7 steps guide

How to run Civic Education for Digital Age workshops

nexUs

Introduction

Promoting the nexus of migrants through active citizenship.

Guide How to run Civic Education for Digital Age Workshop is intended to support educators, in formal and non-formal settings, who would like organize workshop to engage their students in digital civic engagement and topics such as digital democracy, civic technology, citizen e-participation.

The program was developed within the Erasmus+ project: NEXUS: Promoting the nexus of migrants through active citizenship (NEXUS).

Authors

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What is Civic Education for Digital Age Workshop?

Civic Education for Digital Age Workshop is part ideation process, part hackathon-without-the hack. Workshop is designed for Higher Education Institutions that are interested to encourage civic engagement among their students. It explores how civic-technology can be used to enhance active participation and lead to fulfilment of democratic values.

Who is this Guide for?

Guide is intended to support educators, in formal and non-formal settings, who would like to engage their students in digital civic engagement and topics such as digital democracy, civic technology, citizen e-participation.

What is the end product of the Workshop?

At the end of the Workshop each participant will have developed their own project-prototype that focuses on the use of digital means to strengthen democratic participation. Each prototype is co-created and co-designed in feedback loops with other participants.

What's the background of the Workshop?

Civic Education for Digital Age Workshop was designed and tested as part of the NEXUS project (2019-2022). In April 2022, 18 participants took part in the workshop in Ljubljana (Slovenia), testing its methodology, tools and providing feedback that helped shape this Guide. Workshop took place over 3 full working days (18 hours of work in total). However, the process can be shortened to fit different time-frames.
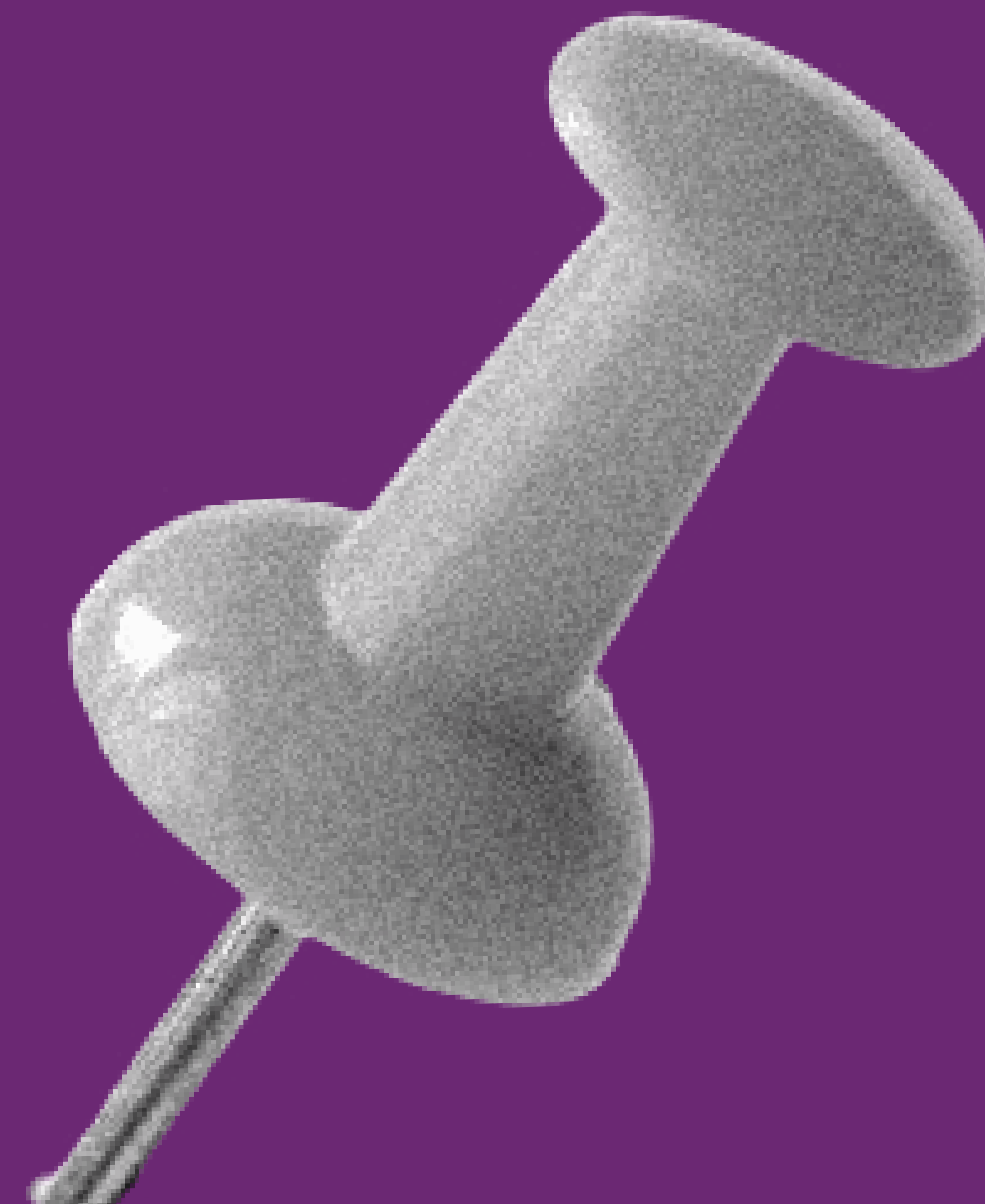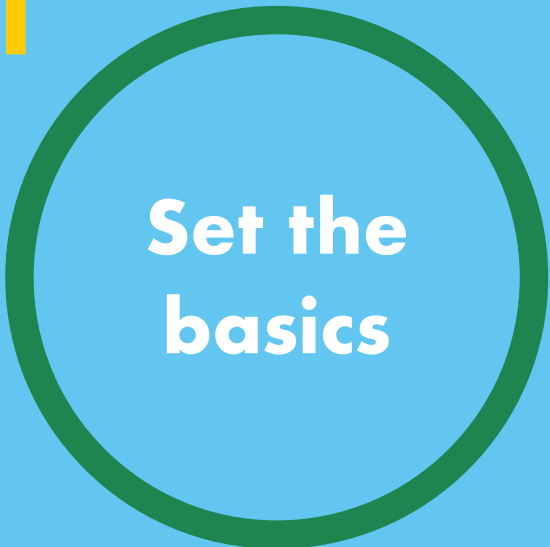
How to use this guide?

Guide should be used together with Inventory of Civic Tech Tools and MOOC Civics 4.0: active citizenship and participation in the digital age.

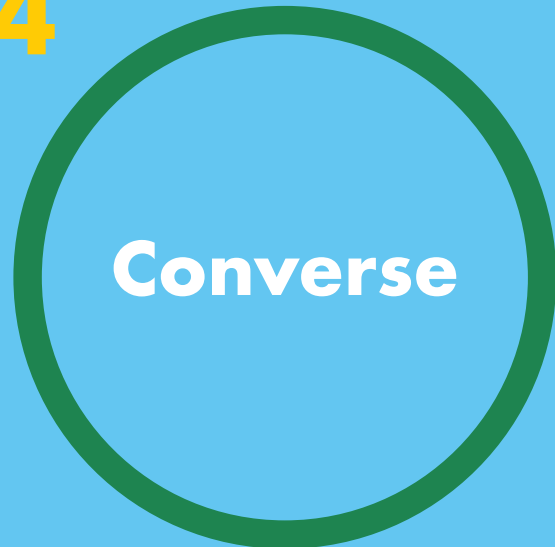# The 7 Steps in Civic Education for Digital Age Workshop

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Set the basics

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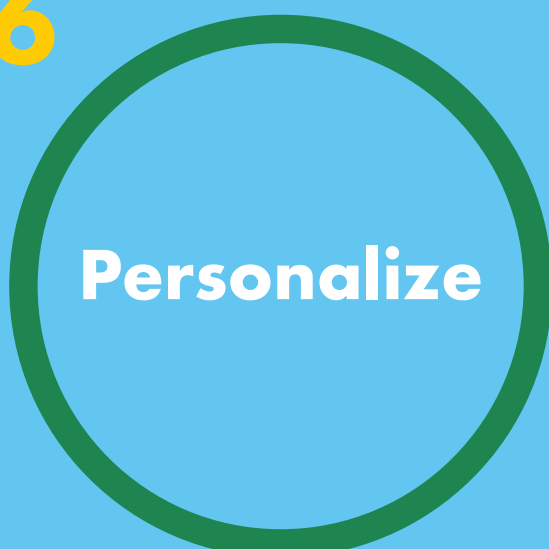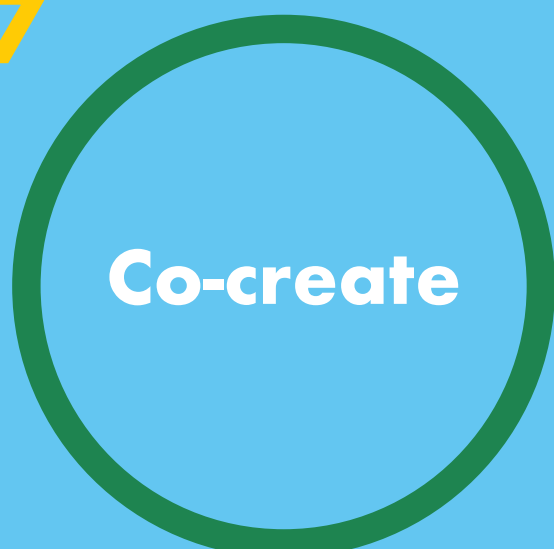
Set the Basics

No workshop can succeed if participants don't feel included, safe and encouraged to contribute. Create supportive and collaborative workshop environment. Introduce the aim of the workshop and the process that will follow in the coming days. Use appropriate ice-breakers, get-to-know-each-other activities if the group is new. Ask participants to share what they **Expect** from the workshop, what they can **Contribute** to it, and first and foremost what is their **Motivation** to participate. Jointly decide on the ground rules for the group-work and respectful environment.

Step 2

Inspire

What is Civic tech anyways?

"Technologies that are deployed to enhance the relationship between people and government, by giving people more of a voice to participate in public decision making and/or to improve the delivery of services (usually by gov't) to people." (Omidyar Network)

In the times of political pessimism and disengagement from traditional forms of citizen-participation, civic tech could seem like an appealing and engaging way of taking action. But like any other solution to a community problem, civic-tech doesn't rely solely on technology. Behind each tool is a group of committed activists who devoted time to research the problem and look into possible solutions, who took multiple attempts before moving into the right direction.

To understand better what civic-tech entails and how campaigning, outreach and community building play part in it, we recommend to open the Workshop by inviting Guest speakers from your local context, who developed civic-tech initiatives.

WATCH INSPIRING INTERVIEWS RECORDED WITH 3 CIVIC-TECH INITIATIVES FROM EUROPE

Step 3

Explore

The feedback we received from MOOC Civics 4.0 students, is that they were unfamiliar of the existence of similar civic-tech tools in their own communities, in their own context. Once prompted by inspirational examples, they were motivated to search and explore the tools that exist and are available in their own context/community.

TAKE INSPIRATION FROM THE TOOLS WE MAPPED

OPEN PARLIAMENTS

OPEN PARTICIPATION

CROWDSOURCING

CROWD-MAPPING

ⓘ **Exercise: Split students in group (by region or by topic of interest) and ask them to search for examples of civic tech tools by using most common key words for civic-tech tools: open participation, crowdsourcing, crowd-mapping, open parliaments, open data, accountability and transparency tools, online petitions, online advocacy, online campaigns.**

ONLINE PETITIONS

ACCOUNTABILITY

TRANSPARENCY TOOLS

ONLINE ADVOCACY

OPEN DATA

ONLINE CAMPAIGNS
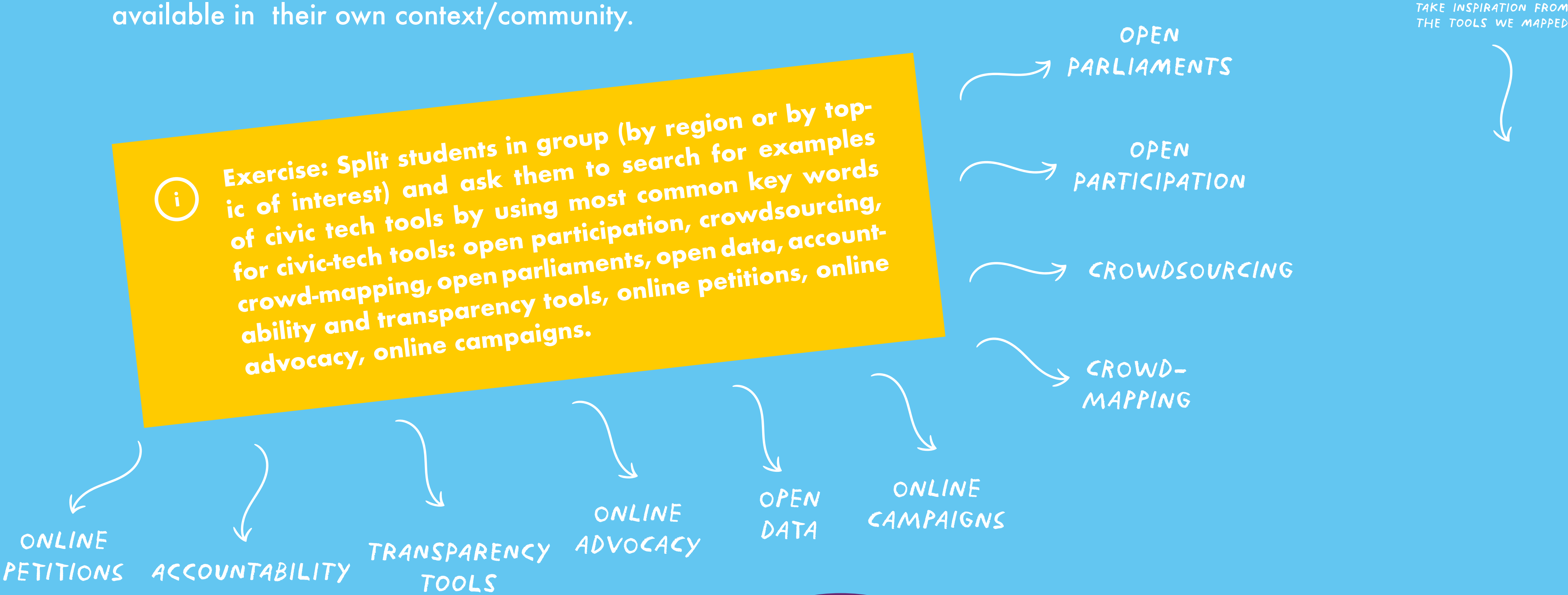
While they explore the tools, ask them to think & reflect:

1. What the tool does?

2. Is it interesting and engaging?

3. What are the advantages/disadvantages?

4. Who is it intended for?

5. Any testimonials from users? What do they say?

6. Is mainstream media reporting about it?

7. Would they use the tool?

Step 4

Converse

Before getting into ideation and co-creation stage, use the opportunity to encourage group discussion and raise awareness of different ways that Universities could foster greater students' participation and engagement in the European democratic process. Apply World Caffe method to ignite conversational process and facilitate open and intimate discussion. World caffe method will smoothly bridge the outcomes of Exploratory phase and introduce Ideation & co-creation phase.

Time needed: 1.5 hours – 2 hours.

Each round of conversation should be around 20 minutes; aim at having at least three rounds of conversation (this will depend on group size, and number of topics/tables). At the end allow 10 minutes per topic/table host to present to the whole group.

Suggested topics:

- What is the role of Universities in facilitating civic engagement?
- What is the extent of students' engagement in different spheres of society?
- How civics can be taught in 2020-2030?
- What are students' perception on their communities and their attitudes towards public institutions and politics?

Step 5

Ideate

After identifying challenges and opportunities through previous steps, participants are ready to reframe these insights into questions that create a welcoming space for "out of the box" thinking. Introduce the "How might we" question-method that will help them generate multiple new perspectives on the challenge. Introducing the "How might we" question-method opens up the field for new ideas, and encourages a collaborative approach to solving the challenges.

Time needed: 30 minutes for ideation.

Each round of conversation should be around 20 minutes; aim at having at least three rounds of conversation (this will depend on group size, and number of topics/tables). At the end allow 10 minutes per topic/table host to present to the whole group.

We suggest doing HMW individually, allowing each participant to ideate and contribute with as many ideas on as many challenges they wish. Give clear instructions that HMW questions should remain within the theme of the workshop.

WATCH THE VIDEO ON HOW TO RUN HMW

How might we

INTENDED ACTION

For

PRIMARY USER

So that

DESIRED EFFECT

Follow up work for workshop moderator: The goal of your work is to find associations and facilitate formation of the groups based on the interest expressed by participants through this exercise. To do so, match all similar contributions, whether by the action, user or desired effect. For example, during Ljubljana workshop we ended up having several topics (see images as illustrative example). We estimate 30 minutes up to one hour of your work.
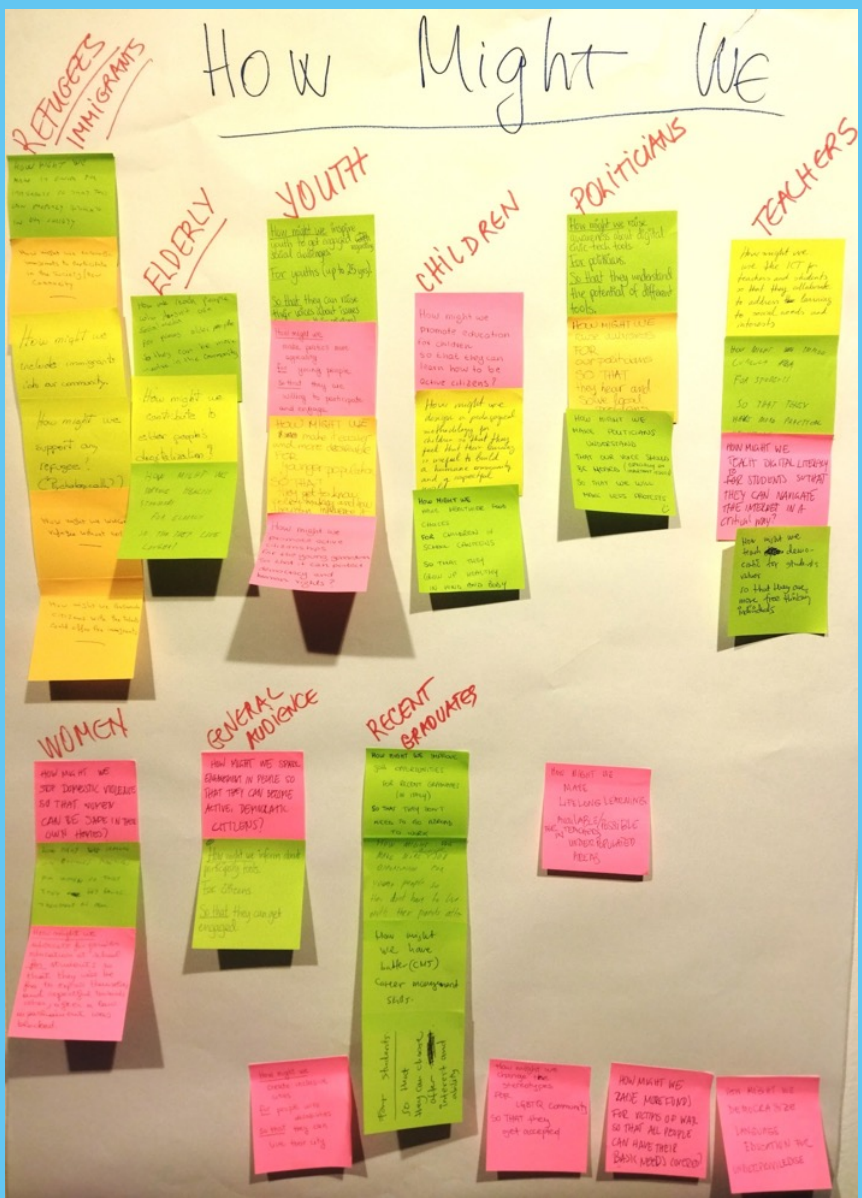
Step 6

Persona-lize

Now that you have matched similar questions and created several topics, ask participants to form the groups to work on each topic. They should remain in the same group for Step 6 and 7, meaning they will be prototyping solutions for the topic they now choose.

But before they prototype solution, they first need to better understand who are they prototyping it for? This is a group work, so each group will work on creating one persona.

Creating a persona is a great way to collect everything the team knows about the (potential) users and to make this knowledge tangible for the whole team. Personas help you build empathy for your user, and they also keep solutions grounded in real user's needs and problems.

Personal information

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Status:

Job:

Industry:

City:

Country:

Quote

Biography

Motivations

Goals

Pains

Personality

Extrovert ——————— Introvert

Sensing ——————— Intuitive

Thinking ——————— Feeling

Judging ——————— Receiving

Technology expertise

IT & Internet:

Softwares:

Mobile apps:

Social networking:

Virtual reality:

Where to reach me?

Email:

Social media:

Blog:

Referrals:

Location:

Step 7

Co-create

Now that the participants have their user defined, and many possible How Might We question-perspectives, in the final step of the workshop we propose using Round Robin brainstorming method to come up with concrete prototype.

Round Robin is a technique for generating and developing ideas in a group brainstorming setting. It relies on an iterative process building off consecutive contributions by each participants, conducted in either written or verbal variations.

The iterative Round Robin process will result in each participant having developed one co-created prototype. In case you wish to have one prototype per group, watch the video from the beginning for different version of Round Robin workshop. At the end, each participant should present their prototype to the group and receive a feedback.

WATCH THIS INSTRUCTION-VIDEO ON HOW TO RUN ROUND ROBIN.

Looking for more info?

01 Sign-up for our MOOC Civics 4.0 Active citizenship & participat in the digital age

02 Explore our Inventory of Civic Tech Tools

About youth digital civic engagement

03 Cho, A. (2020). Digital civic engagement by young people.

04 Crowley, A., & Moxon, D. (2017). New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making processes. Council of Europe.

05 Salto Participation and Information, Youth Participation

06 Salto Participation and Information,Digital Transformation in Youth field

About Digital Democracy

07 Sgueo, G. (2020). Briefing Re-thinking democracy: Digital Democracy.

Is the future of civic engagement online?

About Design Thinking as a human-centered approach to innovation

08 IDEO

Now that you conducted the workshop, it's time to implement those ideas!

Good luck, changemakers!