference point that shapes how we see others. The prompts below help youth write about themselves and connect their story to broader social issues:

- Identity Words: List words that describe you (traits, hobbies, cultural background, language, etc.)?
- Family/Heritage: How would you describe your family's background or heritage (race, ethnicity, religion, origin)?
- Community/Place: Where did you grow up or spend most of your time? What was that community like?
- Values & Traditions: What traditions, values, or beliefs shaped you?
- Experiences of Difference or Fairness: Have you ever felt treated differently (better or worse) because of who you are? Describe it.
- Connecting to Society: What larger issues (e.g., race, class, gender, fairness) relate to these experiences? How do they connect your personal story to systemic issues?

4.6.3 Soundscape Planning Sheet

A soundscape is any acoustic environment, combining cultural sounds, natural sounds and noise of a place. This sheet helps youth choose and layer sounds to tell a story about their community or theme:

- Theme/Story: What is the story or mood you want to create with sound? (e.g., a day in your neighborhood, a celebration, a social issue)
- Location & Ambience: Where does this take place (city street, forest, home, etc.)? What background sounds are naturally there (birds, traffic, machinery)?
- Key Sounds (List by category):
  - *Natural/Ambient:* _____

- *Human/Voices: _____*
- *Music/Song (if any): _____*
- *Other Cultural or Symbolic Sounds: _____*

- Sequence & Layering: In what order will sounds appear and overlap? (e.g., start with ambient sound, then add voices or music)
- Emotional Tone/Meaning: What feeling or message does each sound convey (e.g., calm, busy, proud, tense)?
- Technical Notes: How will you record these sounds? (location, time of day, equipment)
- Story Connection: How do these sounds represent your community, identity or the theme of your story?

4.6.4 Facilitator Reflection Prompts

Youth workers use these questions to examine their own assumptions and ensure inclusive facilitation. Anti-bias guides advise instructors to reflect on identity and how it shapes lived experiences and to ask, “Who might be left out of this activity? How will I include them?” Use these prompts before or after a workshop:

- Inclusivity: Who might be missing or underrepresented in this story/activity? How can I include their perspective so that no one is invisible?
- Bias and Assumptions: What stereotypes or assumptions might I or the youth hold about this topic or group? How will I challenge or correct them?
- Language & Materials: Am I using respectful, inclusive language and materials? Have I avoided terms or images that others might find offensive?
- Youth Agency: How am I encouraging youth to lead and own their stories? Am I listening to their ideas and choices without imposing my own?
- Self-Reflection: How might my own identity (race, gender, culture, etc.) and experiences affect how I facilitate this session?
- Context & Justice: Does the activity acknowledge broader issues (like inequality or history)? How can I highlight connections to justice or fairness in the discussion?

4.7 From Method to Media: Preparing for Participatory Video Projects

Building on earlier activities (storyboards, soundscapes, autoethnography), storyboarding and audio workshops train young people to visualize stories and play with sound before filming. For example, one guide emphasizes that participatory video “is at its core about storytelling,” encouraging participants to “describe their own individual stories” and learn the film tools to tell them (SUNRISE Network, n.d.). In practice, facilitators can have youth co-develop scripts and visual storyboards as they did with the SARUTO project, where participants set shared expectations and “collaborate on the creation of a script or visual storyboard” before shooting (Contextos, Lascò Srl, and Associación Fronteiras, 2022). These pre-production exercises also create a safe space, simple group exercises like short recording/playback games build confidence (“sense of can-do”) without pressure to perform (Contextos, Lascò Srl, and Associación Fronteiras, 2022). By the time camera time arrives, youth have rehearsed expressing ideas and reflecting on personal

experiences (via autoethnography), so they can co-create meaningful video.

As the project shifts into production, facilitators guide youth from reflection to action. Early co-working on story plans naturally leads into filming: groups may interview community members or shoot scenes that illustrate their theme. The SALTO DIGITART guide notes that after reflection, “participants will develop performance capacities playing with the camera and getting acquainted with the video-making and editing process” (Contextos, Lascò Srl, and Associación Fronteiras, 2022). Practically, this means moving from paper and pen to cameras and mics: facilitators should demonstrate camera basics (framing, focus, recording sound) and set up collaborative roles (director, cameraman, interviewer, etc.), always looping back to reflection. For instance, a youth video field guide reports that showing participants live editing demos (e.g., how clips are cut and music added) early on demystified editing and let every young person suggest what to include or cutsunrisenetwork.org. In short, the techniques learned in storyboarding, sound projects, visual thinking, attentive listening and trust in one’s voice become the foundation for group video co-creation.

Inclusive, anti-racist participatory video: To ensure equity and representation in the media-making process, we follow a collaborative framework.

Key principles include:

- Ongoing consent and ownership: Make clear from the start how footage will be used. Adopt ongoing informed consent, at each stage, youth can agree or withdraw. In one project, facilitators built in multiple consent checkpoints so participants could agree on how narratives are framed or withdraw participation (Lenette et al., 2020). This respect for freedom goes hand in hand with treating participants as authors. A collaborative editing process involving youth in decisions about cuts, sequencing, music, etc., ensures the final video truly reflects their perspective. As Lenette et al. (2020) notes, when youth have a strong sense of ownership of the videos as narratives, it boosts their agency and reduces the chance that adults will misrepresent their stories.
- Amplify every voice: Design activities so everyone can contribute ideas and feedback. Facilitators should circulate cameras and airtime, asking each youth what to film and how to present it. During editing, invite all participants to watch rushes and direct changes. One field report emphasizes that an inclusive editing process ensured every individual had a voice in shaping the final video, yielding a film that matched the group’s collective (SUNRISE Network, n.d.). This means resisting hierarchies, shy or marginalized youth must be encouraged gently to speak, and confident youth coached to listen. Building from the autoethnography work,

facilitators can ask, “Whose story is this? Who else should we interview? How do we represent different perspectives?”

- Collaborative creation**:** From day one, structure the project as teamwork. Pair or group youth for interviews or filming, have them plan shots together and solve problems jointly. The DIGITART guide stresses alternating action and reflection: film segments, then pause to watch and discuss them as a group (Contextos, Lascò Srl, and Associación Fronteiras, 2022). This cycle keeps everyone engaged and accountable. Importantly, as the group learns, facilitators should gradually step back. Research on participatory video notes that facilitators initially lead group formation and skill-building, but then should gradually step back to let the group lead the process as it gains more confidence and awareness (Contextos, Lascò Srl, and Associación Fronteiras, 2022). In practice, that means moving from facilitating closely to acting more as mentors, supporting without commandeering.
- Ethical editing and representation: Use editing as an ethical tool. Let youth cut scenes, rearrange sequences based on the storyboards and contribute to the overall storytelling process (SUNRISE Network, n.d.). We must be especially cautious about race and stereotype, e.g., avoid editing footage so that any group appears monolithic or their words taken out of context. Whenever possible, let participants view and comment on near-final cuts. As one study reflects, giving youth control over editing helped them reduce the likelihood of misrepresenting their ideas (Lenette et al., 2020). Strive for representation that is accurate and multifaceted, include people of different races and genders, and let young filmmakers choose how to depict cultural identity. In all decisions, prioritize the voices of racialized youth and consider the equity dimension of who is seen and how, carrying forward the respect and critical awareness fostered by earlier chapters.

4.8 Final Reflections and Next Steps

Participatory video can ignite a lasting spark of engagement and self-expression in youth. By owning their stories on film, young people often emerge more confident about speaking out. Research from youth-centered projects shows that participants gain real-world knowledge and civic confidence. For example, one study found that after creating a video about local issues, youth had “increased awareness and knowledge” of community concerns and “greater confidence to question community members and decision-makers,” sometimes communicating problems more effectively than adults (Haynes and Tanner, 2015).

These outcomes illustrate that media projects can transform learning into action. According to Haynes and Tanner (2015), youth who co-produce films learn to see themselves as capable messengers, their emotional, credible and encouraging voices carry weight. In practice, facilitators observe that participants often continue asking questions and sharing with peers long after the workshop ends, fueled by the pride of making a film of their own.

To sustain this momentum, youth workers should embed anti-racism in everyday practice. Anti-racist engagement is not a one-off lesson but a commitment. Continuously encourage self-reflection and dialogue about race and power in each project. For instance, facilitators

can model the cultural humility they taught earlier, admitting what they do not know, learning from youth and actively seeking diverse perspectives (Equitas, 2024). Whenever controversial stereotypes or discriminatory language arise (in media or conversation), address them openly using human-rights frameworks (Equitas, 2024).

Commit to ongoing learning: use materials and examples that center voices of color, and make anti-racism a regular discussion, not an add-on. (Equitas, for example, urges youth workers to connect discrimination observations to global human rights standards, holding institutions accountable (Equitas, 2024). Encourage young participants to become anti-racist peers and allies. For example, let them advise each other in editing to avoid biased representation or have them mentor newcomers on inclusive storytelling. The key is to make justice and dignity a default goal of all youth activities.

4.8.1 Youth-led Storytelling

Help youth to see this workshop as the beginning of their creative journeys. Suggest forming media clubs or writing groups where participants keep practicing. Schools and community centers can host regular screenings or story nights where youth share their videos or zines; one participatory video project ended with students organizing a *celebratory public screening* complete with refreshments, showcasing their work to friends and family (SUNRISE Network, n.d.).

- Online platforms also offer avenues: youth might post videos on a class blog or start an Instagram channel for storytelling, extending reach while guiding them on safe sharing.
- Advocacy is another path: some youth may choose to present their films to local officials or community leaders, as happened in the climate-adaptation study where young filmmakers used their videos to press village councils into action (Haynes and Tanner, 2015).
- Even informal sharing counts: encourage them to tell their stories at community events, submit to youth film festivals or hang photo-and-quote exhibits at a local library.

In conclusion, remember the guiding principles of this guide (let young people choose their topics, teach them the craft and trust their voices). Youth media projects have shown time and again that when young creators see themselves as capable of effecting change, they continue to engage creatively and critically with the world (Greenaway 2016; Haynes and Tanner, 2015). By fostering these opportunities through clubs, online projects, exhibitions and civic action, youth workers can encourage the anti-discriminatory and empowered spirit born in the workshop to expand into other arenas. As one youth media editor says of her experience, it felt real when young people were given platforms to speak for themselves (Greenaway 2016). Let us keep creating such platforms, believing that every teen's story is valuable and every voice is needed.

Chapter 5. Technical Guide for the Creation of a Participatory Video

What is a Participatory Video?

Participatory Video (PV) is a community-centered approach to filmmaking. In PV, the traditional roles of filmmaker and subject are shared. Instead of being passive recipients of a filmmaker's view, the people who are usually “filmed” take an active role in every stage of the video-making process. In addition to telling a story, they also shape, film, edit and decide where and how it is shown.

PV is about the democratisation of storytelling. It gives voice to people who are often underrepresented in mainstream media and enables them to define their narratives in their own terms. This process is not only creative but also empowering and transformative.

How Does Participatory Video Work?

The process typically involves:

- Collaborative Planning: The participants decide what issues or stories are most important to them.
- Skills Training: Participants learn how to use cameras, record sound, conduct interviews and edit footage.
- Filming Together: The group films within their own communities, often taking turns behind and in front of the camera.
- Reflective Discussion: Based on collective values, teams review their footage and decide what to include or exclude.
- Community Screenings: The final video is shared with others, sparking discussions, dialogue or even policy change.

5.1 Why Participatory Video?

When people own their stories, they unlock new possibilities for personal growth, collective action and social change.

PV is a transformative approach that:

- Empowers: PV gives people control over how their stories are told, helping to restore confidence, especially in marginalised or silenced communities.

- Builds Capacity: Participants gain technical and communication skills, including camera use, interviewing, teamwork and media literacy competencies that can be used beyond the project.
- Develops Social Connection(s): Working together on a creative project builds trust, empathy and shared purpose among diverse community members.
- Advocates and Raises Awareness: The final video can be used to engage decision-makers, raise public awareness, influence policy or document lived experiences for future generations.
- Reflects and Heals: The act of telling one's story and being heard can be a form of emotional or social healing, especially for communities facing trauma or exclusion.

5.2 Principles and Ethics of Participatory Video

PV is also a value-based practice. The method requires more than teaching people how to use a camera. It calls for building relationships, practicing mutual respect and engaging ethically with every person involved.
The principles and ethics of PV guide how we approach communities, make decisions and care for each other throughout the storytelling process. These values ensure that the process is safe and inclusive and that every voice leads to meaningful impact.

5.2.1 Participation: Everyone Has a Voice

Participation means active involvement from beginning to end, not just appearing on camera. Community members:

- Decide which topics are meaningful or urgent.
- Contribute ideas, stories and visuals.
- Take on roles such as camera operator, interviewer, editor or facilitator.

No one is "just a subject." Every person has the right to shape their representation and the way their story is told. True participation also means making space for quiet voices, ensuring inclusivity across age, gender, ability and background.
Good practice: Use inclusive group activities like story circles or drawing timelines to help everyone contribute in a way that suits them.

5.2.2 Informed Consent: Clear, Ongoing, and Respectful

Informed consent is not just a signed form, it's a continuous process of ensuring understanding and freedom of choice.

- Explain the project in clear, jargon-free language.
- Clarify how and where the video will be used (for example: online, at festivals, in workshops).
- Allow people to say no at any stage - before, during or after filming.

For vulnerable individuals (children, trauma survivors, etc.), take extra care to protect their rights and emotional well-being.

Ethical tip: Ask, “Would this person feel safe if this video was seen publicly tomorrow?” If there’s doubt, revisit the content with the group.

5.2.3 Transparency: Clear Intentions and Open Communication

From the very start, facilitators must be honest about their intentions, timelines and potential impact. This builds trust and helps participants feel secure.

Transparency includes sharing the following information:

Who is funding the project?
Who will see the final product?
What happens after the film is finished?
Are there any risks to participating?

Good practice: Revisit the group’s expectations at each stage to avoid misunderstandings.

5.2.4 Power Sharing: Co-Creation, Not Control

Traditional media often reflects the power of those holding the camera. PV intentionally challenges this by redistributing power:

- Participants decide what is filmed and how it’s edited.
- Facilitators act as guides or supporters, not directors

Disagreements are navigated through discussion and group decision-making. This approach nurtures collective ownership and prevents exploitation or bias.

Ethical tip: Don’t rush decisions. Make space for the group to pause, reflect and decide together - even if it slows the process.

5.2.5 Do No Harm: Emotional, Cultural and Physical Safety

Participatory Video often touches on personal or sensitive issues, from migration stories to community conflicts. Facilitators must create a safe, supportive environment:

- Respect cultural norms and practices.
- Avoid re-traumatizing participants through difficult topics.
- Ensure physical safety during filming (for example: avoid dangerous locations, use equipment properly).
- Provide emotional support, and follow up after sensitive discussions.

Good practice: Plan for moments of group reflection and check-ins, especially after emotional interviews or scenes.

Additional Ethical Considerations:

Confidentiality: Blur faces or use pseudonyms if anonymity is needed.

Representation: Avoid reinforcing stereotypes; support stories that reflect dignity and complexity.
Ownership & Archiving: Decide together who keeps the footage, who can share it and how it will be stored or used long-term.

5.3 Story Generation Tools and Collaborative Storytelling

Participatory Video is also about reframing it through a collective lens, using tools that help uncover deeper truths, inspire creativity and engage different styles of thinking. Below are creative techniques and games for group story development, especially when working with social topics, truth vs. fiction or diverse perspectives.

5.3.1 Creative Story-Building Techniques

5.3.1.1 Parallel Stories in Two Groups

Setup: Divide participants into two groups. Give both the same topic or event (e.g., "The Day the Internet Broke"). **Task:** Each group creates a short narrative independently.
Outcome: Compare stories. Discuss how different interpretations or biases emerge based on perspective, context and experience.
Use this to demonstrate that every story is framed, and framing is a choice.

5.3.1.2 Unconnected Words to Story

Setup: Each participant contributes a random word (objects, feelings, places). **Task**: The group must create a coherent story using all the words.
Outcome: Encourages flexibility, lateral thinking and collective creativity.
Bonus: Connect random words to real social issues. Example: “Apple, Fence, Silence” → A story about food insecurity and borders.

5.3.1.3 Rolling a Numbered Dice (Quantity-Based Creativity)

Purpose: Add constraints or creative challenges based on the number rolled.
How it works:
Participants roll a standard numbered dice (1-6).
The number corresponds to how many creative elements they must incorporate into their story.
Examples:
Roll a 3 - Add 3 new elements, such as:

- A metaphor (e.g., "like a caged bird")
- A color theme (e.g., everything red)
- A cutaway scene (e.g., a dream or flashback)

Roll a 5 - Include 5 symbolic objects or sensory details (e.g., smell, texture).
This method boosts spontaneity and forces the group to work beyond their comfort zone. Great for deepening creativity under playful pressure.

5.3.1.4 Story Dice (Idea Prompting with Visuals)

Purpose: Use images or icons to spark inspiration or structure a scene.
How it works:
Use physical or digital story dice with drawings/icons instead of numbers (see StoryDice by Dave Birss https://davebirss.com/storydice/).
Roll 2-5 dice and interpret the pictures as symbols, characters, actions or locations.

Examples:
Rolled images: 🔒 (lock), 🌊 (wave), 👣 (footprints) - Could inspire a story about escape, migration or secrets left behind.
Rolled images: 🐦 (bird), 📱 (phone), 🔥 (fire) - Might lead to a narrative about spreading misinformation on social media (like wildfire).
This method is visual and open-ended, ideal for groups that think in symbols, metaphors or images, and for introducing poetic elements into documentary stories.

5.3.1.5 Object Storytelling

Setup: Ask each participant to bring an object that holds personal or symbolic meaning.
Task: Share the story of that object and what it represents in their life.
Filmmaking Link: Use these objects visually in the final film or as metaphors to develop scenes.
Objects can anchor personal memory to collective history and can serve as documentary narratives.

5.3.1.6 Emoji Story Challenge

Setup: Present participants with 3-5 random emojis.
Task: Create a story inspired by or connecting these emojis.
Variation: Use emojis to express emotional arcs (e.g., 😳 → 😠 → 😵 → 😍 → ✊) This technique is especially engaging for young people and digital storytelling.

5.3.1.7 Butterfly Effect: Change One Detail

Setup: Take an existing story or scene and change one key detail (time, person, location or decision).
Task: Recreate the story with that altered element and explore how the outcome shifts. Use in PV: Reflect on how small decisions (or misinformation) lead to drastically different community realities.
Ideal for stories involving systemic change, misinformation or resilience.

5.3.1.8 Role-Playing Debate: Misinformation vs. Truth

Setup: One team presents a fictional narrative based on misinformation. The other team plays fact-checkers, journalists or affected citizens.
Task: The "truth" team must debunk the misinformation, using stories, fact-check-tools, emotional appeals or personal experience.
Outcome: Sparks real-time critical thinking and demonstrates the power of narrative in shaping beliefs.
Use this to raise awareness of media literacy and promote critical engagement.
These techniques enhance narrative depth, emotional authenticity and group cohesion.

5.3.1.9 Role-Playing Scenarios

Enact scenes based on real-life issues (e.g., police encounters, job interviews, hospital visits).
Explore multiple characters' perspectives.
Use recordings as narrative brainstorming or documentary material (with consent).

5.3.1.10 Forum Theatre (from Theatre of the Oppressed)

Present a short scene of social injustice.
Invite the audience to step in and try to change the outcome by taking the role of the

protagonist.
Discuss: What worked? What failed? What alternatives exist?
Teaches agency and the consequences of action/inaction in real-world dilemmas.

5.3.2 Visual and Structural Tools for Social Narratives

5.3.2.1 Timeline Mapping for Community Memory

Visualize a timeline of key local or historical events.
Connect these with personal moments or emotions.
Helps generate stories rooted in shared or inter-generational experience.

5.3.2.2 Storyboarding Social Change

Sketch scenes that represent "before," "during," and "after" a problem or intervention (e.g., a protest, a flood, a law).
Emphasize visual metaphors and narrative rhythm.

5.3.2.3 Character Constellations

Map out all stakeholders in a story: community members, institutions, outsiders, systems.
Define who holds power, who is marginalized, and who drives change.

Narrative Function Roles (used in storytelling, screenwriting & social impact docs):

Protagonist - not always a hero, but the central figure driving the action.
Antagonist - the force (person, system, idea) working against the protagonist's goal.
Catalyst - causes change without undergoing it themselves (e.g., an outsider arriving). Confidant(e) - the character who listens and helps reveal the protagonist's inner world. Foil - contrasts with another character to highlight traits (e.g., hopeful vs. cynical).
Narrator - may be within or outside the story; frames how we interpret the events.
Shadow - represents the repressed, feared, or destructive part of a system or person.

Sociological and Community-Based Roles (excellent for non-fiction and social justice storytelling):

The Gatekeeper - controls access to spaces or resources (e.g., school director, elder).
The Insider - part of the group being portrayed, with lived experience.
The Outsider - external observer, may bring objectivity or misunderstanding.
The Bridge-Builder - connects different groups or generations.
The Silenced - those whose stories are usually hidden or erased.
The Resister - challenges the system, sometimes quietly or creatively. The Follower - shaped by others' actions; not passive, but affected.
The Transformative Agent - someone who evolves and causes others to evolve.

5.3.2.4 Stakeholder Mapping and Community Involvement

Stakeholder mapping is the process of identifying all the people, groups and institutions connected to a story, issue or community. In participatory video, this step is essential to ensure that the voices represented in the film are not only those who speak the loudest - but also those who are often unheard.
This mapping lays the foundation for an inclusive and collaborative process.

Who is the Stakeholder?

A stakeholder is anyone who:

- is affected by the issue or story.
- has power, influence, or responsibility over the situation.
- can contribute insights, resources or perspectives.
- might be impacted by the film or its outcomes.

Stakeholders can be both directly involved (e.g., community members, youth) or indirectly related (e.g., NGOs, policy-makers, service providers, media).

Stakeholder Categories (Examples)

Primary Stakeholders - People with lived experience of the issue (e.g., local residents, youth, survivors)

Secondary Stakeholders - Those who support or work with the community (e.g., teachers, NGOs, health workers)

Institutional Stakeholders - Government bodies, schools, religious leaders, police or policymakers

Challenging Voices - People with opposing views or skepticism (e.g., critics, local media, resistant officials)

Invisible or Marginalized Voices - Those often left out of conversations (e.g., persons with disabilities, migrants, elders, LGBTQ+)

How to Map Stakeholders (Simple Steps) - Draw a circle in the center of a large paper or board: this is your main issue or story topic (e.g., “access to education”).

Add layers of people around the circle:

Closest = most affected

Middle = support/impact roles

Outer = decision-makers or distant influencers

Use colors or symbols to indicate:

Who has power? Who is voiceless?

Who can help amplify?

Who may resist or misunderstand?

This can be done with sticky notes, string diagrams or digitally on a collaborative platform.

5.3.3 Community Involvement: Moving from Mapping to Engagement

After mapping, it’s vital to engage stakeholders meaningfully:

Invite them to co-create: Ask them to contribute ideas, stories, concerns or questions.

Clarify roles: Who will film? Who wants to act, interview or provide background stories?

Build trust: Listen actively, share your intentions and ensure there’s no hidden agenda.

Ensure feedback loops: Let stakeholders review drafts or give input before final decisions. Create safe spaces: Especially for vulnerable groups, make sure participation is voluntary, informed and empowering.

5.3.4 Why It Matters in Participatory Video

Representation: The story reflects many realities, not just one dominant voice. Trust: Early collaboration avoids conflict or suspicion later.

Ownership: People feel pride and connection when their voices shape the story.

Impact: A more inclusive film has stronger social resonance and potential for change. Workshop Ideas
Power & Voice Map: Have participants rank stakeholders by how much power they have and how much voice they have in the issue. Then discuss imbalances.
“Who’s Not in the Room?” Exercise: Regularly ask during production - who is missing from this conversation? How can they be involved?
Stakeholder Walk: Physically walk through a neighborhood or community space identifying people or groups relevant to the topic.

5.4 Technical Basics: Camera, Sound, Lighting

You don’t need fancy equipment to make impactful videos.
The basics include:

- Camera: How to hold a shot steady, frame a subject and use movement purposefully.
- Sound: The importance of clear audio, such as using mics or minimizing noise.
- Lighting: Using natural light effectively or adjusting for indoor setups.
- Participants gain hands-on practice with tools they can access, like smartphones or basic gear.

5.4.1 Camera: How to Film Confidently with What You Have

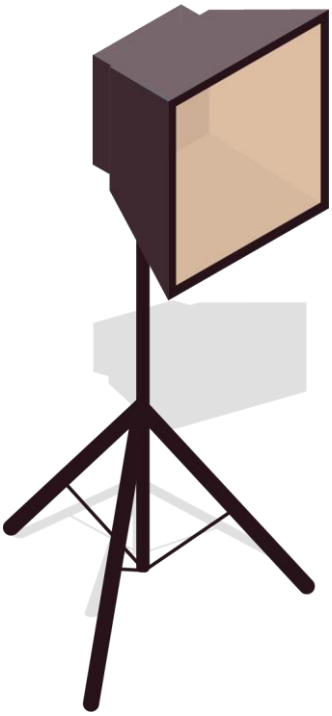
Equipment Options
Smartphones (ideal for participatory video - familiar, accessible and portable)
Consumer cameras or DSLRs (but need training)
Webcams (useful for interviews or indoor storytelling)

Framing the Shot (Composition)
Rule of Thirds: Imagine your screen divided into 9 equal parts by two vertical and two horizontal lines. Place your subject along these lines or at the intersections.
Headroom and Lead Room:
Headroom: Don’t crop too close to someone’s head; leave a bit of space.
Lead Room: If someone is looking or moving in a direction, leave space in front of them.
Angles and Perspectives:
Eye-level is natural and respectful.
Low-angle can empower a subject, while high-angle can diminish them. Vary your angles to keep the video visually engaging.
Stability
Hold the camera with two hands or use a tripod (or improvise: books, tables, wall).
Avoid fast panning (moving the camera side to side quickly), as it can make viewers dizzy. Use static shots (camera stays still) for interviews or reflective moments.
When to use a handheld camera
Types of Shots
Wide Shot: Shows the environment and the subject's place in it.

Medium Shot: From the waist up; common for conversations.
Close-Up: Focuses on the face, emotions or hands (great for emotion and details).

5.4.2 Sound: Making Sure We Can Hear Every Voice Clearly

Many viewers will tolerate average visuals, but poor sound ruins engagement. If the message isn't clear, the story loses power.
Sound Tips (Even Without a Microphone)
Get Close to the Subject: The closer the mic (or phone) is to the speaker's mouth, the better.
Reduce Background Noise: Avoid busy roads, wind or fans. Indoors is often better. Monitor Sound: Record 10 seconds and play it back: can you hear clearly?
Use DIY Microphones: Earbuds with a built-in mic work better than holding the phone far away.
Optional: Using External Mics
Clip-on/Lavalier Mic: Attaches to clothing, great for interviews.
Shotgun Mic: Directional, ideal for group conversations or filming at a distance. If using these, check compatibility with your phone or camera.



5.4.3 Lighting: Helping the Audience See Clearly

Natural Light - Your Best Friend
Use daylight whenever possible: it's free and beautiful.
Face the Light: Always have the subject face the window, not with their back to it. Otherwise, they will appear as a dark silhouette.
Avoid Harsh Shadows: Overhead sunlight (like midday) creates shadows under the eyes. Early morning or late afternoon light is softer and more flattering.
Indoor Lighting Tips
Use lamps, LED lights or even white walls to reflect and soften light.
Avoid mixing light colors (e.g., yellow lamps and blue daylight), which can look unnatural. Three-point lighting (if available):

- Key light - the main source (brightest)
- Fill light - softens shadows (often a white surface or secondary lamp)
- Backlight - creates separation from the background

Bonus Tips for Beginners:

- Shoot horizontally, not vertically (unless you're making a video for TikTok or Instagram Reels).
- Before filming, clean your camera lens with a soft cloth or shirt.
- Film a test clip to check everything: lighting, framing, sound and focus.

Keep a checklist before you start shooting:
Is the lens clean? Is the subject in frame? Is the lighting good?
Is the background clean and non-distracting? Can you hear clearly?

5.5 Interview Techniques and Informed Consent

Interviews are one of the most powerful and direct ways to let people tell their own stories in a participatory video. Done well, they build trust, encourage honesty and help uncover meaningful insights. But interviews must always be approached with care, respect and ethical responsibility - especially when working with vulnerable groups or sensitive topics.

5.5.1 Encouraging Real Stories

a. **Ask Open-Ended Questions**

Instead of “yes or no” questions, ask ones that begin with:

“Can you tell me about…?” “How did you feel when…?” “What happened next?”

This encourages people to speak freely and go deeper into their experiences.

b. **Listen Actively and Respectfully**

Make eye contact (if culturally appropriate).

Nod or give short verbal signs to show attention.

Don’t interrupt and let silences happen. Sometimes silence invites deeper reflection.

c. **Create a Comfortable Environment**

Choose a quiet, safe and familiar setting when possible.

Use minimal crew or equipment so people don’t feel overwhelmed.

Be sensitive to the person’s emotional state - pause or stop if they seem distressed.

d. **Let the Interviewee Lead**

Don’t control the story or push for certain answers.

Follow their pace and direction - be curious, not forceful.

If they want to talk about something else that matters to them, let them.

e. **Use Body Language and Empathy** Smile, show kindness and be patient.

Sit at the same level, avoid standing over someone or crowding them. Informed Consent: Ethics Before Footage

In participatory video, informed consent means making sure that every participant fully understands what they’re being filmed for and that they agree to it freely.

5.5.2 Clarity & Transparency

Explain the Project Clearly:
What is it about?
Where will the video be shown (online, at events, etc.)?
Who will have access to the footage?

Use Simple Language:

Avoid complicated legal or academic words.
Translate into the participant's native language, if needed.

Consent is a Process, Not a Form:

Always ask before filming.
Reconfirm consent during editing and before final screening. Allow people to withdraw their consent at any point.

5.5.3 Types of Consent

Verbal Consent (recorded on video or audio) Written Consent (a signed form)
Ongoing Consent (check in regularly, especially in longer projects)

Tip: For youth or vulnerable persons, always involve a guardian or support worker and follow your country's legal requirements.

Respect Privacy and Boundaries.

Avoid pressuring people to share traumatic experiences.
Blur faces or change names if someone wants to stay anonymous.
Don't share clips on social media unless people have clearly agreed.

Workshop Activity Ideas

Mock Interview Practice: In pairs, participants take turns being interviewer and interviewee using real-life topics.
Consent Roleplay: Act out good and bad consent scenarios and discuss them. Question Design Workshop: Together, create a list of open-ended, respectful questions related to your community topic.

5.6 Basic Video Editing Skills

Video editing is the process of shaping the raw footage into a clear, engaging and emotionally resonant story. In participatory video (PV), editing is ideally done with the community or participants, so the final result reflects their voice, intention and context. Even with no prior experience, anyone can learn the basics of editing using free or beginner-friendly tools.

What Does Editing Involve?

Editing is like storytelling with pictures, sound and rhythm. The goal is to turn many clips into a meaningful whole.

5.6.1 Core Skills

Cutting for Clarity: Trim unnecessary footage (pauses, off-topic moments, repetition). Focus on moments that move the story forward or express emotion. Sequencing Scenes: Arrange clips in a logical or emotional order.
Think about how to introduce characters, raise questions, show events and offer resolution.

You can follow a basic story arc:

Beginning → Middle → Turning Point → Ending. Using B-Roll for Visual Support
B-roll = extra footage that shows context (e.g., people walking, landscapes, hands at work). Use it to cover cuts or support a spoken interview.

5.6.2 Sound Editing

Make sure voices are clear.
Adjust volume levels to avoid sharp jumps.
Add background music carefully - only if it enhances the emotion and doesn't distract.
Adding Text and Subtitles
Subtitles increase accessibility and understanding.
Use titles to introduce people, places or sections of the story. Keep text readable: short, clear and visible on screen.
Pacing and Timing
Let powerful moments breathe.
Avoid rushing or dragging - watch how long scenes feel and adjust accordingly.

5.6.3 Collaborative Editing in PV

Watch footage together as a group - discuss what to keep or cut.
Make editing decisions democratically: What message do we want to send? What feeling do we want to leave?
Use visual boards or printed screenshots to plan the story order before opening editing software.

5.6.4 Workshop Activity

Clip Sorting Game: Give participants printed screenshots of different scenes. Ask them to arrange the best order to tell a story.
Silent Edits: Remove all sound and ask viewers to guess the emotion or meaning. Then compare with the final version.
One-Minute Challenge: Teams edit a 1-minute story from 5-6 random clips. It encourages creativity and practice.

5.6.5 Video Apps & Tips

OpenShot Video Editor (Free) - Desktop.
Start a Project: Open OpenShot → Click File > New Project. Save your project: File > Save Project As.
Import Media: Click the green "+" icon or drag and drop videos/images/audio into the "Project Files" area.
Editing Basics: Drag media from "Project Files" into the timeline below. Use the razor tool or right-click > Slice to cut clips. Move clips by dragging them along the timeline.
Add titles: Title > Title or use templates.
Export: File > Export Project > Export Video.
Shortcuts: Ctrl + S - Save Ctrl + Z - Undo, S - Split/Slice tool, Del - Delete clip
Audacity (Free) - Desktop
Start a Project: Open Audacity → File > New.
Import Audio: File > Import > Audio or drag your file in. Editing Basics: Use the Selection Tool to highlight a part. Edit > Remove Special > Split Delete to cut.
Use Effects (top menu) to clean up noise, fade, or amplify. Export as MP3 or WAV: File > Export > Export as MP3.
Shortcuts: Ctrl + I - Split clip at selection Ctrl + L - Silence selection Ctrl + Z - Undo

Spacebar - Play/Stop

CapCut (Free) - Mobile (Desktop) Start a Project:

Open CapCut → Tap “New Project”. Select clips from the phone gallery.

Import Media: Tap “Add” after selecting video/images. Use the “Audio” tab to import sound/music. Editing Basics: Tap a clip to edit → Use Split to cut. Tap and hold to move clips.

Use “Text” or “Stickers” for overlays.

Export by tapping the arrow icon (top-right). Gestures/Shortcuts: Pinch to zoom timeline. Long press to rearrange.

Tap → “Split” for cutting.

Adobe Premiere Pro (Paid) - Desktop Start a Project:

Open Premiere → New Project → Name it and choose location. Import Media:

File > Import, or drag files into the Project Panel. Editing Basics:

Drag files into the Timeline. Use the Razor Tool (C) to cut.

Use the Selection Tool (V) to move clips. Add text: Graphics > New Layer > Text.

Export: File > Export > Media > H.264 (.mp4). Shortcuts:

C - Razor (cut), V - Selection tool, Ctrl + K - Cut at playhead Ctrl + Z - Undo, Spacebar - Play/Stop

Adobe Audition (Paid) - Desktop Start a Project:

Open Audition → File > New > Multitrack Session. Import Media:

Drag audio into tracks or File > Import. Editing Basics:

Use the Razor Tool to split clips.

Apply effects by right-clicking clips or using Effects Rack. Mix levels using sliders on each track.

Shortcuts: R - Razor Tool Spacebar - Play/Stop, Ctrl + Shift + E - Export audio mix

Canva (Free + Paid) - Web

Start a Project: Go to Canva.com → Click Video > Create a blank video. Import Media:

Click Uploads → Drag & drop video or audio.

Editing Basics: Drag clips/images into the timeline. Export: Share > Download > MP4 Video.

Canva for Photo Editing

Go to canva.com → Create a design → Choose Photo, Instagram Post, Poster, or Custom Size depending on your need.

Uploading Photos: Click on Uploads (left menu) → Upload images from your device or drag them into Canva.

Editing Tools: Crop & Resize - Use Crop from the top toolbar to trim or focus on parts of the image. Drag corners to manually resize.

Filters & Adjustments Click Edit photo to open:

Filters (preset looks: retro, grayscale, vivid)

Adjust settings (brightness, contrast, saturation, blur, tint, etc.) Auto Enhance to improve image quality in one click.

Background Remover (Pro only)

Removes image backgrounds instantly for cutouts or posters. Free users can use **Pixlr.com** as an alternative (see below). Text & Elements

Use Text to overlay messages, titles, or quotes.

Use Elements for shapes, icons, or visual decoration. Frames & Grids
Use Frames to place photos in creative shapes (e.g., heart, circle). Use Grids to organize multiple photos in a layout.
Exporting: Click Share > Download > PNG, JPG, or PDF depending on use.
Pixlr.com (Free + Paid) - Web Start a Project:
Go to Pixlr E → Create New or Open Image.
Import Media: Use File > Open Image or drag onto canvas.
Editing Basics: Use Crop Tool, Text Tool, Filter for effects. Good for designing title cards or posters.
Export: File > Save > JPG/PNG.

Media Libraries & Licenses

Creative Commons (CC) License Types:
CC0 - No credit needed. CC BY - Must credit author.
CC BY-SA - Credit + share-alike. CC BY-ND - Credit, no changes.
CC BY-NC - Credit, no commercial use.
CC BY-NC-SA/ND - Same as above + share-alike/no derivatives.

Media Sources:

Meta Sound Collection: Meta Creator Studio > Sound Collection. YouTube Audio Library: YouTube Studio > Audio Library.
Pexels.com: Free HD photos and videos, no attribution required but encouraged.

5.7 Screening and Constructive Feedback

A community screening is more than just showing a video - it's a shared space for connection, learning and collective ownership. It marks a key moment in the participatory video process where creators, participants, and the wider community come together.

Purpose:

- Celebrate the work, effort and voices of everyone involved.
- Acknowledge the stories told and those who told them.
- Create space for emotional reactions, recognition, and reflection.

Structure:

Set a respectful tone:
Remind everyone that feedback is meant to uplift, not critique harshly.
Use a talking circle, suggestion box or moderated discussion to include everyone.
Ask guiding questions, such as:
What did this story make you feel or think about?
What parts felt the most powerful or true?
Is there something missing or that you'd want to explore further?
What could happen next in the community because of this video?

Include all voices:

Invite input from children, elders and people who might be quieter (if needed).
Use tools like sticky notes, drawing reactions or "traffic lights" (red: concern, yellow: think more, green: great!) for anonymous sharing.

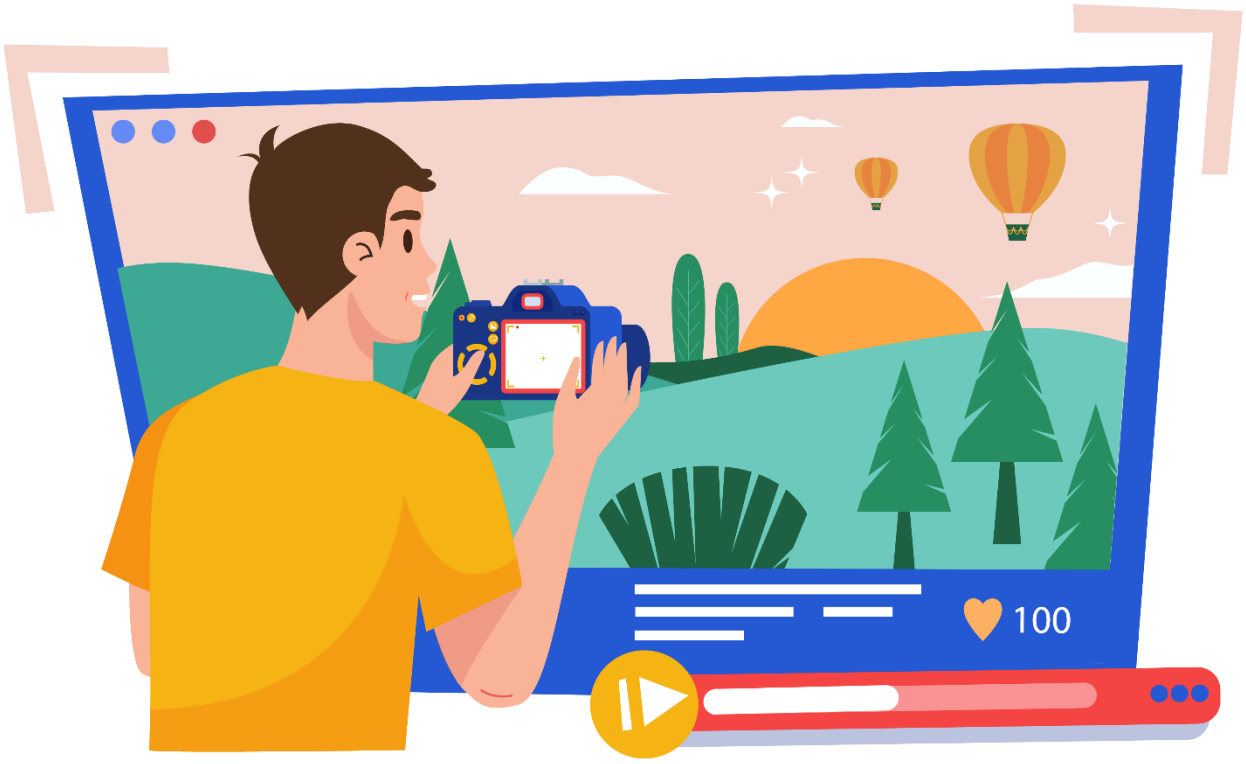
Outcomes of Constructive Feedback:

Builds collective learning and future ideas.

Encourages community ownership of the message and next steps.
Helps the video team see how the work is received and where they might grow.

After the Screening

Consider follow-up meetings or creative actions inspired by the film.
If needed, re-edit or make short versions for different audiences.
Share the video online, with stakeholders, or with the media only if all participants agree.
The ultimate aim is to listen, learn and honour the shared journey, not to "judge" the film.
Participatory video is about dialogue, empowerment and transformation. Screening is where that becomes visible.



Chapter 6: Facilitating Learning: From Guidelines to Training

The HATE-LESS project offers a robust methodological framework grounded in media literacy, participatory action and inclusive storytelling. However, the impact of these methodologies depends not only on their design but also on their successful translation into real-world training settings. This chapter explores how youth workers and trainers can operationalize the HATE-LESS guidelines to deliver meaningful and engaging training sessions. It also discusses how the training toolkit complements the methodological guidelines, introduces effective strategies for building the capacities of youth workers and outlines follow-up mechanisms to ensure sustained engagement with young participants.

The methodological guidelines are designed to be flexible, reflective and action-oriented. They encourage youth workers to engage critically with media practices, collaborate meaningfully with young people and communities, and foster environments where inclusion, creativity and dialogue can thrive. Whether used as a stand-alone resource or in combination with the training handbook, the aim is to support a growing community of practice committed to using media literacy as a force for social change.

Turning methodology into training and practice is not a linear process. It requires facilitators to understand the pedagogical vision of the project, internalize its values and adapt its content to meet the diverse needs of youth. The training process should reflect the participatory, inclusive and anti-racist ethos that runs throughout the HATE-LESS approach. Rather than simply disseminating information, training sessions should aim to create spaces where young people can explore their identities, question dominant narratives and co-create counter-discourses that challenge hate, discrimination and disinformation.

6.1 Bringing the Guidelines to Life

The key to transforming theory into practice lies in how trainers design and deliver their workshops. Training sessions inspired by the HATE-LESS methodology should mirror the participatory approaches advocated in the guidelines. Each method introduced in the guidelines can serve as a training module. Storyboards can be used to help participants plan narratives that reflect their experiences with exclusion or belonging. Soundscapes can offer a powerful entry point into non-verbal storytelling, especially for participants with different linguistic backgrounds. Autoethnographic writing enables youth to explore their identities and social realities in a deeply personal and reflective way. These methods not only transmit skills but also foster empathy, critical thinking and creative agency.

Moreover, training should follow a rhythm of exploration, reflection and creation. Activities can begin with the deconstruction of harmful narratives, such as analyzing examples of

online hate speech or misinformation, and then move into co-creating positive alternatives. Through this structure, training becomes a journey: one where participants not only learn new techniques but also begin to see themselves as capable agents of change in their communities.

6.2 Complementing the Guidelines with the Training Toolkit

The Training Toolkit developed alongside the guidelines plays a critical role in supporting trainers. While the guidelines provide the conceptual and methodological foundation, the toolkit offers the practical scaffolding needed to bring that foundation to life. It includes ready-to-use activity plans, facilitation scripts, editable templates and ethical guidelines that allow trainers to adapt methods for different age groups, cultural contexts or learning environments.

Importantly, the toolkit is not meant to be a prescriptive manual. Rather, it is a flexible resource that encourages trainers to respond to the unique dynamics of their groups. It emphasizes the importance of listening, co-creation and responsiveness. Trainers are invited to experiment with new formats, collaborate with participants in designing activities and modify workshop flows based on participants' feedback and interests.

In combining the guidelines and toolkit, facilitators are equipped not only with tools but with a philosophy of training: one that centers equity, participation and creativity. This combination ensures that the HATE-LESS approach is not confined to paper but becomes a lived practice in training rooms, schools, youth centers and online spaces.

6.3 Building Capacity: Training Youth Workers as Multipliers

Youth workers play a central role in the HATE-LESS project - not only as facilitators but as multipliers of knowledge and practice. To fully inhabit this role, they need ongoing capacity-building support. One effective strategy is the cascade training model, in which selected youth workers are trained to become trainers themselves. These multipliers then lead further trainings within their local contexts, creating a ripple effect that expands the reach and impact of the project.

Capacity-building should go beyond technical skills. It should also include reflection on power, representation and the ethics of facilitation. Youth workers must be prepared to handle sensitive discussions around race, identity and discrimination, and they need tools to create psychologically safe and culturally respectful learning environments. In some contexts, additional coaching may be required to address issues of accessibility, ensuring that trainings are inclusive with neurodiversity of participants, language minorities and youth with disabilities.

Digital literacy is another crucial area for development. Youth workers should be comfortable using tools like video editing software, sound platforms or interactive whiteboards - not for their own sake, but as vehicles for meaningful youth expression. Training youth workers in both technical skills and inclusive pedagogical strategies ensures they are equipped to support a wide range of learning styles and needs.

Mentorship and peer learning can also enrich capacity-building. Experienced trainers can support newcomers by sharing lessons learned, co-facilitating workshops or hosting peer exchange circles. This builds a sense of community among facilitators and fosters collective learning, which is essential in a field where contexts and challenges are constantly evolving.

6.4 Following Up with Youth: Beyond the Workshop

Training young participants in media literacy, storytelling and anti-racist engagement does not end with the final workshop session. Sustainable impact requires thoughtful follow-up and continuous engagement. One effective approach is to help participants establish youth-led media clubs or storytelling collectives, where they can continue producing content and engaging in critical reflection. These clubs can operate informally in community centers or schools, or exist virtually through shared platforms.

Follow-up strategies should also include opportunities for youth to present their work publicly. Whether through film screenings, digital exhibitions, podcast episodes or zines, showcasing youth creations helps validate their efforts and gives visibility to their perspectives. Such events not only boost confidence but also invite dialogue with broader audiences, including parents, educators,

policymakers and community leaders.
Trainers can also encourage youth to become peer mentors. Participants who complete a training cycle may be invited to assist in future sessions, share their stories or help facilitate activities. This kind of youth-to-youth mentoring reinforces the multiplier effect and supports leadership development.
Finally, feedback loops are essential. By implementing regular check-ins, surveys or reflection sessions, trainers can track the longer-term effects of training and adjust their approaches accordingly. This ongoing dialogue with participants ensures that training remains relevant, responsive and rooted in lived experience.

6.5 Youth Workers as Agents of Democratic Resilience

The work of youth workers extends far beyond facilitation. In the HATE-LESS framework, they are positioned as agents of democratic resilience - individuals who nurture critical literacy, amplify marginalized voices and support inclusive civic participation. This role connects directly to the goals of sustainability and the scaling-up of project impacts.
To support this role, it is vital to view youth workers not just as trainers, but as community leaders, cultural translators and knowledge producers. They must be empowered to adapt the project's tools to different linguistic, cultural and political contexts, while maintaining the integrity of its core values: anti-racism, empathy, participation and inclusion.
Multiplying the project's impact also requires youth workers to document and share their practices. Through reports, videos, blogs or workshops, they can contribute to a growing repository of case studies and best practices. This knowledge-sharing deepens the learning ecosystem and inspires new initiatives.
In every stage - from training design to facilitation to follow-up - youth workers are key to transforming the guidelines into a movement. Their role is not static; it evolves with each workshop, each story and each young person they support.

6.6 Conclusion: Learning as Legacy

Facilitating training based on the HATE-LESS methodology is not merely a technical task - it is a commitment to building inclusive, democratic communities. By aligning conceptual guidance with practical tools, empowering youth workers as leaders and sustaining youth engagement over time, the project creates a training model that is reflective, creative and transformative.
Youth workers are not only delivering content; they are enabling cultural shifts. They help young people move from being passive consumers of media to active creators of counter-narratives. They foster spaces where critical dialogue is possible and where every voice count. And in doing so, they plant seeds of change that extend far beyond the training room.
The invitation now is to carry these methods forward - with courage, care and a deep belief in the power of young people to shape the future.

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