

Public Dialogue training based on the Norwegian Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue methodology





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Public Dialogue for Youth: Building Bridges Through Understanding

We envision a society where young people are empowered to engage in meaningful dialogue, build mutual understanding, and become active contributors to inclusive and democratic communities.

Public Dialogue for Youth supports young people as agents of change by equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to communicate openly, think critically, and approach differences with empathy and respect.

Implemented within the Erasmus+ programme, this project brings together organisations from Poland, Latvia, and Spain to create an innovative educational framework based on the dialogue methodology inspired by the Norwegian Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue. The project focuses on promoting dialogue as a tool for understanding rather than confrontation, encouraging young people to listen, reflect, and find common ground when discussing complex social issues.

Our main goal is to empower youth — especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds — to develop civic engagement, social sensitivity, and a sense of responsibility for the challenges facing today's Europe. Through a combination of training, practical activities, and community-based initiatives, participants gain not only knowledge but also real-life experience in facilitating and participating in public dialogue.

But beyond that, this project is about creating a space — a safe and open environment where young people can express themselves, ask difficult questions, and grow through shared experiences and perspectives.

Through this initiative, we present the outcomes of a collective journey — from developing a dialogue-based curriculum to implementing local actions and pilot dialogues led by young participants. Across different countries and communities, young people have come together to explore topics such as identity, migration, equality, and environmental challenges, building connections that go beyond borders.

We hope that the results presented here will inspire others to use dialogue as a powerful tool for understanding, cooperation, and positive social change — in their communities and beyond.



Who is behind Public Dialogue for Youth?



PASOS (Spain)

a non-profit organization aimed at energizing and empowering young people, educators, and agents of social change.

Creative Ideas (Latvia)

a non-governmental organisation promoting creative education and inclusion through innovative learning tools and participatory design.



Activity Cooperation Development "Everyone is Welcome" Association (Poland)



an organization focused on social inclusion, gender equality, and civic participation through education and community action.



PILOT COMMUNITY ACTIONS





Pilot Community Actions from Poland

ORGANIZED BY: ACTIVITY COOPERATION
DEVELOPMENT "EVERYONE IS WELCOME"
ASSOCIATION

As part of the Public Dialogue for Youth project, six pilot public dialogues were implemented in Poland by young participants after completing a dedicated training programme in public dialogue. With the support of trainers acting as supervisors, the participants were able to apply their newly acquired skills in practice.

The dialogues were organized in their own environments — in schools as well as in non-formal educational settings, such as language schools and other local community spaces. Sessions were conducted mainly in Polish, with some also held in English, adding an extra layer of challenge and inclusivity. This experience allowed young people not only to engage their communities, but also to build confidence, discover new strengths, and grow into the role of dialogue facilitators at the local level.

TRAINING FOR TRAINERS: PREPARING FOR PUBLIC DIALOGUES FOR YOUTH

Before the implementation of the Public Dialogues for Youth, a Training for Trainers held in June in Kielce brought together representatives of all partner organisations. Each organisation was represented by two participants, creating an international team ready to build a strong foundation for the project.

This training was a key step in ensuring quality and consistency in how public dialogues would later be facilitated with young people. It combined both theoretical understanding and extensive hands-on practice, allowing participants not only to learn, but to experience the process of dialogue truly.

DESCRIPTION

The training focused on developing facilitation skills, understanding the principles of dialogue, and preparing participants to support young people as they lead their own discussions.

Participants explored:

- what public dialogue really means and how it differs from debate or discussion
- how to create a safe, inclusive, and non-judgmental space
- the role of a facilitator and the importance of neutrality
- how to guide conversations on sensitive or complex topics
- how to act as a supervisor and support young facilitators in their learning process
- how to design and deliver training sessions for youth

A strong emphasis was placed on practice — participants spent a significant amount of time simulating dialogues, facilitating sessions, and reflecting together. This experiential approach allowed them to better understand group dynamics, challenges, and the responsibility that comes with guiding dialogue.

KEY LEARNINGS:

- ✓ Facilitation is not about leading the conversation, but about holding space for others to speak and be heard.
- ✓ Creating trust and safety is essential for meaningful dialogue.
- ✓ Supporting young facilitators requires patience, awareness, and the ability to guide without taking control.
- ✓ Practice is crucial — real understanding comes through experience, not only theory.

This training played a crucial role in preparing the team to work with young people and support them in conducting their own pilot public dialogues. It ensured that the methodology was not only understood, but embodied — allowing it to be passed on in an authentic and impactful way.





PUBLIC DIALOGUE: FEAR OF FAILURE

THE CHALLENGE:

Many young people struggle to openly talk about emotions such as fear of failure, especially in familiar environments like school, where fear of judgment can limit honest expression.

DESCRIPTION

One of the participants implemented a pilot public dialogue in their own school with a group of students aged 14–15. The session focused on the topic of fear of failure — an issue highly relevant and emotionally significant for teenagers.

The dialogue was facilitated by a trained participant who, after completing the public dialogue training programme, applied their skills in practice with the support of supervisors. The session created a space for open reflection, sharing personal experiences, and building mutual understanding among peers.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Working with an unprepared (“cold”) group is significantly more challenging than with participants who already have dialogue experience.
- ✓ Non-verbal communication (body language, presence, tone) plays an equally important role as words in facilitating dialogue.
- ✓ Discussing deep and personal topics with familiar peers can be more difficult than with strangers due to fear of judgment.
- ✓ Taking on a new role (as a facilitator) within one’s own class requires confidence and overcoming internal barriers.
- ✓ The topic of fear of failure proved to be highly relevant and important for this age group, opening meaningful and needed discussions.



PUBLIC DIALOGUE: IDENTITY AND FINDING YOUR WAY

THE CHALLENGE:

Facilitating a public dialogue in a foreign language requires not only language confidence, but also emotional readiness to discuss deep and personal topics. In this case, both the facilitator and participants faced the challenge of expressing complex thoughts about identity and personal development in English. The added pressure of speaking in a non-native language, combined with the sensitivity of the topic, made it more demanding to create a safe and open space for honest dialogue.

DESCRIPTION

A trained participant conducted a pilot public dialogue in a language school, supported by a supervising trainer. The session took place in English with a group of young participants and focused on the topic: "Identity and Finding Your Way."

Despite initial stress and language barriers, the participants actively engaged in the discussion, sharing reflections on their personal paths, values, and sense of identity. The dialogue created a supportive environment where young people could openly express themselves and explore meaningful questions about who they are and who they want to become.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Discussing personal topics in a foreign language can be challenging, but also highly empowering.
- ✓ A safe and supportive environment is key to overcoming language barriers and encouraging openness.
- ✓ Participants are capable of deep reflection even when working outside their linguistic comfort zone.
- ✓ Topics related to identity and personal growth strongly resonate with young people and encourage meaningful engagement.





PUBLIC DIALOGUE: EDUCATION, FUTURE CHOICES, AND PREPARATION FOR ADULT LIFE

THE CHALLENGE:

This dialogue was the very first pilot implemented within the group, meaning there was no prior experience to rely on. Taking the initiative required strong leadership, courage, and the ability to step into a completely new role. An additional challenge was facilitating the dialogue in one's own class environment — a space where the participant had been part of the group for years. Shifting from a familiar, more reserved role to that of a facilitator demanded overcoming internal barriers, fear of judgment, and stepping outside of one's comfort zone.

DESCRIPTION

A trained participant conducted a pilot public dialogue in her own high school classroom with a group of students aged around 18. The session was held in Polish and focused on the topic of education, future choices, and preparation for adult life.

The dialogue was facilitated after completing the public dialogue training programme, with the support of a supervising trainer. The discussion created an open and honest space where students reflected on their educational paths, shared concerns about the future, and discussed how well school prepares them for real-life challenges.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Active and open listening allows participants to express deeper emotions and uncover shared experiences.
- ✓ Many young people face similar uncertainties about their future, which creates a sense of connection and mutual support.
- ✓ Dialogue can reveal new perspectives about people we think we already know, even within long-established groups.





PUBLIC DIALOGUE: WHAT TO CHOOSE: A DREAM JOB OR HIGH EARNINGS?

THE CHALLENGE:

This dialogue brought together multiple challenges at once. The facilitator had to lead the session in English while working with a large and mixed group of participants with different language levels and backgrounds.

The group unexpectedly grew, including students from various courses and even graduates, making it significantly more difficult to manage engagement and group dynamics.

Facilitating a large, diverse, and partially unprepared group in a foreign language required adaptability, confidence, and strong group management skills — especially for someone without prior experience in leading such large-scale sessions.

DESCRIPTION

A trained participant conducted a public dialogue in a language school during evening classes. Due to the open and informal setting, the group naturally expanded, bringing together participants aged approximately 13 to 20 with varying levels of English proficiency.

The session, supported by a supervising trainer, focused on the topic: “What to choose: a dream job or high earnings?” Despite initial uncertainty, the facilitator successfully created a space for discussion, where participants could share their perspectives and reflect on personal values, even in a linguistically diverse group.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Language proficiency is less important than sincerity — participants are able to express meaningful ideas even with limited vocabulary.
- ✓ Differences in language levels can influence participation more strongly than the language barrier itself, as less confident participants may withdraw in the presence of more advanced speakers.
- ✓ Working with a large group requires different facilitation skills — it is more challenging to maintain engagement and ensure equal participation compared to smaller groups.
- ✓ Group dynamics in larger settings tend to shift quickly, often concentrating activity among a few participants, which requires active facilitation to balance involvement.





PUBLIC DIALOGUE: LOVE

THE CHALLENGE:

This dialogue took place during a public festival on February 14th, bringing together a large and highly diverse group of participants — from young people to adults and seniors. The wide age range created both an opportunity and a challenge, as participants came with very different life experiences, perspectives, and ways of expressing themselves.

Facilitating a meaningful and balanced discussion in such a large, mixed group required adaptability, sensitivity, and the ability to create a safe space where every voice could be heard.

DESCRIPTION

A public dialogue was conducted as part of a Valentine's Day event, focusing on the theme of love, relationships, and human connection. Participants explored what love means to them, how it is expressed, and how it evolves over time.

The session created an open and reflective space where people from different generations could share personal perspectives, listen to each other, and discover both differences and common ground. The dialogue was supported by a facilitator and encouraged respectful exchange and deeper understanding across age groups.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Perspectives on love vary significantly depending on age and life experience.
- ✓ Despite differences, many core values related to love and connection remain universal.
- ✓ People express and understand love in very different ways — through different “languages” of love and personal experiences.
- ✓ Intergenerational dialogue creates a unique opportunity for mutual learning and reflection.





PUBLIC DIALOGUE: HATE

THE CHALLENGE:

This dialogue focused directly on the topic of hate — a sensitive and often difficult issue to address openly. The session was conducted within a group of young participants in a familiar classroom setting, which required the facilitator to step into a new role among peers.

Leading a discussion on hate demanded emotional awareness, neutrality, and the ability to manage strong reactions. Participants came with different experiences — some had faced hate, others reflected on moments of being part of it — which added depth but also complexity to the conversation.

DESCRIPTION

A trained participant facilitated a public dialogue in her own class, with the support of a supervising trainer. The session centered entirely on the topic of hate — how it appears in everyday life, what drives it, and how it affects individuals and communities.

The dialogue created a safe and respectful space for sharing honest thoughts and personal experiences. Participants explored different perspectives: some believed responsibility lies on both sides, others highlighted the importance of addressing harmful behavior directly. The discussion showed how differently hate can be perceived depending on personal experiences.

This conversation highlighted how important it is to speak about hate openly — not only to understand it, but also to learn how to respond to it more consciously.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ People experience and understand hate in very different ways, shaped by their personal stories.
- ✓ Open discussion helps reduce judgment and builds empathy between participants.
- ✓ Addressing hate through dialogue can support more thoughtful and responsible reactions in real-life situations.





Pilot Community Actions from Latvia

ORGANIZED BY:
CREATIVE IDEAS

As part of the project "Public Dialogue for Youth" in Latvia, four public dialogues were implemented within the training group, while five public dialogues were conducted for larger groups - in various school classes.

With the support of our teacher Agnese, the participants were able to apply their newly acquired skills in practice to lead the dialogues.

The dialogues were organized in our school: Olaines Secondary school no. 1. Sessions were conducted in Latvian, so that everyone could understand the topic of the dialogue and express their opinion.

This experience allowed young people not only to engage their communities, but also to build confidence, strengthen the ability to express themselves and broaden their view on many topics discussed in the dialogues.



PUBLIC DIALOGUE: FINANCIAL LITERACY

THE CHALLENGE:

In this dialogue, we made a big mistake in choosing the topic. It turned out to be irrelevant among young people, creating obstacles for further dialogue. There were difficulties with participant engagement, sometimes none of the participants answered the question or the answers were very short.

DESCRIPTION

February 5 – Anna and Karolína led a public dialogue for class 10.b on financial literacy. Students discussed their first experiences with earning money, managing finances, where to find reliable financial information and who should manage personal finances. Many students admitted that their parents currently manage their finances, but interest in financial responsibility, saving and investing is growing.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Before leading a dialogue, it is essential to research whether the chosen topic truly resonates with the target audience.
- ✓ Crafting open-ended, experience-based questions that connect to students' everyday lives is key to encouraging genuine and elaborate participation.
- ✓ When engagement drops, flexibility is just as important as preparation - being ready to rephrase questions, introduce relatable examples, or shift the discussion angle entirely is a critical facilitation skill.





PUBLIC DIALOGUE: HOW TO START A BUSINESS WITHOUT LARGE RESOURCES.

THE CHALLENGE:

The dialogue proved to be quite challenging to facilitate, as some participants did not fully understand the topic. However, others engaged with it effectively, contributing to meaningful discussion. This suggests that the topic may not have been sufficiently accessible or clearly formulated, and could have been presented in a way that was easier for a broader audience to understand.

DESCRIPTION

February 19 – Daniels Šahs led a public dialogue in class 10.a on “How to start a business without large resources.”

At the beginning students were reserved, but as the discussion progressed they became more active and engaged.

Some students are not yet thinking about starting a business, while others showed interest in entrepreneurship and investment opportunities in the future.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Encouraging early contributors is vital, as their vocal participation lowers the barrier for more reserved students to join the conversation.
- ✓ The shift from silence to active participation highlights that high schoolers often require a low-stakes "warm-up" period to build the confidence necessary for meaningful dialogue.
- ✓ The participants who weren't interested in the topic, were bored by the dialogue, showing the need to have questions





PUBLIC DIALOGUE: URBAN ENVIRONMENT

THE CHALLENGE:

This dialogue was a bit challenging to lead because not all of the participants if the dialogue were from Olaine. It was a bit difficult for them to talk about the city. In the end they were inspired by others and shared their own ideas about the city.

DESCRIPTION

February 27 – Kārlis Krūmiņš organised a public dialogue in class 11.ab on “Urban Environment.” Students shared ideas about the development of Olaine city, what could be improved, and what ideas from other cities could be implemented in Olaine. Students also noted that the municipality supports youth initiatives and innovative projects.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ The more people join in on the dialogue and talk about this topic the easier it is for others to join in.
- ✓ The differences in understanding the environment can have an impact of how people perceive a topic.
- ✓ Participants are less likely to talk if they are in a big group. The “heard mentality” principal. Everyone hopes someone else will answer the question. You have to get people going somehow.
- ✓ Participants often have great ideas right after the dialogue. They can discuss them together in smaller groups.





PUBLIC DIALOGUE: THE IMPACT OF SMART DEVICES ON HUMANS - INTERNET ADDICTION

THE CHALLENGE:

This was our biggest dialogue yet. Most of the participants were students from another school, some teachers and municipal representative. There were a lot of different opinions from all age groups, so it was hard to summarize them all, because there were some differing opinions.

DESCRIPTION

During the discussion, the participants analyzed the daily habits of young people and adults in using smart devices and discussed opportunities to balance their use. The participants also addressed the role of artificial intelligence in the future, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking in evaluating information and recognizing fake news.

At the end of the dialogue, the participants agreed that it is essential for each person to consciously and responsibly regulate their daily habits, maintaining a balance between the use of technology and independent thinking. The public dialogue also raised the issue of thoughtful food purchasing and meal planning.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ As more voices contribute to the conversation, the barrier to entry lowers for everyone else.
- ✓ Differences in age can greatly influence opinion on the topic.
- ✓ Working with a large group requires different facilitation skills — it is more challenging to maintain engagement and ensure equal participation compared to smaller groups.





PUBLIC DIALOGUE: HOW FOOD CONSUMPTION AFFECTS THE ENVIRONMENT

THE CHALLENGE:

Young people tend to prefer fast food, therefore a significant proportion of participants provided similar responses to many of the questions talked during the dialogue. Only a small number of young people expressed differing opinions regarding food consumption and purchasing habits.

DESCRIPTION

During the dialogue, young people engaged in conversation using the “yes/no” method, focusing on their daily food choices, product origins, and consumption habits. Participants shared their experiences and perspectives regarding the extent to which consumers pay attention to the country of origin of food products and the preference for locally produced goods. Many participants acknowledged that they rarely choose products made in Latvia in their daily lives, while imported products are often perceived as more appealing due to their taste and popularity.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ The participants who weren't interested in the topic, were bored by the dialogue, showing the need to have questions
- ✓ Active young people often had a desire to oppose what others said and emphasize that their opinion was the right one.
- ✓ Some participants found it challenging to reflect on their own food purchasing and planning habits in a broader environmental and financial context, indicating a need for more practical and relatable examples during the dialogue process.



OUR DAYS IN SPAIN: FULL OF NEW EXPERIENCES

Arriving in Saron

Overall our first afternoon in Saron was spent exploring the surroundings. We were enchanted by the wonderful mountain scenery and truthfully it made the whole week better. We also experienced the warmth of the sun in Spain. Our first night we were surprised by the cold night but we swiftly recovered and learned to use more blankets.

DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES

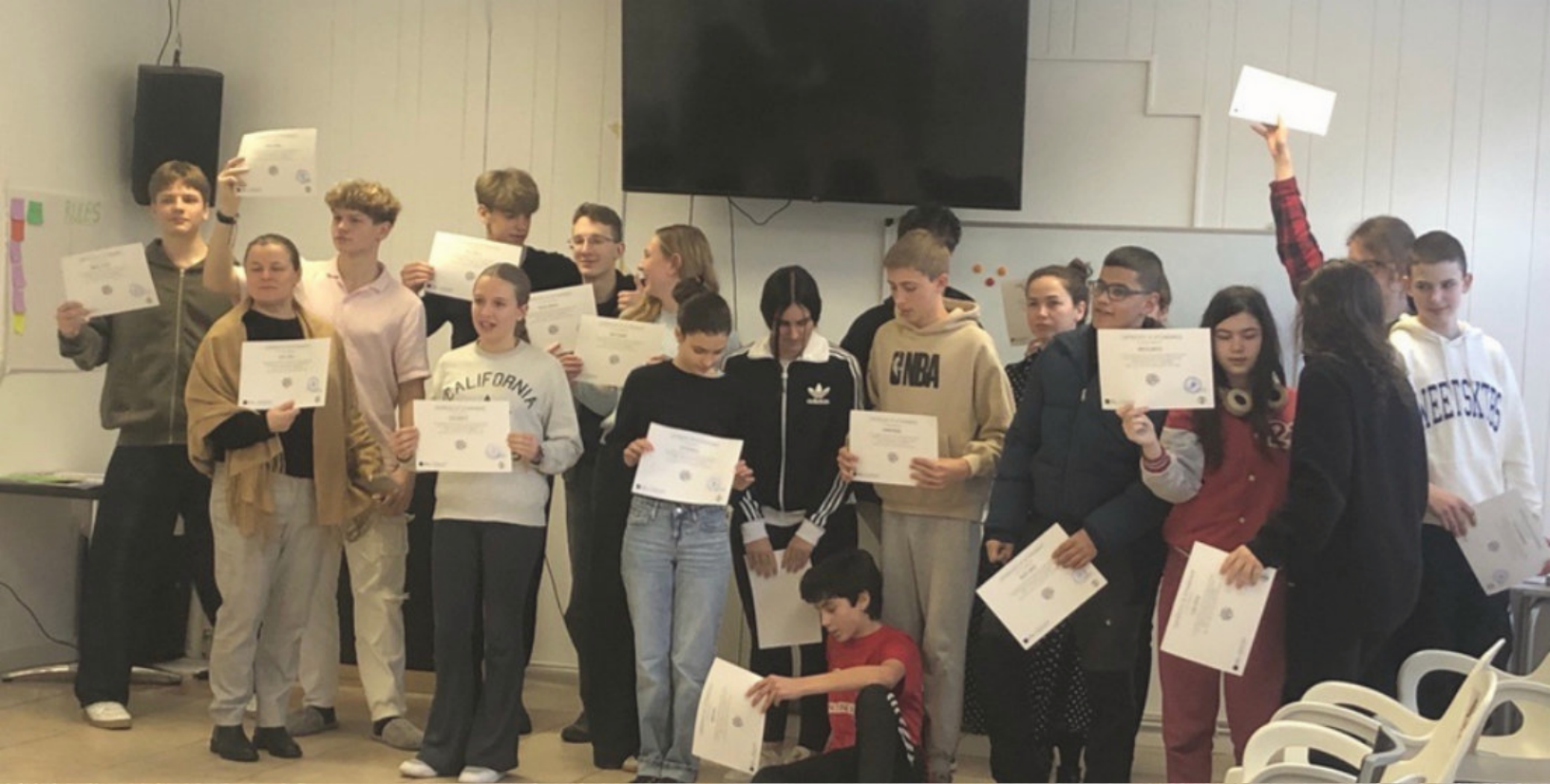
The session, supported by a supervising trainer, focused on the topic: "What to choose: a dream job or high earnings?" Despite initial uncertainty, the facilitator successfully created a space for discussion, where participants could share their perspectives and reflect on personal values, even in a linguistically diverse group.

MEETING THE POLISH AND SPANISH YOUTH

The dialogues were interesting from both the Spanish and Polish teams.

We spent time with the Polish youth the most time, going on a bicycle trip, the culture evenings and an excursion to Santander. We also played football with the Spanish youth, as well as seeing their Escuela Rafael Waldorf school.





Pilot Community Actions from Spain

ORGANIZED BY: PLATAFORMA DE ALTERNATIVAS
SOSTENIBLES Y SOLIDARIAS (PASOS)

As part of the project "Public Dialogue for Youth" in Spain, three training sessions were implemented within the Public Dialogue methodology training group. After the training phase, the young PASOS participants were encouraged to put their acquired skills into practice by facilitating four pilot public dialogues. With the support of PASOS leaders and previously trained young facilitators, they were able to gain confidence and practical experience as dialogue facilitators. The dialogues were organised in different local settings, including the public High School Verdemar and PASOS' youth center. Sessions were conducted in Spanish and English, and addressed topics such as emotional management, internet addiction, AI and mental health and sports. This experience allowed young people to engage their communities in meaningful conversations, develop communication skills, active listening, critical thinking, leadership competences, while disseminating the Public Dialogue methodology and demonstrating its value, as a tool for youth participation and community engagement.



TRAINING COURSE IN SARON, SPAIN

THE CHALLENGE:

This international training brought together participants of different ages and backgrounds from multiple countries. One of the key challenges was working entirely in English — a non-native language for everyone involved. Additionally, facilitating and participating in dialogues within a large, multicultural group required adaptability, openness, and the ability to navigate different communication styles and perspectives.

DESCRIPTION

Participants took part in a four-day training course combining both theoretical and practical learning. The programme focused on deepening the understanding of public dialogue methodology while providing extensive hands-on experience through simulations and real dialogue practice.

Throughout the training, participants explored how to facilitate discussions, manage group dynamics, and create safe spaces for open conversation. A significant part of the experience was dedicated to practicing dialogues in diverse groups, allowing participants to learn by doing.

The training also included cultural evenings, where participants shared aspects of their cultures, traditions, and perspectives. This created a unique opportunity to better understand cultural differences and see how they influence the way people think, communicate, and engage in dialogue.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Working in a multicultural environment broadens perspectives and deepens understanding of different viewpoints.
- ✓ Language barriers can be overcome through openness, active listening, and a willingness to communicate.
- ✓ Practical experience is essential for building confidence in facilitation and dialogue.
- ✓ Cultural context strongly shapes how people express themselves and interpret discussions.





PILOT PUBLIC DIALOGUE: EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT

THE CHALLENGE:

Young people often face difficulties in understanding and expressing their emotions, especially in environments where emotional topics are not usually openly discussed. Stress, anxiety, and peer pressure can impact their well-being, yet there are limited opportunities to explore these experiences collectively in a safe space.

DESCRIPTION

One of our trained facilitators, facilitated a public dialogue focused on emotional management in a local setting with a group of young people aged 16–31.

The session aimed to explore how participants experience and cope with emotions in their daily lives, particularly in relation to school, relationships and personal challenges.

The dialogue was led by Saadet, a trained participant who, after completing the Public Dialogue training, applied the methodology in practice with the support of entity leaders.

The session provided a supportive environment where participants could openly share their feelings, reflect on personal experiences, and learn from one another through dialogue and active listening.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ YParticipants were very open once others also started sharing feelings about stress and frustration.
- ✓ Many young people said they are usually asked about performance or behaviour, but not about how they actually feel.
- ✓ Participants connected emotional management with school pressure, family expectations, friendships and insecurity.
- ✓ Some young people struggled at first to describe their emotions, but the dialogue helped them express and understand them better.
- ✓ The workshop showed the importance of a calm and respectful environment where participants feel safe to speak honestly.





PILOT PUBLIC DIALOGUE: INTERNET ADDICTION

THE CHALLENGE:

Many young people today struggle to maintain a healthy balance between their online and offline lives. Excessive use of social media, gaming, and digital platforms can lead to difficulties in concentration, sleep, and real-life social interaction. Despite its relevance, this topic is not always openly discussed among peers.

DESCRIPTION

One of PASOS young people facilitated a public dialogue focused on internet addiction in our facilities with a group of young people aged 15–27. The session addressed how digital habits affect daily routines, emotional well-being, and relationships.

The dialogue was led by Tugba, a trained participant who, after being trained on the Public Dialogue method, applied the methodology in a practical context under the guidance of another young facilitator and the entity's leaders.

The session encouraged participants to reflect on their own digital behaviours, share personal experiences, and explore strategies for a more balanced use of technology in a respectful and open environment.

LESSONS LEARNED

Several participants admitted they spend more time online than they would like, especially on social media and short videos.

The conversation became more honest when participants understood the topic was not being judged or moralised.

Young people spoke openly about scrolling late at night, losing track of time and feeling irritated when disconnected.

Some participants linked excessive internet use with tiredness, low concentration and difficulties in face-to-face relationships.

Many participants did not see themselves as “addicted,” but they recognised habits that worried them.

The topic worked well because everyone could relate to it through their own daily experience.



PILOT PUBLIC DIALOGUE: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

THE CHALLENGE:

Artificial Intelligence is becoming an increasingly present part of young people's lives, influencing how they study, communicate, and access information. However, there is often limited space to critically reflect on its implications, including ethical concerns, dependency, and its impact on creativity and learning.

DESCRIPTION

One of PASOS young people facilitated a public dialogue focused on Artificial Intelligence in a local High School, with a group of 18 young people aged 16–17. The session explored how AI tools are used in everyday life, particularly in education, and encouraged participants to reflect on both the opportunities and risks associated with their use.

The dialogue was led by Esma, a trained participant, who applied the Public Dialogue methodology after completing the training programme, with the support of PASOS leaders.

The session created a safe and open space for participants to share their perspectives, question assumptions, and exchange ideas about the role of AI in their present and future lives.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Participants were already using AI tools in different ways, but many had not previously discussed where the line is between support, dependency, and misuse.
- ✓ The group showed mixed feelings: some were excited about the possibilities of AI, while others expressed discomfort about how easily it can replace personal effort or creativity.
- ✓ The dialogue became especially interesting when participants moved from talking about technology in general to giving real examples of how they use AI in their own lives. This made the conversation much more concrete and reflective.
- ✓ Several participants raised concerns about trust, reliability, and the difficulty of knowing when AI-generated content is accurate.
- ✓ One of the clearest outcomes was that young people do not need technical expertise to talk meaningfully about AI; what they need is a space to question how it is affecting the way they learn, think, and make decisions.



PILOT PUBLIC DIALOGUE: MENTAL HEALTH AND SPORTS

THE CHALLENGE:

Mental health is an important aspect of young people's well-being, yet it is often overlooked in discussions about sports and physical activity. While sport can have positive effects on emotional health, young people may also experience pressure, stress, anxiety, low self-esteem or fear of failure linked to performance, competition or expectations from others.

DESCRIPTION

One of PASOS' young participants, Sandy, facilitated a Public Dialogue focused on mental health and sports in a local high school with a group of 18 young people aged 15–17. After completing Public Dialogue training, Sandy applied the methodology in practice with the support of PASOS leaders.

The session explored participants' experiences and perspectives regarding the relationship between physical activity, emotional well-being, motivation, self-confidence and stress.

Participants reflected on both the positive and challenging aspects of sports in their daily lives. The session created a safe and respectful space where participants could openly exchange ideas, share experiences and discuss how sport can influence mental health and overall well-being.

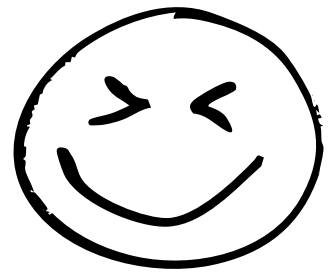
LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Participants generally recognised the positive impact that sport and physical activity can have on their mood, stress levels and emotional well-being.
- ✓ The discussion revealed that sport is not always experienced positively. Some participants spoke about pressure to perform, fear of failure and expectations from coaches, teammates or family members.
- ✓ Several young people highlighted the importance of enjoying physical activity rather than focusing exclusively on results or competition.
- ✓ Participants showed strong engagement when discussing confidence and self-esteem, recognising that success and failure in sports can significantly affect how they feel about themselves.
- ✓ The dialogue demonstrated the value of creating spaces where young people can openly discuss the emotional aspects of sport, which are often less visible than physical performance but equally important for their well-being.





Thank you!



Public Dialogue for Youth was made possible thanks to the incredible engagement and openness of all the young people involved — participants from diverse backgrounds, with different experiences, perspectives, and stories. Many of them faced challenges related to integration, identity, or social barriers, yet chose to step into dialogue with courage and curiosity.

We are deeply grateful to each of you for your willingness to listen, to share your thoughts, and to be present in conversations that were sometimes complex, but always meaningful. Your voices, reflections, and openness have shaped this project into something truly valuable.

We are thankful that this initiative became not only a safe space for dialogue, understanding, and exchange, but also a starting point for real change — within yourselves, within your communities, and in the way we relate to one another. Thank you for turning dialogue into connection, and connection into impact.



Testimonies

To celebrate what we have learned and achieved together, we gathered testimonies from many of the participants who helped sustain this project. This is what they shared:

“Through listening and asking questions, I discovered something unexpected — that understanding others helps you understand yourself. Public dialogue became a space where I could truly find my own voice.”

- Alina Onysko, participant





Public Dialogue for Youth
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