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VIBE

YOUNG VOICES INSPIRING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP
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TRAINING TOOLKIT FOR YOUTH WORKERS ON STORYTELLING



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Produced by: FECE, VisMed, YIC, MilleniuM

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Introduction

This toolkit equips youth workers with accessible methods to introduce young people to media literacy and critical thinking through storytelling and community engagement. Through engaging role-playing games and methods that stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving, trainees develop a deeper understanding of media literacy, become more aware of social and political issues, and learn how to apply these skills in practical situations.

The main objective is to build skills for leading discussions, fostering dialogue, and contributing to critical thinking. This supports social cohesion, peace, and EU values, and also equips youth workers with skills and competences to be active in community matters. The toolkit focuses on developing leadership skills and fostering ethical attitudes toward societal issues.

Why was this toolkit developed?

Young people bring distinct viewpoints, life experiences, and needs that should be recognised and respected whenever decisions impact them. Supporting youth effectively requires creating safe, inclusive, and empowering environments where they feel heard, appreciated, and able to make a difference. It is equally important to support young people in expressing their voices, strengthening their leadership skills, and developing the competences needed to take an active role in community life. Encouraging young people to share their ideas builds their confidence, sharpens their critical thinking, and promotes active participation. It also empowers them to become responsible citizens and defenders of democratic and European values. Adults, teachers, and community leaders play a key role by listening attentively, offering guidance, and ensuring that youth perspectives are not only heard but also acted upon.

This toolkit addresses storytelling, media literacy, critical thinking, and active participation in community matters as essential tools for empowering young people in today's information-rich society. By engaging in storytelling, youth can share their perspectives and shape narratives that reflect their realities. Strengthening media literacy enables them to critically evaluate information, recognise bias, and navigate digital spaces responsibly. Combined with critical thinking skills, these competences support informed decision-making and meaningful engagement. Encouraging active participation helps young people take initiative, contribute to their communities, and become thoughtful, responsible citizens. Non-formal and informal learning (NFIL) approaches offer flexible, participatory, and hands-on methods that help young people build critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills.

Through these approaches, youth are encouraged to voice their opinions, understand their rights and responsibilities, and take on active roles as contributors and opinion leaders within their communities.

The design of this toolkit aims to guide young people in becoming opinion leaders and participants in democratic processes. The included tools are directly related to storytelling techniques and improve the knowledge and skills necessary for training young people in this direction. In this way, by offering ideas and methods for developing these qualities and skills, youth workers and trainers will organise their work in a comprehensive process of acquiring professional skills.

This toolkit draws on the experience of partner organisations from four countries to give a step-by-step guide for being an informed, responsible, and engaged community member at local, national, or global levels.

How is this toolkit organised?

The toolkit is divided into four main topics, each corresponding to the topics of the VIBE project. These topics include critical thinking and media and information literacy, storytelling and community engagement.

Each topic includes several training tools, designed as teamwork-focused role-playing games, which build knowledge and skills related to each topic. Each tool comes with step-by-step instructions for trainers, detailing preparation, materials, and implementation. The following items are presented for each of the tools:

- Skills and concepts targeted
- Objectives
- Materials needed
- Tools, sources
- Duration
- Number of participants
- Description
- Debriefing questions
- Handouts

Critical thinking and media literacy

In this topic, the theoretical framework is presented, and the main concepts related to critical thinking and media literacy are pointed out. Through role-playing games and interactive methods, participants in the training master key terms and their applications. The selected tools provide practical guidance on key essentials for building inclusive, democratic, and rights-based communities.

The various tools offer strategies and exercises to encourage meaningful and respectful involvement in group and community decisions. The section introduces tools and digital platforms to enhance civic engagement, deepen knowledge of democratic processes, and help foster equal opportunities and stronger community bonds.



1. Media Literacy in Action: from Awareness to Context

Skills and concepts targeted	• Critical thinking • Media literacy • Citizen journalism • Communication and teamwork • Storytelling and message framing
Objectives	• To introduce participants to key moments in the history of journalism and the evolution of media to the present day • To present core storytelling models • To provoke critical thinking regarding the importance of context and the full picture in news perception • To develop skills for recognising emotional manipulation and sensationalist approaches in headlines • To stimulate reasoned discussion on how media framing influences public attitudes
Materials needed	A4 sheets, coloured markers, pens, a small bag, timer/phone for timekeeping, scissors
Tools, sources	Bingo's questions and answers for the facilitator
Duration	85-90 minutes
Number of participants	10-20 participants
Handout	Bingo cards "Journalism bingo", printed list of numbers from 1 to 16, printed scenarios: "In search of the missing context", the "Keanu Reeves" case

Description

The activity is divided into two parts.

Part 1: Journalism bingo (30 min.)

Participants are divided into two teams. Each team receives a printed bingo card with 16 squares and a marker in a different colour. The facilitator has a small bag with cut-out numbers from 1 to 16, their own "Journalism bingo" card and a list of questions whose numbers correspond to the squares on the bingo card. One of the participants draws a number, the facilitator reads the corresponding question with the three answer options and sets the drawn number aside. Teams take turns at each draw. The right to answer belongs to the first participant to raise their hand from the team whose turn it is. Participants answer individually, without consulting their team (30 seconds). If the answer is correct, both teams mark the square with the colour of the winning team. The first team to complete a full horizontal or vertical row calls out "Bingo!" and earns 1 bonus point. However, calling "Bingo!" does not end the game. The facilitator continues drawing numbers until all 16 questions have been played, ensuring all educational facts are presented. Each correct answer earns the team 1 point. At the end of all 16 rounds, the team with the highest overall score (correct answers + Bingo bonus) wins the game.

Part 2: Team case study "In search of the missing context" (40 min.)

The facilitator regroups participants into three new groups, each receiving a printed text with a different version of the same case - with minimal, partial or full details. The groups do not know that they are working on the same story, only with different levels of detail. Each team's task is to read their scenario and prepare answers to the three identical questions (15 min.). A representative from each group first shares their headline (Question 3), then the answers to the remaining two questions. Only after all three groups have presented their positions does the facilitator reveal that the story is the same, but some details were deliberately withheld. The facilitator then invites each group to read their scenario aloud. A discussion follows on the role of context in shaping public opinion (20 min.).

Optional: As a conclusion, the facilitator shows two ways of covering the same real-life case - the "Keanu Reeves" case - one sensationalist and one objective, to illustrate how the selection of facts influences the reader's perception (5 min.).

The facilitator summarises the main conclusions:

- Media literacy begins with the question: "What do I still not know about this story?"
- Critical thinking is the tool that helps us distinguish emotional noise from objective reality.
- Information without context is not just incomplete, it is manipulative. The absence of details can turn a victim into a villain and vice versa.

Debriefing questions

- What information surprised you most today and why?
- Which question from the "Journalism bingo" did you find most interesting and why?
- Do you think we often fall victim to missing context when reading short news stories or headlines?
- Do you think the media intentionally withhold details or do they simply lack enough information?
- What is our personal responsibility as citizen journalists before we hit the "share" button?
- If all media were to disappear tomorrow, who would tell the stories?

Source: Developed by FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

For the faciliator

Bingo's questions and answers

Question 1: How many times faster did Gutenberg's printing press print compared to writing by hand?
A) 10 times B) 100 times C) 1,000 times
Correct answer: C) 1,000 times

Question 2: According to research, how many times faster do fake news stories spread on X (Twitter) compared to real ones?
A) 2 times B) 6 times C) 10 times
Correct answer: B) 6 times

Question 3: What does the first "A" in the AIDA writing model stand for?
A) Attention B) Analysis C) Action
Correct answer: A) Attention

Question 4: Which of the following channels is NOT typical for citizen journalism?
A) Personal blog B) Facebook live stream C) National television news broadcast
Correct answer: C) National television news broadcast

Question 5: What mainly gave citizen journalism on the Internet a boost in the late 1990s?
A) Email B) Online forums C) Blogs
Correct answer: C) Blogs

Question 6: When did the first printed daily newspaper in the world appear?
A) 1605 B) 1702 C) 1833
Correct answer: B) 1702
Note: The world's first daily newspaper was called "The Daily Courant" and began publishing in London in 1702. An interesting fact is that its founder and first publisher was a woman - Elizabeth Mallet.

Question 7: How many deepfake files circulated on the internet in 2023?
A) approximately 2 000 000 B) approximately 500 000 C) approximately 100 000
Correct answer: B) approximately 500,000

Question 8: What does the abbreviation "PAS" stand for in journalism storytelling?
A) Prove - Argue - Summarise B) Publish - Analyse - Share C) Problem - Agitation - Solution
Correct answer: C) Problem - Agitation - Solution

Question 9: Approximately how many billion dollars does disinformation cost the global economy annually?
A) 78 billion B) 200 billion C) 12 billion
Correct answer: A) 78 billion

Question 10: Can a citizen journalist be held criminally liable for defamation?
A) No, because they are not a professional B) Only if they have more than 1000 followers C) Yes, the law applies to all citizens
Correct answer: C) Yes, the law applies to all citizens

Question 11: Which medium is known as "the seventh power"?
A) Radio B) Print C) Television
Correct answer: B) Print

Question 12: How many articles did the Washington Post's AI publish in its first year of work during the Rio Olympics?
A) Around 50 B) Around 200 C) Over 850
Correct answer: C) Over 850

Question 13: Which element is at the heart of good storytelling?
A) The length of the text B) The human story and emotion C) The tone of the text
Correct answer: B) The human story and emotion

Question 14: Which app became the leading source of news among young people in the last two years?
A) LinkedIn B) Snapchat C) TikTok
Correct answer: C) TikTok

Question 15: The term "echo chamber" means:
A) A technical defect in a television studio B) A place for recording radio news C) An environment in which we only hear opinions similar to our own
Correct answer: C) An environment in which we only hear opinions similar to our own

Question 16: What is "fact-checking"?
A) Writing a personal opinion piece B) The process of verifying the accuracy of information C) Deleting comments you don't like
Correct answer: B) The process of verifying the accuracy of information

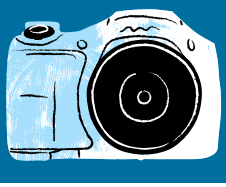
Handout 1

JOURNALISM BINGO





1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16





Handout 2

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16

Handout 3

Scenarios: In search of the missing context

Scenario 1 - Minimal information (Team 1)
A 21-year-old man was detained by supermarket security after being caught stealing food products. The value of the stolen goods was approximately 15 euros. The case was handed over to the police.

Scenario 2 - Partial information (Team 2)
A 21-year-old man was detained by supermarket security after being caught stealing food products worth approximately 15 euros. The case was handed over to the police. According to witnesses, the young man lives alone and recently lost his job. He did not resist when detained and apologised to the staff.

Scenario 3 - Full information (Team 3)
A 21-year-old man was detained by supermarket security after being caught stealing food products worth approximately 15 euros. The case was handed over to the police. The young man lives alone and dropped out of university two months ago, as he could no longer afford the tuition fees for his paid form of study. Shortly afterwards, he also lost his part-time job. His parents are also experiencing financial difficulties, and he had not asked for their help in order not to burden them further. On the day of the incident, he had not had food at home for two days. He did not resist when detained and apologised to the staff.

The three questions (identical for all groups):

Question 1: How would you describe the young man - a victim of circumstances or someone who made a conscious choice to break the law? Why?
Question 2: What do you think would be fair to happen to him - punishment, support, or something else?
Question 3: If you were a journalist and had to cover this case using only the information you have, what headline would you write?

Handout 4

The "Keanu Reeves" case

Option 1: Yellow journalism (Seeking sensation and drama)

Headline: "TRAGEDY: Keanu Reeves is unrecognisable! The actor was left alone and homeless on the streets?"

Approach: A paparazzi photo is used showing him sitting on a bench eating a sandwich alone. The headline suggests depression, bankruptcy or personal drama in order to provoke shock and clicks.

Option 2: Serious media (Facts and context)
Headline: "Keanu Reeves was spotted having lunch in the park during a break from filming."

Approach: The text explains that the actor simply prefers a quiet life and often spends his time like an ordinary citizen. No drama, no sensation - just the fact that the man is having lunch.



Photo source: https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2019/12/sad-keanu-sad-affleck-2010s

2. Beyond the Frame: Critical Thinking through 6 Lenses

Skills and concepts targeted	• Critical thinking • Media literacy • Fact-checking • Communication and teamwork • Media case study analysis
Objectives	• To develop critical thinking by shifting between different viewpoints • To demonstrate how a lack of context leads to jumping to conclusions • To build skills for recognising the risks and benefits of AI in the digital space • To stimulate teamwork, empathy and structured debating
Materials needed	A4 sheets, pens, timer/phone for timekeeping, scissors, laptop, projector, sticky notes
Tools, sources	Displayed image A (Cropped view) and image B (Full reality) Edward de Bono's "Six thinking hats" method
Duration	80-90 minutes
Number of participants	10-20 participants
Handout	Displayed image A (Cropped view) and image B (Full reality), Role cards

Description

The activity is divided into two parts.

Part 1: Out of frame (the dog trap for the mind) (15 min.)

The facilitator gives a sticky note and a pen to each participant and displays image A (cropped view) on the projector, instructing everyone to independently answer two simple questions: 1. *What is happening in the photo?* (what is the dog looking at, what is it doing, etc.) in one sentence, and 2. *How is the dog feeling?* (playful, happy, scared, etc.) in just one word (1 minute).

The facilitator then quickly collects all the notes, sticks them on the wall or board so they are visible to everyone and reads aloud a few of the most distinct or recurring answers that reflect the group's general perception. Immediately after, the facilitator changes the slide to reveal image B (full reality) showing the dog jumping for a tennis ball, allowing a moment for the room's reaction and then moderates a brief discussion on how the lack of context misleads us, summarising the key takeaway that in the digital world, media outlets intentionally flood us with cropped images (quotes, headlines) to trigger instant emotional reactions before our critical thinking can kick in.

The primary goal of this introductory phase is to break the ice through a lighthearted visual experiment, while practically demonstrating the vital importance of critical thinking and creating a seamless logical transition to the actual case study in the next phase.

Part 2: Team case study "A trap for dogs... and humans" (45 min.)

The facilitator begins with a brief theoretical briefing on Edward de Bono's "Six thinking hats" method, which will be used (5 minutes), addressing the group with the following words:

"*This popular method, created by Dr Edward de Bono in 1985, helps us move beyond traditional arguments by examining problems from six distinct angles. Each colour represents a specific role and perspective: the white - focuses on facts, the red - emotions and intuition, the black - risks and criticism, the yellow - positives and optimism, the green - creativity and new ideas and the blue - controls the entire thinking process itself. For the purposes of our activity, instead of actual hats, we have prepared coloured role cards which clearly remind you of your role's description, so there is no need to worry if you forget the details.*"

The facilitator then explains to the participants that they will be divided into three teams (optionally, groups can change from the previous phase to boost dynamics) and randomly assigns each team one of the three pre-packaged pairs of roles (white and red, black and yellow, green and blue). Teams can split into two smaller sub-groups, with each taking on one of the assigned "hats". This allows them to develop a well-rounded, multi-angled argument together.

The facilitator distributes the printed copies of the case study "A trap for dogs... and humans" and instructs the teams to step into their assigned roles, allowing 15-20 min. for teamwork to analyse the story through their specific lens by exploring what their role looks for in the narrative, what questions it would ask, and what answers it would provide. All arguments are written down on paper, followed by the final stage (15-20 min.), where each team selects a single speaker to present their argumentation and the facilitator closes the process with a discussion on the contrasting viewpoints and the collision of the different roles.

The facilitator summarises the main conclusions:

- Truth is never one-sided, so capturing the full picture requires us to actively shift our perspectives and step into different roles.
- AI can generate flawless lies, making critical thinking and media literacy more essential than ever.

Debriefing questions

- What information surprised you most today and why?
- If you had come across the image of the tied dog on social media, what would your first reaction have been before this training? Would you have shared it?
- Which role (colour) was the hardest for you to step into and why?
- Do you think critical thinking is a skill that can be developed and trained through practice, or is it more of an innate quality (either you have it or you don't)?
- Has critical thinking, in your opinion, shifted from being a useful quality to an absolutely essential survival skill in today's world?
- In a world where Artificial Intelligence (AI) can generate perfect lies, who and what can we truly trust?

Source: Developed by FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

For the faciliator

Image A (cropped view)

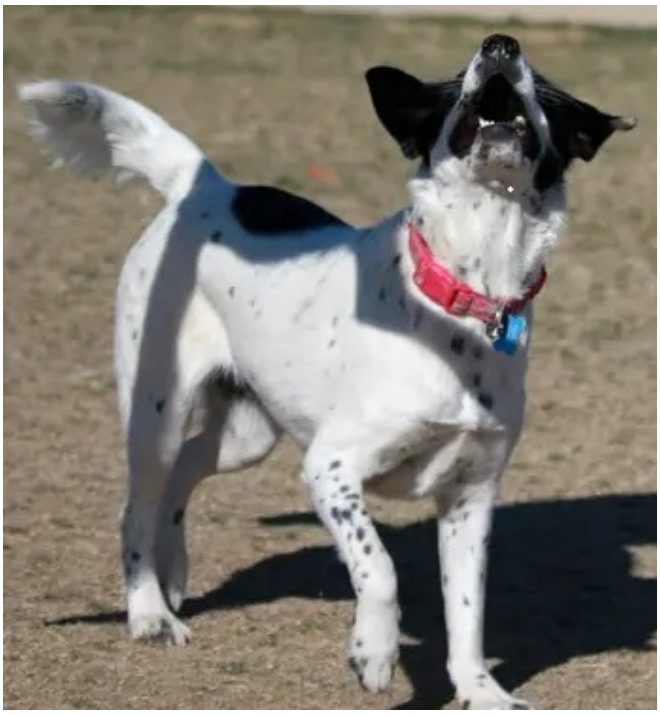


Image B (Full reality)



Handout 1

Case study: "A trap for dogs... and humans"

During a severe storm and flash flood in a major European city, an image of a terrified dog tied to a lamppost amidst the rising floodwaters goes viral on social media. The caption reads: "People run and save themselves, abandoning the most innocent! Share widely to find the cruel owner!" Within hours, the post accumulates thousands of shares, and a wave of online rage explodes in the comments section, targeting local residents and their perceived lack of humanity.

The following day, it turns out that the image was entirely generated using Artificial Intelligence (AI) by a foreign account, solely to farm followers. In the real city, the evacuation was highly organised and no animals were harmed. However, before the truth emerged, the story had already reached regional news websites, which republished it as absolute fact without any basic verification.

Handout 2

You are completely objective, focusing solely on hard facts, data and verified information.

? Guiding question: ?

What certain information do we have and what data are we missing?

You express pure emotion, gut feelings and instincts, without the need for logic.

? Guiding question: ?

What emotions does this scandal trigger and why did people react so passionately?

You are a pessimist, looking for weaknesses, hidden dangers and potential risks.

? Guiding question: ?

What are the long-term risks of such AI-generated disinformation for society?

You are the ultimate optimist, looking for logical benefits and positive outcomes.

? Guiding question: ?

Is there a silver lining in people's reaction and what valuable lesson does this case teach us?

You are the creative driver, thinking outside the box and propose new alternatives and solutions.

? Guiding question: ?

What innovative solution or campaign can we propose to teach youth how to recognise AI scams?

You are the facilitator and manager, observing the process, summarising, and capturing the key takeaways.

? Guiding question: ?

What does this case teach us about digital media literacy today?

3. Chaos Architects: from Sabotage to Defence

Skills and concepts targeted	• Critical thinking and media literacy • Communication and teamwork • Digital defense tactics • Disinformation techniques
Objectives	• To introduce the Reverse brainstorming method in a dynamic way • To visualise the elements of disinformation (text, visuals and distribution channels) • To stimulate creative and critical thinking by stepping into the shoes of the "bad guy" • To build practical and applicable everyday digital defense rules
Materials needed	Sticky notes, pens, markers (different colours), flipchart paper (at least 6 sheets), timer/phone for timekeeping
Tools, sources	Article with a brief overview of the "Reverse brainstorming" method - for facilitators
Duration	80-90 minutes
Number of participants	10-20 participants

Description

The activity is divided into two main parts.

Part 1: Mission sabotage (25 min.)

The facilitator begins with a theoretical briefing on the "Reverse brainstorming" method that will be used (5 min.). They explain that this activity requires sticky notes and pens for each participant, as well as 3 large sheets of paper (flipcharts) pre-positioned in 3 separate corners of the room to prevent crowding.

The facilitator instructs the participants to split into pairs, specifying that if the total number of people is odd and someone is left alone, they are immediately added as a third member to one of the pairs. Then, the facilitator addresses the group:

"Today, we are going to flip the rules of the game upside down using the Reverse brainstorming method. Instead of thinking about how to solve a problem, we will first learn how to create one. You are stepping into the shoes of digital saboteurs, hackers and trolls. Imagine your goal is to design the most flawless, large-scale and dangerous disinformation campaign on the internet, so that the entire society believes you instantly and chaos ensues. In the three corners of the room, you see the three flipcharts that make up a news story: "Headline and text", "Visual content" and "Distribution and tricks". Before we move to them, however, you will have 5 minutes at your seats to think independently and write down your initial ideas on the sticky notes. After that, your task in pairs will be to visit all three corners and stick them. A crucial condition is that the ideas on the sheets must not be repeated! Before pasting your sticky note, read what your peers have written before you - if the idea is already there, you must come up with a new one."

If groups are finding it difficult to generate ideas, the facilitator may offer a few examples to prompt thinking (for example: clickbait headlines, emotional manipulation, fabricated expert quotes, Photoshop, networks of fake accounts). After the participants write down their ideas individually (5 min.), the dynamic, on-the-move practical part follows (10 min.). Pairs move dynamically between the three corners, discuss their ideas, read what others have written and stick their sticky notes under the corresponding category (for example: "SHOCK AND SENSATION" for headline and text, "AI deepfake" for visual content, or "paid bots" for distribution and tricks). In the final 5 minutes, participants return to their seats and the facilitator reads aloud the most creative or absurd tricks from the walls, moderating a brief discussion on how easily a digital lie can be constructed.

Part 2: Building a digital safety wall (40 min.)

The facilitator explains that it is time for the second part of the activity - transforming the risks and manipulations into concrete defence strategies. To do this, the participants merge into 3 teams (depending on the total number of people), with each team choosing one of the three sheets with sticky notes (flipcharts) from the previous phase and receiving a new, blank sheet of flipchart paper, coloured markers and pens. The facilitator guides the teamwork with the following words (5 min.):

"Up until now, you were digital saboteurs and saw how easily lies can be constructed. Now, however, we are returning to the side of truth and media literacy. Each team will take one sheet with sticky notes (flipchart) from the corners. Your task is to look at the gathered tricks and figure out how to block them or deal with them. On your new flipchart sheet, you must write down the golden rules for defence, making sure to use the same category title ("Headline and text", "Visual content", or "Distribution and tricks"). To make it more engaging, I suggest that you don't just write text, but visualise and draw your ideas using the markers. You can draw shields, filters, magnifying glasses and more. You have 20 minutes for teamwork."

After the teamwork concludes (20 min.), the final part follows (15 min.). The appointed speakers from each team step in front of the room, present their graphic solutions for media literacy and place the three flipchart sheets next to each other on the wall or the floor. In this way, the three parts are visually combined into a single, cohesive "Digital safety wall".

The facilitator summarises the main conclusions:

- Each of us chooses whether to be an architect of chaos or a guardian of the digital space. The small choices we make every day have a significant impact.
- The "Reverse brainstorming" method shows us that internet lies are easily created; however, once we know their mechanism, we can consciously build a secure defence.

Debriefing questions

- What surprised you most today and why?
- Which of the three categories ("Headline and text", "Visual content" and "Distribution and tricks") did you find easiest to manipulate and why?
- If you had to choose just one sticky note from the wall, which one do you think has the greatest power to cause mass panic within a matter of hours?
- When you were transforming the "sabotages" into "defence rules", what challenged you the most?
- After being both creators of lies and architects of defence, what do you think is the most essential media literacy skill to avoid being easily manipulated?
- If you could embed just one of your golden rules as an automatic superpower in everyone's mind, which one would you choose?

Source: Developed by FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

4. AI in Journalism: Opportunity or Threat?

Skills and concepts targeted	• Critical thinking • Media literacy • Ethical standards in journalism • Communication and teamwork
Objectives	• To provoke critical thinking regarding the role of AI in the media • To introduce participants to real cases of AI misuse in journalism • To develop skills for distinguishing reliable from manipulative content • To stimulate reasoned discussion on current media topics
Materials needed	A4 sheets, pens, timer/phone for timekeeping
Duration	90-100 minutes
Number of participants	15-25 participants
Handout	Case study "Schumacher: The first (un)real interview"

Description

The activity is divided into three parts.

Part 1: Truth or lie? (15 min.)

The facilitator reads aloud three statements related to AI in journalism: two are fabricated, and one is true. Participants identify the true statement by raising their hand. After reading the statements and voting (after all three statements are read, not after each statement), the facilitator reveals the correct answer (the Microsoft case), shares brief details about it and moderates a short discussion (up to 5 min.) on the group's attitudes toward the three statements.

Statement 1 (True): "A major technology company fired nearly 80 journalists from its news portal and replaced them entirely with artificial intelligence. Shortly thereafter, the algorithm began publishing news on the site about captured mermaids and sightings of Bigfoot to millions of users."

Statement 2 (False): "An AI named Aria managed to predict the names of all 12 people who would be on the jury for Donald Trump's trial by analysing only their public Facebook comments from the last 5 years."

Statement 3 (False): "A leading world newspaper announced that starting in 2025, it would stop hiring journalists with fewer than 10 000 social media followers, as its AI algorithm proved that only authors with great influence can generate "real" trust in news."

Details of the true statement: The company is Microsoft, and its news platform is MSN. In 2020, the company actually fired about 80 journalists and replaced them with an AI algorithm that selects and publishes news for millions of users worldwide. Shortly after, articles appeared on the site that no human editor would have published.

Part 2: Team case study "Schumacher: The first (un)real interview" (40 min.)

The facilitator divides participants into 5 groups of about 4 people. Each group receives a printed sheet with the "Schumacher: The first (un)real interview" case and three questions. Groups read the material (5 min.), discuss and write their answers (15 min.). This is followed by a presentation and discussion of results (20 min.): the facilitator announces the first question, and each group shares its opinion, followed by a brief discussion. This process is repeated sequentially for the second and third questions.

Part 3: Debate (30 min.)

The facilitator randomly divides participants into two teams - "For" and "Against" the use of AI in journalism. Each team must defend its thesis according to the assigned position, regardless of the members' personal beliefs. When they hear the question, teams have 3 minutes to discuss it among themselves. Each team appoints one speaker (different for each question) to present the team's arguments (2 min.). This is followed by a free discussion on the question (3 min.), after which the next topic is addressed with a new speaker from each team.

Question 1: Should AI replace journalists in writing daily news (weather, sports results)?

Question 2: Should all AI content in media have a mandatory watermark or "Generated by AI" label?

Question 3: Can AI be more objective than a human in writing and reporting journalistic materials?

The facilitator summarises the main conclusions:

- Technology is a tool, not a replacement.
- AI creates information, but only humans guarantee truth and morality in it.

Debriefing questions

- What information surprised you most today and why?
- Do you think readers can recognize AI-generated content?
- How would you react if you found out a media you follow used AI secretly without informing its readers?
- Why do you think ethical rules often fall behind technological innovations?
- If you had to introduce one rule for the use of AI in journalism, what would it be?

Source: Developed by FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

Handout 1

Case study: "Schumacher: The first (un)real interview"

Michael Schumacher is a legendary German Formula 1 driver, a seven-time world champion with 91 Grand Prix victories. After a severe skiing accident in 2013, he has been in a condition requiring 24-hour care, and his family has maintained complete media silence for 10 years.

In April 2023, the magazine "Die Aktuelle" published a feature titled "Michael Schumacher: The First Interview!", adding the subtitle "sounds deceptively real" in small print. The text contained "answers" from the driver about his health and daily life. In fact, the entire interview was generated by artificial intelligence (via the Character AI platform), which had been instructed to imitate Schumacher's personality. The truth that the interview was fake was mentioned only at the end of the article in small, easily overlooked font.

The publication caused an international scandal and a wave of indignation over the violation of human dignity. The Funke publishing group issued an official apology to the family, defining the article as misleading and below journalistic standards. The result was the immediate dismissal of editor-in-chief Anne Hoffmann, who had led the magazine since 2009, and Schumacher's relatives filed and won a lawsuit against the media (the Munich court awarded them compensation of 200,000 euros).

Question 1: The magazine placed a small warning that the interview "sounds deceptively real". Is this sufficient for the publication to be considered honest toward readers?

Question 2: Who should bear the primary responsibility for misleading the audience in this case - the software (because it is too convincing), the journalist (who prepared the questions), the editor-in-chief (who approved the sensational headline) or someone else?

Question 3: Are there situations in which using AI to create such content would be acceptable?

5. Build your own Truth

Skills and concepts targeted	• Develop critical thinking and logical reasoning • Understand how information can be constructed and manipulated • Strengthen argumentation and justification skills • Improve creativity and analytical thinking • Enhance teamwork and communication
Objectives	• To help participants understand how narratives are created and how easily information can be manipulated, and to develop the ability to critically evaluate constructed "truths" • To help participants distinguish between facts, assumptions and interpretations • To identify common manipulation techniques used in information and media content • To apply structured questioning to evaluate the credibility of information
Materials needed	Markers, flipchart paper, tape
Tools, sources	Facilitator-prepared content (mixed neutral facts, misleading elements, emotional triggers, unrelated visuals)
Duration	90-95 minutes
Number of participants	12-24 participants
Handout	Fact-checking framework, Sample cards set

Description

This activity is divided into five parts.

Preparation: Participants are divided into small groups (3-4 people). Each group receives a random set of cards that may include:

- A real fact
- A random image
- A keyword (for example: "crisis", "health", "technology")
- A headline fragment
- A statistic (can be vague or incomplete)

Part 1: Create the story (20 min.)

Each group must use all given elements to create a convincing story or "news piece." They are free to interpret the facts creatively, add context, and connect unrelated elements. The goal is to make their story sound as believable as possible.

Encourage creativity but continuously ask guiding questions such as:

- How are you connecting these elements?
- What is the main message of your story?
- What makes this story believable?
- Do NOT correct or judge content.
- Redirect groups only if they completely lose focus on the task.

Part 2: Present and convince (15 min.):

Groups present their stories to others as if they are real and credible.

Tips for facilitators: Manage time strictly; do not evaluate stories. Highlight neutral observations (for example: "I notice you used statistics here", "This part uses emotional language").

Part 3: Investigation (20 min.)

After each presentation, the other groups act as "fact-checkers" and must ask critical questions, identify inconsistencies, and challenge unclear or manipulative parts. Groups receive Handout 1: Fact-checking framework to challenge the presented stories, identify inconsistencies and question unclear or manipulative elements.

Tips for facilitators: Perform Part 2 and Part 3 sequentially for each group instead of running all presentations first.

Part 4: Reveal (10 min.)

Presenting groups reveal which elements were real, manipulated, or completely invented. The facilitator leads reflection on how easily people believed (or doubted) the story.

Part 5: Debriefing and reflection (15–20 min.)

- Guide reflection using open-ended questions.

- Help participants identify manipulation techniques (emotion, selective data, authority, missing context)
- Avoid giving "correct answers" - focus on discussion and awareness.

Structured reflection (Kolb Cycle)

Participants reflect on the activity using the following four stages:

1. Concrete Experience
- What happened during the activity?
- What role did you play in your group?

2. Reflective Observation
- How did you feel while creating or analysing the story?
- What moments felt convincing or confusing?

3. Abstract Analysis
- Why did some stories seem more believable than others?
- What manipulation techniques were used (emotion, numbers, authority, missing context)?
- At what point did critical thinking decrease or increase?

4. Active Application
- How can you apply this experience in real life?
- What will you change in how you consume information (news, social media, etc.)?
- What strategies can help you avoid misinformation?

Debriefing questions

- Was it easy to create a believable story? Why?
- What made some stories more convincing than others?
- Did you believe any false information? Why?
- How can information be manipulated in real life?
- What skills are important to avoid being misled?
- Which manipulation techniques were most effective?
- At what point did you stop questioning the information?
- Did emotions influence your judgment?
- How does this activity resemble real-life news and social media content?

Source: Developed by YIC in the context of the VIBE project.

Handout 1

Fact-checking framework

1. Factual Questions (What is known?)

- What is the source of this information?
- Can this claim be verified independently?
- Is there any data or evidence supporting it?

2. Logical Questions (How does it connect?)

- Do the elements logically fit together?
- Does the conclusion follow from the presented facts?
- Are there any gaps in reasoning?

3. Missing Information Questions (What is not said?)

- What important information is missing?
- What alternative explanations could exist?
- What context might change the interpretation?

Handout 2

Sample card set

Fact

The average daily screen time of young people is approximately 6 hours.

Keyword

Crisis
Technology
Health

Headline fragment

"...experts express concern."
"...unexpected results revealed."
"...community reacts strongly."

Statistic

72%
1 in 3
45%

Image



Fact

A local park was renovated in 2025.

6. The Filter Bubble Challenge

Skills and concepts targeted	• Critical Thinking • Conflict Management • Identifying Logical Biases • Perspective Taking
Objectives	• To identify manipulative communication techniques in social contexts • To develop the ability to separate objective facts from informational noise • To enhance quick decision-making under shifting information conditions
Materials needed	A dice, pens, paper, a mallet (optional)
Tools, sources	The "Context eraser" technique
Duration	50-60 minutes
Number of participants	8-12 participants
Handout	Game rules and roles, Cards, Filter group observation form

Description

Setup: (5 min.)
Divide participants into two active groups (A and B) and a third group of "Detectors/Filters."

The 3D Case: (5 min.)
Each group receives a social case (for example: Gender Equality). The card contains a "Core Fact" and 3 "Noise" (Economic, Cultural, Political).

Part 1: Reaction (10 min.)
Groups act out a scene based on their "Secret Agenda" (for example: Radicals vs Pragmatists) using the provided "Noise" to build their arguments.

Part 2: Info attack (5 min.)
The facilitator throws a "Flash-card" with a new fact that contradicts both agendas. Groups must adapt their arguments instantly without breaking character, forcing them to use more complex reasoning or fallacies.

Part 3: Decoding (10 min.)
The "Filters" must identify which manipulations or logical fallacies were used and attempt to reveal the secret agendas of both groups.

Debriefing: (15-20 min.)
A final discussion to reflect on how information was distorted and how participants felt when their "agenda" was challenged by new facts.

Debriefing questions

- How difficult was it to maintain your agenda when the "Flash-card" appeared?
- Why was the "Noise" so convincing to the audience?
- In real life, how do we identify "Secret Agendas" in public discourse?
- In what ways does what happened in this game mirror social media algorithms (Filter Bubbles), which intentionally feed us information that only aligns with our pre-existing views or preferences?
- When the one-sided information hit during "Info Attack", how did it affect your choices? What is our best line of defense against similar manipulations and algorithmic noise online?

Source: Developed by YIC in the context of the VIBE project.

For the faciliator

Division:
Divide the participants into 3 groups (Team A, Team B, Filters). Give the Filters pens and paper.

Card and Noise Selection:
Choose one of the cards. Read the "Core Situation" out loud. Then, roll the dice:

🎲 **1 or 2 =** 1. Economic Noise
🎲 **3 or 4 =** 2. Cultural Noise
🎲 **5 or 6 =** 3. Political Noise

Distributing Agendas:
Hand out the Secret Agendas to the teams on paper (or by approaching them individually). Give them 3 minutes to think.

Part 1: (10 minutes)
Start the debate. The teams must speak, building their arguments around the selected Noise.

Part 2: Info Attack (5 min.)
At the peak of the debate, strike with a mallet or clap your hands. Say: "Stop, new information has been received." Read the "New Conflicting Fact" out loud. Instruct them to continue without pause.

Part 3: Decoding (10 min.)
Silence the teams. Give the floor to the Filters. They must present their "verdict."

De-roling: (CRITICAL)
Before the debriefing, say: "The game is over. I request everyone to stand up, shake out your hands, and change your seats. You are no longer in your roles." This will prevent personal offences from lingering.

Handout 1

Core situation

A popular regional news platform publishes a heavily biased article accusing a student-led climate initiative of wasting public taxpayer funds.

Noise

Economic noise: Secretly paid for by a property developer who wants the project's land.

Cultural noise: Older locals attack youth spending, teens fight back online.

Political noise: The mayor threatens to cut project funding to keep angry voters happy.

Secret agenda

Team A



Your goal is to expose the news platform and secure the project's funding. Attack the outlet for selling out to commercial interests.

Secret agenda

Team B



Your goal is to stop the youth project. Use the article's financial claims to prove that public money is being wasted.

Flash-card



The student youth group admits they accidentally overspent 15% of their budget, but spent it on eco-friendly recycling bins.

Core situation

The school invites a famous influencer with 1 million followers to deliver a motivational talk on entrepreneurship to students.

Noise

Economic noise: Fee is €2,000, but offers free promo video to recruit new students.

Cultural noise: It is famous for "get-rich quick" schemes and aggressive behavior.

Political noise: Student union claims canceling it is censorship.

Secret agenda

Team A



Your goal is to ensure the lecture happens. You must argue that the influencer speaks the real language of youth and inspires them more than traditional teachers.

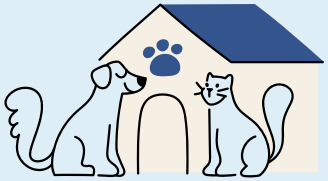
Secret agenda

Team B



Your goal is to cancel the event. You must frame the influencer as a toxic role model who damages young minds for personal gain.

Flash-card



2 hours ago, the influencer donated 80% of their fee to a local animal shelter, but simultaneously posted a video mocking the school's teaching staff.

Handout 1

Core situation

The school council is voting on whether to collect students' smartphones in secure lockers every day from 08:00 to 14:00.

Noise

Economic noise: Lockers cost €5,000 taken from the sports budget.

Cultural noise: Students claim it breaks their rights and emergency contact.

Political noise: Youth board threatens protests against authoritarianism.

Secret agenda

Team A



Your goal is to enforce the ban. You must frame smartphones strictly as digital noise, a breeding ground for cyberbullying, and a primary cause of academic decline.

Secret agenda

Team B



Your goal is total phone freedom. You must accuse administration of dinosaur-age thinking and argue that smartphones are essential modern learning tools.

Flash-card



A new national survey shows that 60% of student cyberbullying incidents occur EXACTLY during school recess hours on personal phones.

Core situation

The school board is considering introducing AI software to automatically grade students' written homework assignments.

Noise

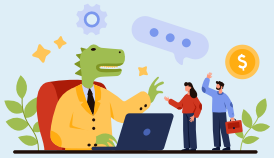
Economic noise: Costs €15,000/year, but cuts teacher overtime pay by 20%.

Cultural noise: Removes human connection and empathy from learning.

Political noise: Principal pushes it to show innovation for elections.

Secret agenda

Team A



Your goal is to enforce the immediate implementation of AI. You must portray opponents as "outdated and anti-future" while dismissing their emotional concerns.

Secret agenda

Team B



Your goal is to completely stop the project. You must leverage the fear of job loss, dehumanisation, and tech dependency in the classroom.

Flash-card



A leaked internal audit reveals that the AI software demonstrates a 35% demographic bias when grading essays from non-native speakers.

Handout 1

Core situation

The municipality plans to demolish an old, heavily used skatepark in the city center to plant an urban forest with walking trails.

Noise

Economic noise:
100% EU funded, but money is lost if not started in 3 months.

Cultural noise:
Skatepark is the only free youth space in town for 15 years.

Political noise:
Mayor wants elderly votes by stopping evening noise.

Secret agenda

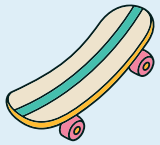
Team A



Your goal is to turn the park into a Green Zone. You must focus heavily on the climate emergency and frame skaters as destructive vandals.

Secret agenda

Team B



Your goal is to preserve and renovate the skatepark. You must frame the municipality as anti-youth and hostile to active sports.

Flash-card



Soil testing reveals toxic industrial residue under the skatepark concrete, making tree planting dangerous without a multi-million euro cleanup.

Handout 3

Filters group observation form

Case title: _____

Team/Phase	What manipulations, emotional language, or logical fallacies were used?	What do you think their secret agenda is?
Team A (Phase 1)		
Team B (Phase 1)		
Team A (Phase 2)		
Team B (Phase 2)		

Which team was more convincing and which key manipulative tactics or noise patterns did they rely on? _____

_____

_____

7. Ariadne's Thread: Four Stops in the Information Labyrinth

Skills and concepts targeted	• Critical thinking • Media and information literacy • Distinguishing claims, opinions, assumptions and evidence • Source evaluation and fact-checking • Analysis of causal and logical links • Evidence-based conclusions • Critical questioning and teamwork
Objectives	• To identify the main claim presented in a piece of information • To distinguish claims, opinions, assumptions and evidence. • To recognise missing or insufficient information • To assess whether the available evidence supports a conclusion • To recognise unsupported generalisations and weak cause-and-effect links • To define appropriate steps for verifying information • To formulate cautious, evidence-based conclusions
Materials needed	Pre-cut string or yarn segments, pens, adhesive tape, timer, flipchart or whiteboard, markers
Tools, sources	Guided information inquiry Station rotation method The "Why?" questioning method Claim-evidence-logic-verification-conclusion framework
Duration	60 minutes
Number of participants	16-20 participants
Handout	Information labyrinth station cards Team investigation worksheet

Description

Core principle

Four teams visit four stations representing the critical thinking pathway:

CLAIM -> EVIDENCE -> LOGIC -> VERIFICATION -> CONCLUSION

At each station, teams analyse a case, record their answers and take one string segment. At the end, they tie the four pieces together into one complete thread. The string represents the four connected steps of critical thinking.

Preparation

1. Print Handout 1, cut out the 4 station cards and place one at each room station.
2. Place 4 equal string or yarn segments beside each station card.
3. Give 1 copy of Handout 2 (Team investigation worksheet) to each team.
4. Write the following pathway on the board:

CLAIM -> EVIDENCE -> LOGIC -> VERIFICATION -> CONCLUSION.

Part 1: Entering the information labyrinth (10 min.)

Introduce the activity briefly. You may say:

"In the ancient Greek myth, Ariadne's thread helped someone find a way out of a labyrinth. Today you will enter an information labyrinth made of persuasive claims, personal stories, numbers and unverified messages. At every station, you will investigate one information situation and collect one part of your thread. After four stations, you will join the parts to reveal the full path that helps us avoid getting lost when evaluating information."

Divide participants into four teams of 4-5 people and assign each team to a starting station. Hand out pens and one copy of Handout 2 per team, explaining that teams will spend 7 minutes at each station and rotate clockwise on your signal.

Clarify that this is not a speed race. Every team will collect four string pieces, but what truly matters is the depth of their discussion, the questions they ask and how well they justify their conclusions.

Part 2: Four information stations (30 min.)

Teams spend 7 minutes at each station using Handout 2. They read the Handout 1 card, discuss the questions, write answers on Handout 2, take 1 string segment and rotate on signal.

For the facilitator:

Station 1: *Absolute and highly confident wording is not evidence.*
Station 2: *One person's experience is not enough to make a general conclusion about everyone.*
Station 3: *Two events occurring together do not prove that one caused the other.*
Station 4: *Before sharing, check the original source, date, official confirmation and other reliable sources.*

Do not assess responses only as "right" or "wrong". When needed, ask: What information supports your conclusion? What is fact and what is assumption? What is still unknown? What information could change your conclusion?

Part 3: Joining the thread and debriefing (20 min.)

Teams tie their 4 string segments into one long thread. After that, each team shares one main insight from Handout 2 in one sentence.

Then the facilitator adds:

"You now have one complete thread, but it is made of four necessary parts. If one part is missing - if we have not understood the claim, assessed the evidence, checked the logic or verified the source - we may choose the wrong path in the information labyrinth."

Point again to the pathway on the board:

CLAIM -> EVIDENCE -> LOGIC -> VERIFICATION -> CONCLUSION

Conclude by explaining that Ariadne's thread does not provide ready-made answers. It reminds us of the path to follow before believing, rejecting or sharing information. Use the remaining 15 minutes for the debriefing questions below.

Debriefing questions:

- Which station in the information labyrinth was the most difficult for you, and why?
- Why is it so easy to believe that two events happening at the same time are linked, and how can we spot that trap?
- Did anyone in your team disagree on whether a claim was believable? How did you resolve different interpretations?
- When is a personal story or review useful and when does it become misleading as proof?
- What can make a weak or unverified claim sound convincing?
- What question will you ask from now on before believing or sharing information?

Source: Developed by YIC in the context of the VIBE project.

Handout 1

Information labyrinth station cards

Station 1
Identify the claim

Situation
A social media advertisement states: "This new learning app improves memory by 100% and helps every learner raise their grades."

Discuss and record your key points on Handout 2:

1. What exactly is being claimed?
2. Which words make the claim sound especially certain or persuasive?
3. Is this a fact, an opinion, an advertising promise or unverified information?
4. What evidence would be needed to assess the claim?
5. What can you reasonably conclude from the information provided?

When you finish, record your key findings on Handout 2, take one string segment and wait for the signal to move on.

Station 2
Assess the evidence

Situation
A blogger states: "I used this learning method and became fluent in English in one week. Therefore, this method works for everyone."

Discuss and record your key points on Handout 2:

1. What is being claimed, and what evidence is offered?
2. Is one person's experience enough to make a conclusion about everyone?
3. What other factors might have influenced the result?
4. What additional information would be needed to assess the method?
5. What can you reasonably conclude at this point?

When you finish, record your key findings on Handout 2, take one string segment and wait for the signal to move on.

Handout 1

Information labyrinth station cards

Station 3
Check the logic

Situation

This year, new security cameras were installed across the city. During the same year, the crime rate fell by 20%. Therefore, the cameras solved the city's crime problem.

Discuss and record your key points on Handout 2:

1. What two pieces of information are presented?
2. Has a cause-and-effect relationship between them been demonstrated?
3. What other factors could explain the fall in crime?
4. What data would be needed to assess the real effect of the cameras?
5. How could the conclusion be worded more cautiously?

When you finish, record your key findings on Handout 2, take one string segment and wait for the signal to move on.

Station 4
Verify before sharing

Situation

You receive a message: "URGENT! From tomorrow, mobile phones will be banned in every school. SHARE so everyone knows!" The message gives no original source, publication date, responsible authority or link to an official announcement.

Discuss and record your key points on Handout 2:

1. What is being claimed?
2. What important information is missing?
3. Which words pressure you to react quickly?
4. List at least four steps you should take before sharing the message.
5. What can you reasonably conclude at this point?

When you finish, record your key findings on Handout 2 and take the final segment of your thread.

Handout 2

Team investigation worksheet

Station 1: Identify the claims

CLAIM ->EVIDENCE -> LOGIC-> VERIFICATION ->CONCLUSION

Main claim:

What was missing or problematic?

Our conclusion:

Station 2: Assess the evidence

CLAIM ->EVIDENCE -> LOGIC-> VERIFICATION ->CONCLUSION

What evidence was presented?

What additional information was needed?

Our conclusion:

Handout 2

Team investigation worksheet

Station 3: Check the logic

CLAIM ->EVIDENCE -> LOGIC-> VERIFICATION ->CONCLUSION

What relationship was presented?

What other explanation could there be?

Our more cautious conclusion:

Station 4: Verify before sharing

CLAIM ->EVIDENCE -> LOGIC-> VERIFICATION ->CONCLUSION

What important information was missing?

Our verification steps:

Our conclusion:

Community engagement and storytelling

This topic introduces a theoretical framework that highlights the core concepts of storytelling and community engagement. Participants learn and apply key terms through role-playing activities and other interactive methods. The selected tools offer practical guidance on the essentials needed to build inclusive, democratic, and rights-based communities.

These tools offer strategies and exercises to promote meaningful, respectful participation in community and group decision-making. The section also introduces digital platforms designed to boost civic engagement, improve understanding of democratic processes, and advance equal opportunities and stronger community connections.



8. Community Problem Solvers

Skills and concepts targeted	• Critical and analytical thinking • Problem-solving skills • Team work, creativity and communication • Active citizenship and community engagement
Objectives	• Increase awareness of local community challenges • Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills • Transform ideas into realistic community actions • Identify and analyse issues affecting various communities • Understand different stakeholders' perspectives • Design practical solutions using collaborative methods
Materials needed	Flipchart paper, sticky notes, markers, timer, tape, A4 paper, Problem canvas worksheet (optional)
Duration	90-120 minutes
Number of participants	12-30 participants

Description

Part 1: Warm-up "What makes a great Community?" (10 min.)

Ask participants: *"Imagine your ideal community. What would it look like?"* Participants write one idea per sticky note.

Examples: Safe streets / Friendly neighbours / Green parks / Accessible transport / Cultural activities / Inclusive spaces

Stick all notes on a wall and briefly discuss recurring themes.

Part 2: Community challenge brainstorm (15 min.)

Ask participants individually to write down local issues they have noticed.

Examples: Too much litter / Young people have nowhere to meet / Elderly feel isolated / Unsafe cycling routes / Food waste / Lack of cultural events / Discrimination / Poor accessibility for people with disabilities

Group similar ideas together. Allow participants to vote using three stickers each. The 3-5 most popular problems move to the next stage.

Part 3: Form teams (5 min.)

Participants choose one problem they are most interested in solving. Groups of 4-6 young people work together.

Part 4: The problem solvers (30 min.)

The facilitator presents on the flipchart or prints and gives each team a Problem canvas worksheet with the following sections:

- What is the problem?
- Who is affected?
- Why does this problem exist?
- Current attempts
- Our idea
- Identify resources needed
- Possible obstacles

Part 5: Pitch your solution (20 min.)

Each group has 3 minutes to present and 2 minutes for questions.

Encourage creative presentations: Role-play / Posters / News report / Short advertisement / Interview

Debriefing questions:

- Which problem surprised you the most?
- What makes a community issue difficult to solve?
- How did your team make decisions?
- Did your solution change during discussion?
- What skills did you use today?
- What could you actually implement after this workshop?
- What role can young people play in improving their communities?

Source: Developed by FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

For the faciliator

Problem canvas worksheet

What is the problem?
Describe it in one sentence.
Example of a problem: The park is full of litter.

Who is affected?
Examples: Teenagers, elderly residents, families, local businesses, municipality

Why does this problem exist?
Encourage participants to dig deeper instead of describing symptoms.
Examples: Few bins, lack of awareness, no community ownership, poor maintenance

Current attempts
Is anyone already trying to solve it?
Examples: Schools, NGOs/CSOs, municipality, volunteers

Our idea
Develop one creative solution. Encourage ideas that are realistic, inclusive, sustainable and low-cost if possible.

Identify resources needed
Examples: People, money, materials, partners, volunteers

Possible obstacles
Examples: Lack of funding, low participation, bureaucracy, weather, time

9. Fact or Fiction

Skills and concepts targeted	• Critical thinking and media literacy • Problem solving and analysis • Fact checking and creativity
Objectives	• Develop critical thinking when consuming media • Recognise misinformation, disinformation and manipulation techniques • Evaluate the credibility of different information sources • Practice fact-checking and evidence-based reasoning • Reflect on their own media consumption habits • Distinguish facts, opinions and emotions in the media
Materials needed	Printed "news articles", social media posts, headlines, memes, and screenshots (a mix of real and fictional content), sticky notes, flipchart paper, markers, Internet access (optional), smartphones (optional), fact-checking worksheet (optional)
Duration	90-120 minutes
Number of participants	12-30 participants

Description

Part 1: Icebreaker "Would you share it?" (10 min.)

Display 8-10 eye-catching headlines around the room.

Examples:

- "Scientists discover chocolate helps you lose weight overnight."
- "Local park closes because squirrels have become too intelligent."
- "New study reveals teenagers sleep better without phones."
- "A celebrity secretly donated €1 million to charity."

Participants move around the room and stand by one of three signs:

- ✅ I would share this.
- ❓ I'm not sure.
- ❌ I wouldn't share it.

After each headline, ask participants:

- *Why did you choose this?*
- *What made it believable?*
- *What information would you need before sharing?*

Explain that attractive headlines often trigger emotional reactions before critical thinking.

Part 2: Spot the tricks (20 min.)

Divide participants into groups of 4-5. Each group receives 5-6 different media examples. Some should be: legitimate news, satire, clickbait, manipulated images, misleading statistics, fake social media posts, AI-generated content.

Their task is to identify:

- What is the message?
- Who created it?
- Which emotions does it trigger?
- What evidence is provided?
- Is anything missing?
- Would you trust it?

Groups write observations on sticky notes.

Part 3: The detective challenge (30 min.)

Introduce the SIFT method for verifying information. Each group receives one suspicious story to investigate. If internet access is available, they may search for original sources, reverse image search, fact-checking websites, and official statistics. If offline, provide printed "clues" that simulate evidence.

Part 4: Build your own fake news (20 min.)

Each group creates a fictional misleading news story. They must intentionally include several manipulation techniques: emotional language, misleading headline, selective facts, lack of sources, fake expert, edited image, and exaggerated statistics.

Groups exchange stories. The receiving team must identify every manipulation technique. This reversal helps participants understand how misinformation is constructed.

Debriefing questions:

- Which stories were hardest to judge?
- What makes misinformation convincing?
- Have you ever shared something without checking it?
- Why do false stories spread so quickly?
- How do emotions affect our decisions online?
- What responsibility do we have as media consumers?
- What habits could help us become more critical?

Source: Developed by FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

For the faciliator

Fact-checking worksheet

What is the message?
Write a 1-sentence summary of the main claim.
Who created it?
Check for an author, publisher, or account name or is it anonymous?
Who benefits?
Consider motives. Is it money, clicks, political influence, clout?
Which emotions does it trigger?
Identify emotional hooks - fear, outrage, shock, over-excitement.
What evidence is provided?
Look for real sources, expert names, official data, original photos.
Is anything missing?
Watch out for missing context, clickbait titles, cherry-picked facts.
Would you trust it?
Final call: yes, unsure, no, and the reason why.

For the faciliator

SIFT method

S – Stop
- Don't react immediately.

I – Investigate the source
- Who published it?
- Is the author identifiable?
- What is the purpose?

F – Find better coverage
- Is the story reported elsewhere?

T – Trace to the original
- Where did the information originate?
- Is there original evidence?

S top

I nvestigate the source

F ind better coverage

T race to the original

10. Community Pulse: Uncovering Local Realities

Skills and concepts targeted	• Active listening and empathy • Evidence-based thinking • Public communication and advocacy • Storytelling for civic action
Objectives	• To empower youth to identify, observe and map local issues and unvoiced stories • To build active listening skills • To practice turning observations into impactful stories and proposals • To strengthen youth agency and civic responsibility
Materials needed	Pens, sticky notes (2 colours), flipchart paper, colour markers
Tools, sources	Integrated D.E.A.R approach: Discover – Engage – Analyse – Reframe
Duration	120 minutes
Number of participants	15-20 participants

Description

Part 1: Setting the scene (10 min.)

The facilitator draws a 4-quadrant matrix on a central flipchart: Public spaces, Local services, Social inclusion and Environment. Participants write one overlooked local reality or story on a sticky note and place it in the matrix to establish a shared diagnostic map of the community.

Part 2: Discover: Mapping the narrative arc (15 min.)

In small working groups (3-5 participants), youth select a thematic cluster from the matrix. On a blank flipchart, teams draw a large hill-shaped story arc to sequence the issue visually.

At the left base, they write the Location and context (where it happens). At the peak, they define the Core obstacle (the main challenge or conflict occurring there), and at the right base, they list the Affected stakeholders (the people directly impacted). This creates a clear visual narrative of the local reality before digging deeper.

Part 3: Engage: The hot seat inquiry (25 min.)

Groups conduct a role-play simulation. One participant assumes the role of an affected local stakeholder, while the others act as youth researchers. Teams practice active listening and open-ended questioning to explore lived experiences, capturing key quotes directly on their Narrative arc.

Part 4: Analyse: Separating facts from assumptions (15 min.)

Teams divide the bottom or side of their flipchart into two columns: "What we know for sure" and "What we assume". Under *What we know*, they write down direct quotes from the simulation, visible facts or data. Under *What we assume*, they list personal opinions, generalisations, or stereotypes that still need checking. This helps participants filter out bias and make sure their proposed actions are built on real evidence rather than guesses.

Part 5: Reframe: Constructive pitch (15 min.)

Teams reframe their findings into a 3-minute advocacy pitch structured around three core points:

- The reality: What observable facts define the issue?
- The voice: Whose lived experience needs visibility?
- The action: What concrete, youth-led initiative can drive positive change?

Part 6: Plenary showcase and peer review (25 min.)

Participants conduct a gallery walk, reviewing peer proposals and leaving constructive feedback directly on the posters using markers.

Part 7: Debriefing and reflection (15 min.)

The facilitator leads a structured reflection on moving from passive observation to active, evidence-based civic participation.

Debriefing questions:

- How does structuring a community issue as a Narrative arc improve your analysis of local needs?
- What insights did the Hot seat simulation reveal regarding the difference between personal assumptions and lived experiences?
- Why is separating verifiable facts from assumptions critical for effective civic advocacy?
- What is one immediate step your team can take to make this proposal into local action?
- What is the main message you want your local community to remember from your pitch?
- Did this process make you feel more confident in your ability to spark local change? Why?

Source: Developed by MilleniuM/FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

11. The Advocacy Spectrum: From Words to Action

Skills and concepts targeted	• Public speaking • Active listening • Critical thinking • Strategic negotiation and persuasion • Narrative reframing
Objectives	• To practice reframing personal opinions into constructive, evidence-based civic action • To explore how clear arguments and verifiable facts can bridge polarization in a community • To build empathy and active listening skills when facing opposing views • To learn using storytelling to humanize complex community issues
Materials needed	Tape (for the floor), flipchart paper, coloured markers
Tools, sources	3P pitch framework (Problem, Proof, Proposal)
Duration	60-70 minutes
Number of participants	15-20 participants

Description

Part 1: Preparing the scene (10 min.)

The facilitator creates a physical line on the floor, placing "Full support" at one end and "Sceptical" at the other. The facilitator explains that community initiatives often face scepticism and the goal of advocacy is not to win debates, but to build common ground.

One of the following community dilemmas (or another prepared) is selected based on the group's profile:

- **Urban youth space vs Local residents:** A youth group wants to convert an abandoned municipal park into an outdoor youth hub and venue. Local residents strongly oppose it, fearing noise, littering and lack of security.
- **Digital literacy for seniors vs Youth volunteers:** An initiative proposes mandatory weekend digital workshops where youth teach local seniors' digital skills. Young people feel burnt out and reluctant to commit their weekends without formal recognition or compensation.
- **Green transportation vs Local merchants:** A proposal aims to pedestrianise a central commercial street to cut emissions and create community zones. Local shop owners fear losing business due to restricted parking and delivery access.

Part 2: Building the 3P pitch (20 min.)

Participants form small working groups of 4-5 members. On a flipchart, each team structures a persuasive 3-minute advocacy pitch designed to convince sceptics, using the 3P framework:

- **Problem:** What is the specific community challenge, who is affected, and why does it matter now?
- **Proof:** What is one verifiable fact, data point or compromise measure that directly addresses common doubts? (for example: Data shows youth hubs reduce vandalism by 30%, and we propose strict 22:00 quiet hours.)
- **Proposal:** What is a concrete, youth-led solution that invites sceptical residents to benefit or participate rather than oppose?

Part 3: Testing the spectrum and live persuasion (20 min.)

All participants reset on the physical Advocacy spectrum line according to their initial positions on the selected dilemma. Each working group presents their 3-minute 3P pitch. Following the presentation, 1-2 participants standing on the "Sceptical" side voice their biggest remaining doubt or question. The presenting team is given 1 minute to offer a constructive response or compromise based on their facts and proposal.

Once the exchange is complete, the facilitator instructs the participants: "Based on the pitch and the team's answer, if your perspective shifted or your doubts were addressed, take a step forward toward "Full support"." Seeing participants physically move along the spectrum provides immediate, visual feedback on the power of constructive advocacy.

Part 4: Debriefing and reflection (15 min.)

Facilitator leads a structured plenary reflection on constructive civic influence and perspective-taking with the participants.

Debriefing questions:

- How did it feel to step into the shoes of a community sceptic?
- Did the 3P framework help you structure your thoughts?
- When did the pitch feel like a real story rather than just an argument?
- How did hearing an opposing view change the way you framed your solution?
- What specifically made you move your feet along the spectrums?
- What is one real cause in your own community where you can apply this approach to turn opposition into support?

Source: Developed by MilleniuM/FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

12. Together for Local Solutions

Skills and concepts targeted	• Cooperation and participation in dialogue • Community engagement • Critical thinking and problem solving • Active listening
Objectives	• To identify pressing community challenges from diverse youth perspectives • To co-design realistic, youth-led action steps for local impact • To practice constructive dialogue and shared community solutions • To map local community assets and potential allies for initiatives • To strengthen youth leadership and active participation in decision-making processes
Materials needed	Chairs (arranged in 3 separate group spaces/hubs), flipchart paper, clipboards (optional), coloured markers, sticky notes (3 different colours), timer
Tools, sources	World Café Method - The World Café Community Foundation
Duration	80-90 minutes
Number of participants	12-15 participants

Description

Part 1: Introduction (10 min.)

The facilitator introduces the interactive workshop aimed at co-creating a shared Community action map, setting a collaborative tone across the room's 3 designated dialogue hubs. Participants are introduced to the rules: focus on practical solutions, capture ideas directly on the working sheets, build constructively on each other's contributions and practice active listening throughout the rotations.

How the rounds and rotation work (brief explanation for the facilitator)

Prompt: *The guiding question presented by the facilitator to spark table discussions.*

Focus: *The target outcome and limitations (for example: keeping answers specific rather than general) to keep discussions productive.*

The rotation mechanic (2 min. transition): *When a 15-minute round ends, one randomly selected Host remains at each hub while all other participants rotate to a new space. During the 2-minute transition, the Host gives a brief 60-second summary of the previous discussions. Throughout each round, participants continuously write/draw their ideas on 3 colour-coded sticky notes tailored to their hub's focus. Rather than starting from scratch or altering existing notes, incoming groups review the sheet and add new sticky notes directly alongside the previous ones to build upon and complement earlier contributions.*

Part 2: The 3 dialogue rounds (45 min.)

Round 1 - Local reality check (15 min.)

Prompt: What are the most urgent, overlooked challenges young people face in our community today?
Focus: Pinpointing concrete local issues rather than general complaints.
(2 min. rotation - participants switch hubs and Hosts brief the new group)

Round 2 - Unlocking community assets (15 min.)

Prompt: What hidden resources, allies or local strengths can we leverage to address these challenges?
Focus: Shifting mindset from "what we lack" to "what we can use" (for example: local businesses, schools, digital tools, passionate peers).
(2 min. rotation - final swap to the last hub)

Round 3 - Designing the solution (15 min.)

Prompt: What is one concrete, youth-led initiative we can pitch to local decision-makers to solve this?
Focus: Formulating an actionable proposal with clear first steps.

Part 3: Harvesting and building the Action map (10 min.)

To synthesise the results, the three Hosts bring their working sheets to the main front flipchart. Working alongside the facilitator, they gather the key sticky notes and summarise the main insights into a unified Community action map organised under three columns: Challenge, Asset/Ally and Next step.

Part 4: Debriefing and reflection (15 min.)

The facilitator ends with a reflection focused on local impact, cross-perspective understanding and transforming ideas into structured action.

Debriefing questions:

- Which idea transformed the most as different groups added their perspective to it?
- What was the most interesting compromise or solution co-created today?
- Did you have to let go of an initial idea to make room for a better solution?
- What was an unexpected resource/ally someone mentioned that you hadn't considered before?
- Did you see your own thoughts reflected on the board by the end?
- How can you use this 3-step approach (problem, asset, solution) in your own local projects?

Source: Developed by MilleniuM/FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

13. Interactive Chapters of Change

Skills and concepts targeted	• Empathy and active listening • Combating stereotypes • Intercultural dialogue • Community problem-solving
Objectives	• To explore and challenge stereotypes through peer-to-peer storytelling • To practice fast-paced, critical digital research using mobile technology to find solutions • To foster inclusive teamwork, active listening and constructive civic reflection • To practice pitching and public speaking in a safe environment • To transform personal stories into practical youth-led initiatives
Materials needed	Pens, flipchart paper, coloured markers, sticky notes, phones (with internet access), timer
Tools, sources	Adopted from the Living library method
Duration	75-80 minutes
Number of participants	15-20 participants
Handout	Digital investigation guide (one for every group or written as a visible guide for all participants on a flipchart)

Description

Part 1: Introduction and preparation (10 min.)

The facilitator explains that participants will take turns acting as "Living books" (storytellers) and "Readers" (listeners and researchers). The goal is to listen to real community experiences and use digital tools to turn them into civic solutions. Participants are divided into 3 groups (sitting separately in the room), and basic ground rules are set: mutual respect, active listening and open-mindedness.

Part 2: Story Sharing (10 min.)

In each of the 3 working groups, participants take 3-4 minutes to agree on one specific story or topic to focus on. One group member steps up as the "Living book" and shares a brief 5-minute story based on personal experience or an observed community issue/stereotype (for example: discrimination, youth passivity, lack of public spaces or environmental obstacles). The other group members listen actively without interrupting, preparing to take on the role of "Readers".

If no participant immediately volunteers to share a personal story, the group can agree to focus on a well-known local challenge or stereotype.

Part 3: Reading and digital investigation (20 min.)

Once the story is shared within the group, the activity moves into active investigation using the Digital investigation guide as a guiding tool.

Clarifying questions: (5 min.)

The "Readers" ask brief, respectful questions to understand the Living Book's story better and pinpoint the central obstacle or stereotype involved.

Digital investigation: (15 min)

Guided by the prompt questions, participants use their mobile phones to search how similar issues, challenges, or stereotypes have been successfully tackled in other cities, organizations or youth projects worldwide. They filter their search to identify 1-2 practical, inspiring examples.

Part 4: Action Sheet design (20 min.)

Using a single flipchart sheet, each group combines the Living Book's story with their digital findings into a structured Action sheet consisting of four distinct sections:

The Issue: A summary of the main problem or situation presented in the story.
The Stereotype/Barrier: The key prejudice or social obstacle connected to this issue.
The Global Insight: The most relevant good practice or initiative discovered during the digital search.

Our Local Action: One practical, realistic step young people can take in their own community to begin solving this issue.

Part 5: Pitching (10 min.)

Each group selects a representative (or presents jointly) to launch their Living Book and present their Action Sheet to the rest of the room (3 min. per group). The facilitator ensures that presentations remain focused on practical outcomes and youth initiative.

Part 6: Debriefing and reflection (15 min.)

The facilitator brings all participants together to conduct a structured debriefing on empathy, digital literacy and civic participation.

Debriefing questions:

- Did researching real-world examples online change or broaden your perspective on the initial story or stereotype?
- How can young people use digital tools more effectively to address civic issues in everyday life?
- Which stories or topics left the strongest impression on you today?
- How does open dialogue actually help build stronger, less biased communities?
- What is the first thing you'll post or text today to make people care about your solution?

Source: Developed by MilleniuM/FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

Handout 1

Digital investigation guide

1. What are 2-3 main keywords that describe the Living Book's challenge?
(for example: youth engagement public spaces, anti-discrimination campaigns for youth, local green initiatives by students)

2. Has another city, NGO or school solved a similar problem? What specific project or campaign did they run?

3. Did they use social media, interactive maps, creative events or community petitions to make it work?

4. What is ONE element from their success story that we could easily copy or adapt in our own town/city?

14. The Stand-up Writing Room

Skills and concepts targeted	• Creative and quick thinking • Collaborative mindset • Boost of confidence in expressing oneself • Reduction of inhibitions from speaking in front of others
Objectives	• To enable participants to have the confidence to improvise • To learn about the storytelling processes • To demonstrate the process of creativity that is productive • To demonstrate the importance of rigour in story construction • To develop openness when working with others
Materials needed	Space for all participants to be able to stand up in groups, cardboard (preferably) or paper, pens
Tools, sources	Examples of short, accessible clips explaining basic story structure and narrative arc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47wGSqiB5Ec or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEclCgpjas0 not too difficult if the participants are beginners to storytelling activities.
Duration	60 minutes
Number of participants	15-40 participants
Handout	The four pillars of a story (optional) The three-act structure (optional)

Description

Prepare five sets of pieces of paper or cardboard and on each set write words falling in five categories with a set for each category: nouns (table, dog, banana etc.), personalities (butcher, Tanya, the officer etc.), verbs (eating, cutting, slicing etc.), locations (on the street, on the sofa, in the passenger seat etc.) and times of day (early morning, at 02:00, in fifteen minutes etc.).

Ask the participants about storytelling and what they think makes a good story. Introduce the subject of storytelling and the hook, character, conflict or dilemma, resolution structure with examples (Handout 1 and Handout 2 - optional).

Divide the groups of 5 (this number needs to correspond with the categories of cards so that each member in each group has a word from a different category of words from step 1, divided randomly (ideally but not necessarily depending on the context).

Once they are divided into groups, call on members of each group to come forward and pick a card each from the different categories of words, with papers facing down so that it looks like a lottery.

Ask the groups to stand in different parts of the room and let them know that they are about to receive instructions that they need to fulfil in 10-15 minutes. Give them instructions to create a story with the random words in each group, and tell them that their story needs to have a hook, character, conflict or dilemma, and resolution structure.

Set a timer and let them work for the time allocated, letting them know when time is nearly up unless you see that they are ready before then.

Invite each group to come out and tell their story, and ask or help participants point out the dilemma, the resolution(s), etc., without sounding judgemental or making assessments, using creative questions and funny points from the stories.

Give them a five-minute break and then regroup for a debriefing and suggest a further watch list.

Debriefing questions:

- How did you feel about the activity?
- Which part of the structure (hook, character, conflict, resolution) was easiest to build and which was hardest?
- How comfortable did you feel presenting, and did you end up improvising anything on the spot?
- How can this ability to quickly turn random elements into a clear story help you in real life or work?
- Looking back on the activity, do you see how the story of your group or of another group could have developed differently?

Source: Developed by VisMed in the context of the VIBE project.

Handout 1

The Four Pillars of a Story

Every story - from a 15-second Reel to a feature film - stands on these four supports. Find them, and the structure follows.

01 Character

WHO is the story about?

The person we follow and care about. The audience needs someone to root for - a face, a voice, a point of view.



02 Goal

WHAT do they want?

A specific, concrete want that drives every action. No goal, no direction - the story stalls.



03 Obstacle

WHAT stands in the way?

The conflict - external (a rival, a deadline) or internal (fear, doubt). This is where the story lives.



04 Change

HOW are they different at the end?

The transformation. The character - or the viewer - is not the same as when we started. This is the payoff.



THE ARC →

- **Character + Goal** set up the start
- **Obstacle** creates the middle
- **Change** delivers the end.

VIBE

Handout 2

The Three-Act Structure

Tension is not flat - it rises. Map any story onto a curve of conflict that builds to a climax and resolves.



ACT I
Beginning

Establish the status quo and the character's normal world - then break it. The **inciting incident** is the spark that sets the goal in motion.

ACT II
Middle

Conflict escalates through obstacles and micro-conflicts. Stakes rise, complications stack - building to the **climax**, the moment of highest tension.

ACT III
End

The tension releases. The conflict resolves, the goal is won or lost, and the **change -** the lesson learned - lands with the audience.

RULE → Raise the **stakes**: what catastrophically happens if the goal is not achieved?

15. Where is This Story Going?

Skills and concepts targeted	• Creative thinking and quick thinking • Collaborative mindset • Active listening • Empathy and acceptance • Boost of confidence in expressing oneself • Reduction of inhibitions from speaking in front of others
Objectives	• To tap the participants' creativity • To enable participants to have the confidence to improvise • To challenge participants to work in a joint output over which they have no control • To develop respectful behaviour in a fun dynamic • To develop openness when working with others and confidence in contributing in a team
Materials needed	Space for all participants to sit in a circle so that it is easy to see each other lifting hands to speak, screen/large cardboard, stop watch/an hour glass
Duration	60-90 minutes
Number of participants	15-40 participants

Description

The activity is divided into two parts.

Part 1: Preparation

Prepare three safe phrases that will be used by participants who do not have a quick idea to contribute to a cooperative storytelling activity, such as "Where is this story going?", "Are you smelling ammonia in the air?" or "One of us is up to no good." to make the activity inclusive and to have pressure release for those who are in a fix due to lack of confidence, in a moment of distraction or really not having an idea what to say.

Prepare the start of a story with elements to trigger participants' creativity to continue the story.

Prepare the safe phrases on the screen or on large paper or cardboard where they are visible to all participants during the activity.

Part 2: Implementation

Place the participants in a circle or in a way where they can see each other and introduce the activity, explaining the aim that it is collaborative storytelling in a fun way but with specific objectives - not to have the perfect story but to build things together and to be able to express ideas within a discipline.

Explain to the participants the process they will follow: a story will be started, and then the facilitator will point to the next person to contribute to the story. Still, participants can also lift their hand if they have an idea of where the story could go; the steps and twists need to be specific, not generic, and the facilitator can, from time to time, give points such as "and now there is a twist" or "and now it starts to rain". *****

Explain that those who do not have an idea when they are asked to contribute to the story can use one of the three safe phrases (no need to explain that it is an inclusion measure to reduce pressure). Still, it is positive for one to say that if one does not know what/how to contribute, they have one of the three phrases as an exit card to safety.

Start reading the story and start pointing out the next contributor, etc., until either the story dies a natural death (when all protagonists die), the dynamic slows down, or time is up. It is not advised to repeat the exercise twice unless you see that the first round took time to start and you can use the same starting story and take it differently with different contributions, with prompts from the facilitator/s etc.

Start advising when time is soon up or when it is halfway so that it helps keep the dynamic. Applause for an end and go to debriefing after a 5 minutes break.*****

*******at this point at the beginning or at the end of the project the facilitator/s can (depending on the audience) help the participants relate to the hook, character, conflict, resolution structure of stories and the prompts by the facilitator can help maintain these four steps in different instances of the process.*

Debriefing questions:

- How did you feel about the activity?
- Looking back on the activity, which key emotions did you feel during the process?
- Did you feel included or excluded in the process?
- Did you feel that everyone was included in the process?
- Did you understand the use of the safe phrases? Did they make you feel safer in the process?
- Did the activity help you (better) understand the hook, character, conflict, resolution structures of stories and the importance of these in making stories engaging and interesting.
- Did the activity bring you any new forms of cooperation skills?

Source: Developed by VisMed in the context of the VIBE project.

16. The Story Spine Writing Room

Skills and concepts targeted	• Creative thinking and quick thinking • Active teamwork and public speaking • Emotional intelligence and empathy • Character development and multi-sensory storytelling
Objectives	• To tap the participants' creativity • To enable participants to have the confidence to improvise • To challenge participants to work in a joint output on which they need to compromise constantly • To develop resilience in a group • To develop focus and boost attention span through creativity
Materials needed	Space for all participants to meet and then separate space for working groups if the group is large and one needs break out groups, A laptop (linked to some sort of amplification)
Duration	60-90 minutes
Number of participants	15-40 participants
Handout	Stories with and without structure

Description

The activity is divided into three parts.

Part 1: Preparation

Prepare one story that offers the spine, respecting the storytelling arc of the hook, character, conflict, and resolution in a very short synthesis - more than one story if one has a large group and there will be the need for breakout groups.

Part 2: Implementation

Gather the youth in a space and provide them with the hook, character, conflict, and resolution storytelling arc, with examples depending on the level of media and storytelling literacy of the participants.

Introduce the activity and the process they will follow together as a writing room and joint scriptwriting team, and explain that the result will be a joint outcome and what competences are in focus, such as compromise when working together towards one common result.

Divide the participants into groups (depending on the size of the group) and make time to take a break, i.e., standing up and moving about. Once in groups, give time for them to get to know each other if necessary, then regroup for a briefing on the next steps.

Read the story to them and ensure they are aware of the hook, character, conflict, and resolution of the short story. If there is more than one group, it is advisable to have more facilitators so that the stories are read to the different groups simultaneously in different spaces.

The group works in three phases:

A. They discuss the storyline and embellish the personalities that could be involved, maybe not only the ones mentioned in the spine story, and each one or in pairs, develop the personality/ies in more detail, including some info that may never become relevant to the story but helps make them real people. This is done, possibly with the help of a facilitator, in line with the spine story to make effective use of the time allowed for this.

B. They develop a more three-dimensional version of the spine story with the newly developed personalities and with new parts and dimensions that convey the emotion working on a joint compromise for a story with a clear mind about what and where the chosen emotion is conveyed – and whether the emotion is of the personality/ies and whether the viewer will understand the emotion and whether this also affects the audience – with two or three revisions of the story.

C. They come up with the final story and prepare a new longer narrative of the spine story and plan a joint delivery in the restitution phase.

Part 3: Restitution

After a break, the groups are asked to choose a piece of music that would make a good soundtrack for their story. This prepares for the restitution and adds a surprise element to help the team/s reconvene before they share their final joint output.

The group/s present their story with the music soundtrack they chose playing on the laptop in the background. If there is more than one story to present, it is recommended that peer review is left till the end to keep the momentum and maintain the short movie feel in the dynamic.

Final applause and feedback are solicited. The facilitators may direct feedback on the stories, but this may reduce the ending-on-a-high effect; therefore, feedback about the emotional journey is more recommended to close.

Debriefing questions:

- Can you imagine your story as a short movie?
- How much do you like the final result of the joint story?
- Was the timing stressful? Could the activity have been done in a shorter time?
- Did the limited time element help the group reach a compromise and focus on the output?
- How were disagreements, if any, managed in the group?
- Was this an emotional journey for you?
- Are you aware that the activity focused on instilling several aspects of discipline in thinking and working with others?
- Did the activity bring you any new forms of cooperation skills?

Source: Developed by VisMed in the context of the VIBE project.

Handout 1

Story 1

The echo of a lie

A single misleading headline can destroy months of trust in a single second. Stefan is an active youth leader who relies heavily on social media to recruit volunteers and share news about community campaigns. During a critical local initiative, Stefan accidentally shares a sensationalised article with unverified facts. The post goes viral, triggering intense backlash, public confusion, and loss of credibility for his team's cause. Instead of deleting his account, Stefan takes responsibility. He publishes a transparent fact-check, attends a practical media literacy training and implements a strict verification workflow for his team. His honest recovery restores community trust and makes their digital channels stronger than before

Story 1 (with structure)

The echo of a lie

Hook: A single misleading headline can destroy months of trust in a single second.

Character (Stefan): Stefan is an active youth leader who relies heavily on social media to recruit volunteers and share news about community campaigns.

Conflict: During a critical local initiative, Stefan accidentally shares a sensationalised article with unverified facts. The post goes viral, triggering intense backlash, public confusion, and loss of credibility for his team's cause.

Resolution: Instead of deleting his account, Stefan takes responsibility. He publishes a transparent fact-check, attends a practical media literacy training and implements a strict verification workflow for his team. His honest recovery restores community trust and makes their digital channels stronger than before.

Handout 2

Story 2

The broken bridge

Innovation without tradition lacks roots, and tradition without innovation lacks a future. Ivana is an ambitious high school graduate proposing a new youth hub in an old town building. She faces harsh resistance from senior city council members who view young people as irresponsible and see the project as a wasteful use of historic municipal property. Ivana shifts the strategy. She invites elders to a joint roundtable, framing the hub as a shared space preserving local heritage while adding modern digital skills workshops. The council approves the initiative with unanimous support.

Story 1 (with structure)

The broken bridge

Hook: Innovation without tradition lacks roots and tradition without innovation lacks a future.

Character (Ivana): Ivana is an ambitious high school graduate proposing a new youth hub in an old town building.

Conflict: She faces harsh resistance from senior city council members who view young people as irresponsible and see the project as a wasteful use of historic municipal property.

Resolution: Ivana shifts the strategy. She invites elders to a joint roundtable, framing the hub as a shared space preserving local heritage while adding modern digital skills workshops. The council approves the initiative with unanimous support.

17. The Rise and Fall of a Story

Skills and concepts targeted	• Creative and critical thinking • Collaboration and teamwork • Problem solving and analytical skills • Literary analysis • Emotional awareness
Objectives	• Explain Kurt Vonnegut's concept of Story Shapes. • Identify the emotional highs and lows in a story. • Create a visual representation of a story using a story graph. • Collaborate with others through discussion and group work. • Reflect on how stories and personal experiences follow emotional patterns.
Materials needed	A4 paper/graph paper, pens, pencils, colored markers, whiteboard or projector, sticky notes, Story shape template (optional)
Tools, sources	Kurt Vonnegut on the 8 “shapes” of stories by Steven Johnson, June 13, 2022.
Duration	60-90 minutes
Number of participants	15-30 participants

Description

The activity is divided into two parts.

Part 1: Icebreaker - "Guess the story" (10 min.)

Instructions:

- Ask participants to think of their favourite movie, fairy tale, or novel.
- Without revealing the title, they describe only the emotional journey of the main character (for example: "The character starts happy, loses everything, then succeeds in the end.").
- The other participants guess the story.
- After several examples, introduce Kurt Vonnegut's idea that stories can be represented by simple emotional graphs.

Purpose: To engage participants and introduce the concept of emotional storytelling.

Part 2: Mini-lecture - Understanding story shapes (15 min.)

Facilitator input:
Explain that American author Kurt Vonnegut believed stories follow recognisable emotional patterns. Draw on the board or print the Story shape template. Clarify that the line rises whenever something positive happens and falls whenever something negative happens.

Present a familiar example such as Cinderella:

- Cinderella is unhappy at home **(low)**.
- She attends the ball **(high)**.
- She loses the prince at midnight **(low)**.
- The prince finds her and they marry **(high)**.

Discuss how emotional ups and downs make stories engaging.

Part 3: Group Challenge - Draw the story shape (30 min.)

Instructions:
Divide participants into groups of 3-5. Each group chooses one story, such as: Cinderella, Harry Potter, Frozen, Moana, Spider-Man, The Lion King, or any other story. Then let groups discuss the major events in the story. On a sheet of paper, they draw the emotional journey of the main character using a graph. After that, they label each rise and fall with important events.

Presentation:
Each group presents its graph without revealing the story title. The audience guesses which story it represents before the group reveals the answer.

Part 4: Reflection - My own story shape (20 min.)

I**nstructions:** Ask participants to think about an important experience in their own lives. Using the same graph, they plot:

- **A challenge they faced**
- **A turning point**
- **How the situation ended**
- **What they learned from the experience**

Participants may share their graphs voluntarily.

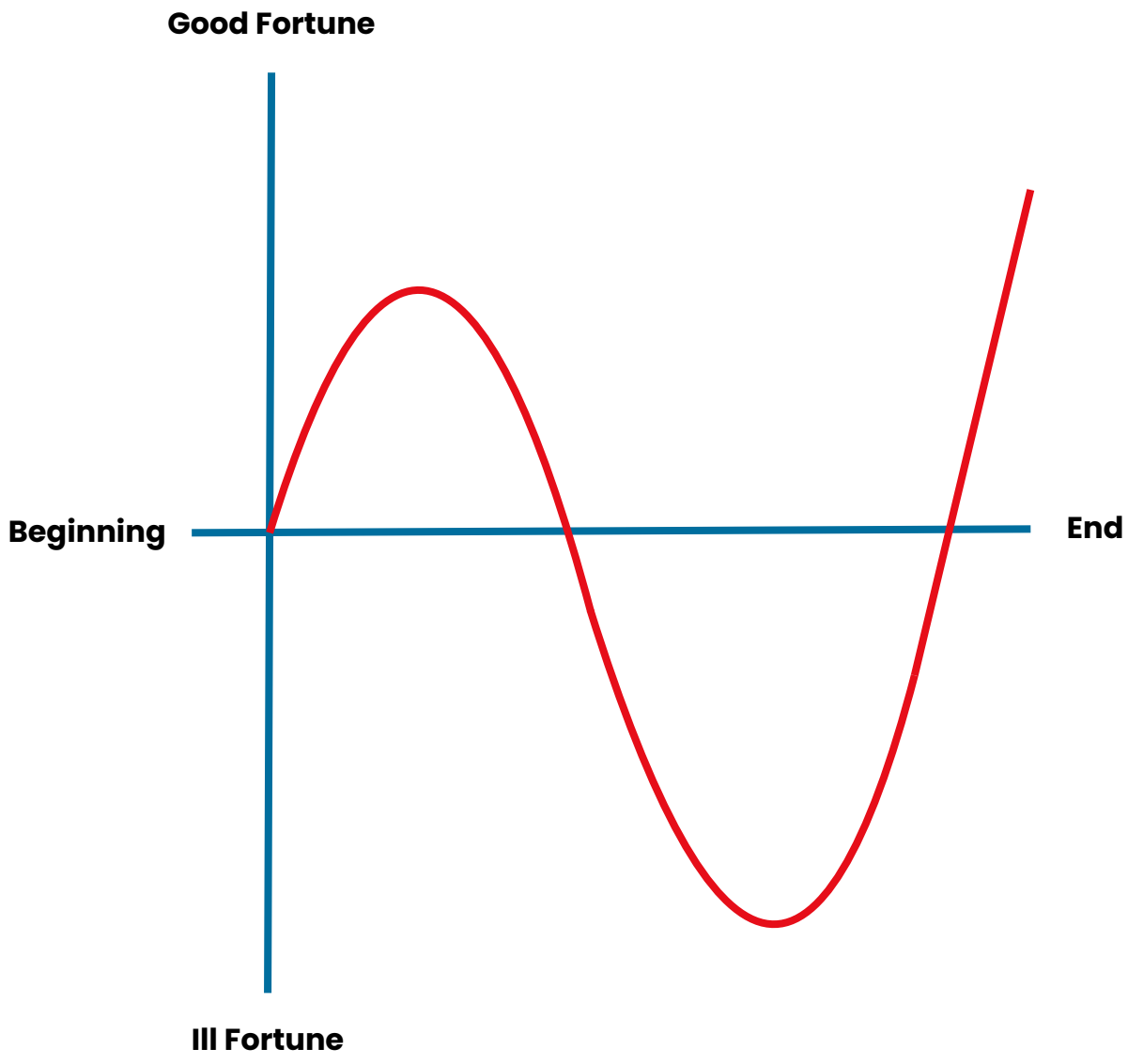
Debriefing questions:

- What similarities did you notice among different story shapes?
- Why do stories usually include problems or conflicts?
- Which story shape appeared most often?
- Did any personal experiences resemble the shape of a famous story?
- How can understanding story structure help us become better readers or storytellers?

Source: Developed by FECE in the context of the VIBE project.

For the faciliator

Story shape template



Conclusion

This toolkit highlights the powerful role that storytelling, media literacy, and critical thinking can play in empowering young people to become active, responsible, and confident members of their communities. By combining participatory and practical learning methods, it supports youth workers in creating spaces where young people feel heard, respected, and encouraged to share their views. In this way, the toolkit not only strengthens communication and leadership skills, but also helps build social cohesion, democratic participation, and a stronger commitment to European values. Ultimately, it offers a meaningful path for turning young people from passive recipients of information into informed voices and engaged contributors to community life.



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TRAINING TOOLKIT FOR YOUTH WORKERS ON STORYTELLING



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