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YESDGs

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Youth Empowerment SDGs:

Educational Course for Youth Workers

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Introduction

Objective of the YESDGs Project

Over the past few years, it has become evident that there are high levels of frustration among young people regarding:

- social conditions,
- climate anxiety and
- the cost of living

There is also a feeling of helplessness with a large proportion of young people feeling like there is little or nothing they can do to affect change. The main objective of the YESDGs project is to empower young Europeans and promote proactive citizenship on issues and themes related to the Sustainable Development Goals, by:

a. supporting them to understand the SDGs and their relevance in their local context;
b. identifying and co-developing tools to empower them to amplify their voices on climate change
c. empowering them to identify and drive local actions.
d. Make them aware that the SDGs aren't solely environmental goals but refer to all aspects of how we live at a local, regional, national and international level.

What are the Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015 all of the United Nations Member States adopted the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the core of this agenda are The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Figure 1. Sustainable Development Goals

These goals are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership, uniting (a, 2024) to:

End Poverty	Protect the Planet
Promote Prosperity	Ensure Peace for all

Importance of youth engagement in sustainable development

As climate change impacts intensify, it is the young people of today who will face the worst effects. Young people across Europe are not willing to play a passive role but are determined to express their concerns and to exert their collective influence in campaigning for positive action in this field. Young people's voices are an integral element in taking actions towards climate change mitigation and a just transition.

For many young people however, climate policy, research and practice are complex to understand and even more difficult to influence. YESDGs, by facilitating transnational networking, engagement, learning and action, aims to build the capacity, competence and confidence of young people, from a variety of backgrounds, to:

a) Understand the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change context, policy and research.
b) Recognise and apply appropriate tools to help amplify their voices on the climate crisis and offer inspiring and original insights on issues that matter to them.
c) Become proactive.

Unit 1: Understanding the Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consist of 17 Goals which aim to integrate social, economic and environmental dimensions.

This provides a holistic approach to development where we can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (b, 2024)

Figure 2. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301479723001135

Sub-unit 1.1 Economic SDGs

A country's economic development focuses on how wealthy a country is. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a measure of the size of the economy, the total economic activity in a country. (c, 2024). Some benefits of living in a country which has a high GDP may include:

- Job Creation
- Poverty Reduction
- Reduced social tension.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	Reduce inequality within and among countries
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

The Economic SDGs endeavour to highlight the interrelationship between how economies can grow their GDP and simultaneously benefit society and the environment.

A countries social development assesses a few aspects of the quality of life of the country's society. The Social Progress Index (SPI) compiles data relating to social and environmental indicators. The SPI sums this data to a single number. This number can be used to rank countries against each other and as a benchmark to track each country social and environmental progress. Some benefits of living in a country which has is considered socially developed may include:

- Access to essential health services
- Housing affordability
- High levels of education

1 NO POVERTY	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	**2 ZERO HUNGER**	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	**4 QUALITY EDUCATION**	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5 GENDER EQUALITY	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	**7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	**16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS**	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

The Social SDGs endeavour to highlight areas of importance that should be monitored during times of growth to ensure nobody in society is left behind.

Sub-unit 1.3 Environmental SDGs

A countries environmental development assesses how sustainably a country uses its resources while minimizing negative impacts to the environment. Similarly, to social development the SPI factors environmental indicators into its rating. Some benefits of living in a country which is considered environmentally developed may include:

- Safe drinking water and sanitation
- Low indoor and outdoor air pollution
- High levels of biodiversity and species protection

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
13 CLIMATE ACTION	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14 LIFE BELOW WATER	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15 LIFE ON LAND	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, Combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

The Environmental SDGs endeavour to highlight areas of importance that should be monitored during times of growth to ensure negative impacts to the land, the sea and plants and animals are minimized.

Sub-unit 1.4 Partnership SDG

The Partnership Goal sets out to really highlight that in order for the SDGs to be successful every country needs to assess where they are holistically based on how they're developing economically, socially and environmentally.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

We can see from the table and graph below that some countries have a very high GDP and a relatively low SPI and vice versa.

Country	**GDP**	**SPI**
Denmark	High	High
Qatar	High	Medium
Costa Rica	Low	High
Central African Republic	Low	Low

SPI vs GDP 2023
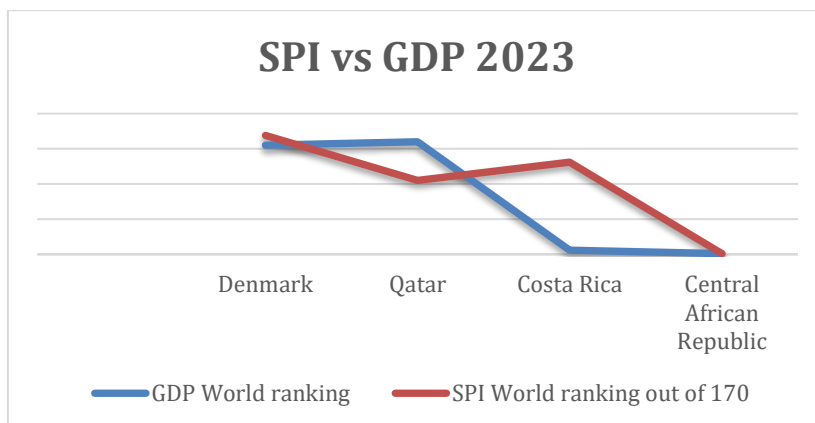
While there can be a relationship between increasing GDP and increasing SPI, the relationship is not linear e.g. a higher GDP may reduce poverty in a country but may not address environmental goals at all. This is because a high GDP does not account for how the country's wealth is distributed so may not benefit society or the environment at all. Because of this we can say the SDGs can't be successfully implemented by countries only focusing on getting wealthier. Every country needs to:

● assess where they are in terms of GDP and SPI,
● identify the areas where they are underperforming,
● implement plans and policy changes to actively drive improvements in their scores.

Only through collaboration and partnership at local, regional, national and international level will the objective of the SDGs be realised. We already have the solutions to the problems the SDGs are trying to solve. The SDGs are a commitment from world leaders to us as citizens solve these problems. Let's get engaged and hold our leaders responsible to make the world a better place for everyone.

Group Exercise

1- Split into groups of 4

2- Choose a Group Name:

( )

3- Choose a Country

( )

4- Discuss what score out of 100 you would give your groups country in the following categories:

Overall Social Progress Score:

Every country in the world is given a score out of 100 based on how well they perform on the SPI, with 1/100 being the worst and 100/100 being the best

/100

Basic Needs Score:

Score calculated based on topics such as housing affordability, diet low in fruits and vegetables, indoor air pollution, water quality, safety etc...

/100

Foundations of Wellbeing:

Score calculated based on topics such as access to quality education, internet access, access to quality healthcare, outdoor air pollution etc...

/100

Opportunity Score:

Score calculated based on topics such as freedom of peaceful assembly, perception of corruption, discrimination and violence against minorities, quality weighted universities etc...

/100

5- Use the following link to look up the most current rating of your groups selected country:

https://www.socialprogress.org/social-progress-index

Overall Social Progress Score:

/100

Basic Needs Score:

/100

Foundations of Wellbeing:

/100

Opportunity Score:

/100

6- List one category that scored higher or lower than your group expected.

7- Discuss with the groups

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Unit 2: The needs of localising SDGs

Before continuing with the following unit let's test the knowledge, we have learned so far with this exercise.

Icebreaking Activity – POST IT

Material: post it and pens

This initial part of the activities is specifically aimed at assessing the group's propensity for activities and breaking the ice to encourage active participation by all.

The proposed activity reflects the overall goal of localizing the SDGs by promoting more active youth participation in achieving the SDGs and raising awareness around sustainable development.

The activity aims to get youth to understand in a simple way the importance of localizing goals to narrow the gap between local and global goals through a family approach; reflect on what actions can be done on a daily basis and how they can connect to the SDGs.

The educator will hand out post it notes to each learner and ask them to write down an action they perform daily that in their opinion can connect to the SDG's (recycling, choose km0 products, turn off the water when brushing their teeth, walk to school and not by car, buy second-hand clothing).
Post-it notes will be placed on a surface and will be used later for another activity.

SD Game: https://sdgame.gisaction.com/world?lang=en

Figure 3. Sustainable Development Goals

Localizing the SDGs refers to the process of adapting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the specific needs, conditions, and priorities of local communities. It involves turning the global goals into actionable plans that are relevant and feasible in a local context. Localization provides assurance that the SDGs are not just aspirational global goals, but practical, achievable goals reflecting the challenges and opportunities for each community.

Specifically, it means that it is necessary to switch from GLOBAL to LOCAL (Global framework to Local Action): The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action by the United Nations to address pressing global challenges. The 17 goals aim to create a sustainable future by balancing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. They cover a wide range of issues, such as poverty, decent work and economic growth, and climate action to reach these goals.

Key Principles of the SDGs:

1. universality: the SDGs are applicable to all countries, regardless of their development status. They provide a common framework for addressing global challenges.
2. integration: the goals are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. It means that progress in one area can contribute to progress in others.
3. leave no one behind: A core principle of the SDGs is to ensure that all people, especially the most vulnerable, are included in the benefits of sustainable development.

While the SDGs provide a global framework, implementing them uniformly across diverse regions with varying socio-economic, cultural, and environmental contexts is challenging. Different regions face unique issues, and a one-size-fits-all approach is not feasible: to

effectively implement the SDGs, it is crucial to consider specific conditions, needs, and priorities of local communities. This process is known as localising the SDGs and involves translating the global goals into actionable plans that reflect local realities.

But what does it mean to "Understand the local realities"?

Local realities encompass a range of factors that vary from one community to another, including:

socio-economic conditions	levels of income, employment rates, educational attainment, health status, and access to basic services.
environmental conditions	natural resources, biodiversity, climate, and pollution levels.
cultural and social norms	traditions, values, beliefs, and social structures that influence community behaviour and priorities.
political and governance structures	local government capacity, legal frameworks, policy environments, and stakeholder relationships.

Adapting the SDGs to the local context requires analysing local priorities and needs, conducting a comprehensive assessment to understand the challenges and opportunities within the community, engaging local stakeholders such as NGOs and businesses to gain additional perspectives and insights.

Localising the SDGs involves translating the broad global targets into specific, actionable goals that are tailored to the unique needs and priorities of local communities. This process begins with the establishment of local targets and indicators, where the global SDG goals are transformed into SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) objectives that align with the specific context of the community. Local indicators are then developed to monitor progress and assess the impact of these initiatives over time.

Once local targets are set, detailed action plans are created: they outline the necessary strategies, activities, and resources required to achieve the local goals. It's essential that these plans are inclusive and participatory, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders—such as community members, local governments, businesses, and organizations—are actively involved in the planning process. This collaborative approach ensures that the plans are comprehensive and consider the diverse needs and perspectives of the community.

The next step is the implementation of these local initiatives. This involves the coordinated efforts of various local actors, including government bodies, community organizations, businesses, and citizens, to put the action plans into practice. During implementation, it is important to remain flexible and adaptable, adjusting strategies as new challenges or

opportunities arise. This adaptability is crucial for ensuring that the initiatives remain effective and responsive to changing circumstances.

Monitoring and evaluation are integral to the success of localised SDG initiatives. Robust systems are established to track progress and measure the effectiveness of the actions taken. This ongoing monitoring allows for the collection of data and feedback, which are used to make informed adjustments and improvements to the action plans as needed. Continuous evaluation helps to ensure that the initiatives stay on track and achieve the desired outcomes

The localisation of the SDGs offers several key benefits. First, it makes the initiatives more relevant and effective by tailoring them to the specific needs and conditions of the community. This relevance enhances the impact of the development efforts, making them more likely to succeed. Additionally, the inclusive nature of the localisation process fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among community members. When local stakeholders are actively engaged in the planning and implementation of SDG initiatives, they are more likely to support and sustain these efforts over the long term.

Furthermore, focusing on local priorities allows for the direct addressing of the most pressing challenges faced by communities. This targeted approach ensures that development efforts are not only impactful but also meaningful to those involved. Lastly, localised SDG initiatives contribute to enhancing the resilience of communities. By building local capacity to respond to challenges and opportunities, these initiatives help communities become more robust and adaptable in the face of future uncertainties.

Sub-unit 2.2: Importance of local context in sustainable development

Figure 4. Associative Image

Understanding local context means recognizing that each community has its own set of conditions that influence how sustainable development initiatives should be designed and implemented. For example, what works in a densely populated urban area might not be suitable for a remote rural community.

Local context refers to the distinctive characteristics that define a particular community or region, shaping how its inhabitants live, interact, and make decisions. These characteristics can be understood through various lenses, including social structures, cultural practices, economic conditions, environmental resources, and the political landscape.

- Social structures encompass the organization of society within a community: it includes the dynamics within families, the roles and influence of community leadership, and the social networks connecting people. For example, in some communities, extended families may play a significant role in decision-making, while in others, formal community leaders or elders hold considerable influence. Social roles and expectations also define how individuals interact and contribute to the community, which can affect how development initiatives are received and implemented.

- Cultural practices involve the traditions, beliefs, customs, and values deeply embedded in a community's way of life. These cultural elements influence how people think, behave, and interact with one another. For instance, a community's religious beliefs might dictate specific practices around environmental stewardship, or local customs may define how resources are shared. Understanding these cultural nuances is crucial for designing development strategies that resonate with the community and respect its identity.

- Economic conditions describe the state of the local economy, which is shaped by factors such as employment opportunities, income levels, and the predominant industries or economic activities within the region. For example, in a community where agriculture is the primary source of income, economic conditions will be closely tied to factors like land availability, weather patterns, and access to markets. On the contrary, in a more urban setting, economic conditions might be influenced by industrial activity, service sectors, or the availability of skilled labour.

- Environmental resources refer to the natural assets available within the community, such as water, land, forests, and climate conditions. These resources are not only vital for the community's survival but also shape its way of life. A community located near a river might rely heavily on fishing and agriculture, while one in a forested area might depend on timber and non-timber forest products. The availability and management of these resources are critical to sustainable development, as they determine the community's ability to sustain itself and maintain its environment for future generations.

- The political landscape of a community includes its governance structure, the level of political stability, and the policies and regulations that govern daily life. Political factors can either facilitate or hinder development efforts. A community with strong, transparent governance might be better equipped to implement development projects, while one with political instability or weak institutions might face significant challenges.

Additionally, local policies and regulations can either support or obstruct sustainable development, depending on how they align with the community's needs and priorities.

Some suggestions to "understand the local context":

A. Contextualize with familiar scenarios:
begin by selecting examples that are likely familiar to the participants. You might compare the differences between urban and rural communities. In an urban setting, the focus might be on access to services, high population density, and infrastructure challenges. On the contrary, in rural areas, you might discuss the reliance on agriculture, the importance of natural resources, and the challenges of accessing education and healthcare.

B. Highlight Cultural Diversity:
use examples that showcase cultural diversity within the same country. You could discuss how traditional practices related to water usage differ between coastal and inland communities, or how religious practices influence social structures in different regions. This not only illustrates local context but also highlights how cultural practices can vary significantly even within a single nation.

C. Use Comparative Analysis:
to deepen understanding, present a comparative analysis. For example, compare how two different communities' approach sustainable agriculture: one might use traditional farming methods while another incorporates modern technology. Discuss how these different approaches are shaped by the local context, such as available resources, cultural values, or economic conditions. This comparison helps participants see how the same goal—sustainable agriculture—can be achieved in different ways depending on the local context.

D. Integrate Case Studies:
introduce brief case studies that participants can easily relate to. For instance, discuss how a specific rural community implemented renewable energy solutions by leveraging local resources like abundant sunlight or wind. Or, use a case study of an urban community that tackled waste management through innovative recycling programs. These real-life scenarios make the concept of local context tangible and illustrate how it impacts sustainable development efforts.

Activity: Group Think Tank
Learning outcomes: After introducing the concept of local context, invite participants to think about and share examples from their own communities. Ask open-ended questions such as, "What makes your community unique?" or "How do local traditions influence daily life in your area?" This encourages participants to reflect on their experiences and recognize the importance of local context in their own lives.

Instructions Part 1: You can divide participants into small groups and ask each group to discuss about the characteristics of their communities: social structures, cultural practices, economic activities, or environmental resources. After the discussion, each group present their findings to the larger group: it is a way to share their experience and learn from each other.

Instructions Part 2: As a hands-on activity, ask participants to create a "Community context map." Provide them with materials to visually map out the unique aspects of their community, such as key cultural landmarks, economic activities, or natural resources. You could stimulate participants with some questions, such as "How does the political situation here affect local businesses?" or

"What are some environmental resources in this area that are crucial for the community's livelihood?" Once completed, participants can share their maps with the group, explaining how these features define their community's identity and influence development priorities.

Sub-unit 2.3: Challenges in localising SDGs

Figure 5. Associative Image of SDGs

Localising the Sustainable Development Goals comes with several challenges:

- Resource constraints: many communities may lack the financial, human, and technological resources needed to effectively implement SDG initiatives.
- Cultural resistance can also be an obstacle, where local traditions and beliefs may conflict with certain SDG objectives, making it difficult to gain community support.
- Political instability or weak governance can hinder efforts, as local governments may lack the capacity or will to prioritize sustainable development.
- Diverse needs and priorities of different communities. What is critical in one area might not be as relevant in another, making it difficult to create a one-size-fits-all approach.

When addressing the "Challenges in Localising SDGs," it's important to engage participants in activities that not only highlight these challenges but also equip them with strategies to overcome them.

These are some activities that could be implemented for this purpose.

Problem solving workshop:

Step 1: identification of challenge. Divide participants into small groups and provide each group with a specific SDG to localize. Ask them to brainstorm the potential challenges they might face in their community when trying to implement this goal. Challenges could include lack of resources, cultural resistance, political instability, or insufficient data.

Step 2: analyse the challenge. Each group selects the top three challenges they believe are the most significant. They then discuss the causes of these challenges and how they impact the localization of the SDG.

Step 3: develop a strategy. Groups brainstorm practical solutions or strategies to overcome each challenge. Encourage them to think about both short-term actions (e.g., community awareness campaigns) and long-term strategies (e.g., building partnerships with local governments or NGOs).

Step 4: presentation and feedback. Each group presents their challenges and proposed solutions to the larger group. After each presentation, open the floor for feedback and suggestions from other participants.

Resource mapping and gap analysis

Step 1: map the available resources. Ask participants to create a "Map of the available resources" in their community. They should identify all the resources that could support the localization of SDGs, including:
- Human resources (e.g., skilled individuals, community leaders)
- Financial resources (e.g., funding opportunities, local businesses)
- Organizational resources (e.g., NGOs, local government agencies)
- Environmental resources (e.g., natural assets, infrastructure)

Step 2: gap analysis. Once the resource maps are complete, participants conduct a gap analysis. They identify areas where resources are lacking or insufficient to effectively localize the SDGs. For example, they might identify a lack of funding for education initiatives or a shortage of skilled personnel to lead environmental projects.

Step 3: create an action plan. Based on the gap analysis, participants develop an action plan to address these gaps. This might include strategies for fundraising, capacity-building, forming partnerships.

Step 4: presentation and feedback. Participants share their resource maps and action plans with the larger group. Encourage them to discuss potential collaborations or resource-sharing opportunities that could help fill the identified gaps.

Producing clean energy

Step 1. Introduction.

Show the video https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal7
Ask participants if they already know anything about this topic, or if it is new information.
Ask students if they sometimes reflect on their energy use and why they do or do not do so

Step 2. Individual group reflection

Ask participants to draw themselves in the centre of a sheet of paper and write down all the devices they use daily that consume energy: smartphone and charger, electric toothbrush, coffee maker, microwave, lights, laptop and charger, etc.

Ask participants the following questions asking for a written response:
- What means of transportation do you use daily/majorly to get around?
- What energy-consuming device do you use most for studying or if you work, for work?

2.1 - Reflection on the devices used

Ask participants to look at the devices identified and underline with a red pencil the devices with the highest environmental impact among those identified
Once this step is completed, urge students to search the internet/other sources (printed information materials available to students) for alternatives to the items deemed most polluting
Write in green the alternatives next to the most polluting devices
Submit this direct question to participants:
- Which of these alternatives could you start using in your daily life?

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MODULE 2: Promoting Engagement and Activism Among Young

Unit 3 Social Entrepreneurship & change

Sub-unit 3.1 - Understanding Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is all about finding innovative ways to solve social, cultural, or environmental problems. Unlike regular businesses that focus on making money, social entrepreneurs focus on making a positive impact on society. They come up with creative solutions to tackle issues like poverty, education, healthcare, and more, aiming to make the world a better place.

Social enterprises have a few distinct features:

- **Mission-Driven**: Their main goal is to address social issues, not just to make a profit. They exist to create positive change in the world.
- **Innovative Solutions**: Social entrepreneurs think outside the box. They find new ways to solve old problems, whether it is through new products, services, or methods.
- **Sustainable Impact**: The aim is to create lasting change. Social enterprises work to address the root causes of problems, not just the symptoms.
- **Financial Sustainability**: While profit is not the primary goal, many social enterprises generate income to keep their projects going and support their mission.

Social enterprises can adopt various business models depending on their mission, goals, and the social issues they aim to address. Each model of social enterprise has its strengths and suits different types of social missions. Let us give a more detailed look at the main models:

Non-Profit Model

Non-profit social enterprises prioritize social missions above all else. They reinvest any surplus revenue back into their programs and initiatives rather than distributing it as profit. These organizations often rely heavily on donations, grants, and fundraising efforts to sustain their activities. While they may generate some income through sales or services, the primary focus remains on social impact rather than profitability.

Examples: Many humanitarian organizations, educational foundations, and environmental groups operate under this model. They work in areas such as disaster relief, healthcare access, education, and poverty alleviation.

Hybrid Model

The hybrid model blends elements of non-profit and for-profit approaches. These organizations have a dual focus: they aim to achieve social goals while also maintaining financial sustainability. The revenue generated from business activities is typically reinvested into the organization to support its social mission. This model allows social enterprises to reduce dependency on external funding and grants.

Examples: A company that sells eco-friendly products and uses the profits to support environmental conservation projects. Another example could be a social enterprise café that provides job training for marginalized groups while also operating as a commercial business.

For-Profit Social Enterprise

For-profit social enterprises operate like traditional businesses, but with a strong commitment to social goals. They aim to be financially profitable while simultaneously addressing social, cultural, or environmental issues. These enterprises often integrate

their social mission directly into their business operations, ensuring that achieving social impact is central to their business model.

Examples: Companies like TOMS Shoes, which follows a "one-for-one" model, donating a product for each one sold, or Warby Parker, which provides glasses to those in need for every pair purchased. These businesses focus on financial success but always with an eye on their social mission.

Cooperatives

Cooperatives are member-owned businesses that operate for the benefit of their members. They can be for-profit or non-profit, but their primary goal is often economic and social development within a specific community. Members, who can be customers, employees, or suppliers, share in the decision-making processes and profits of the cooperative. This model emphasizes democratic governance and community benefit.

Examples: Worker cooperatives where employees own and manage the business, agricultural cooperatives that help farmers band together to improve market access and secure better prices, and consumer cooperatives like food co-ops that provide members with high-quality goods at fair prices.

Community Interest Companies (CICs)

Particularly common in the UK, Community Interest Companies are a type of for-profit social enterprise that operates with a clear social mission. CICs must reinvest their profits back into the community or toward achieving their social objectives. They are legally obliged to use their assets for the public good and are often monitored to ensure they adhere to their mission.

Examples: A CIC might be set up to provide affordable housing, support local artists, or offer community services. These companies balance financial sustainability with social accountability.

Sub-unit 3.2 - Identifying Social Issues and Opportunities

Identifying social issues and opportunities is a crucial initial step in social entrepreneurship. This process involves recognizing the challenges within communities and imagining innovative ways to address them. It requires a deep understanding of the social, cultural, and economic factors at play and the ability to spot gaps where current solutions are inadequate.

Understanding the Community Context
To start, it is important to thoroughly understand the community you want to help. This means engaging in both qualitative and quantitative research. On the qualitative side, engaging directly with community members, local leaders, and experts through interviews and focus groups can provide invaluable first-hand insights into the problems people are experiencing. On the quantitative side, reviewing statistical data from reliable sources such as government reports, NGOs, and academic studies can offer a broader perspective on demographics, economic indicators, health statistics, and other relevant data.

Being culturally sensitive and aware is equally important. Understanding the cultural, historical, and social nuances of a community is crucial, as the nature of issues and the ways they are experienced can vary greatly. Approaching each community with respect, avoiding assumptions, and being open to learning from the residents are essential steps.

Identifying Core Issues
After gathering information, the next step is to identify the core issues. This involves distinguishing between symptoms of problems and their root causes. Tools like problem trees or cause-and-effect diagrams can be helpful in mapping out these issues. It is also important to prioritize these issues based on urgency, the potential for significant impact, and the feasibility of addressing them with available resources.

Exploring Opportunities for Social Change
Once the core issues are identified, the focus shifts to exploring opportunities for creating social change. This begins with a gap analysis to evaluate existing solutions and identify where they

fall short. Key questions might include: What are the limitations of current interventions? Who is not being reached? Are there ways to improve the quality or accessibility of services?

Innovation is at the heart of social entrepreneurship. Encouraging creative thinking and problem-solving is vital. Techniques such as brainstorming sessions and design thinking, which involves empathizing with end-users, generating ideas, and prototyping, can foster innovative solutions.

Engaging with stakeholders is another critical step. This includes not just the community members but also potential partners, local authorities, and other organizations. Collaborative efforts can bring in diverse perspectives, additional resources, and broader support for potential projects.

Assessing Opportunities

Before moving forward with any idea, it is essential to conduct a SWOT analysis—evaluating strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—to understand the feasibility and potential impact of the proposed solution. Considering sustainability is also key: How will the project be funded in the long term? What are the anticipated social, economic, and environmental impacts? Additionally, assessing the scalability of the solution—whether it can be expanded or replicated in other communities—is important for maximizing its impact.

Sub-unit 3.3 - Planning and Implementing Social Enterprises

Planning and implementing a social enterprise involves turning a vision for social change into a viable, impactful organization. This process requires careful planning, strategic thinking, and practical steps to bring the idea to life. Below, we explore the key stages in planning and implementing a social enterprise.

Vision and Mission Development

The foundation of any social enterprise is a clear vision and mission. The vision articulates the long-term change the enterprise seeks to achieve, while the mission outlines the organization's purpose and the specific social issues it aims to address. For instance, the vision might be a world where everyone has access to clean water, and the mission could focus on providing affordable water filtration systems to underserved communities.

These statements are not just formalities; they guide every aspect of the enterprise's strategy and operations. They help ensure that the enterprise stays focused on its social objectives and communicates its purpose to stakeholders, including employees, investors, and the community.

Market Research and Feasibility Study

Conducting thorough market research is crucial to understand the environment in which the social enterprise will operate. This involves analysing the target population's needs, preferences, and the current market landscape, including potential competitors and partners. A feasibility study helps to assess the practicality of the business idea. It covers aspects like the demand for the product or service, potential revenue streams, costs, and the resources required.
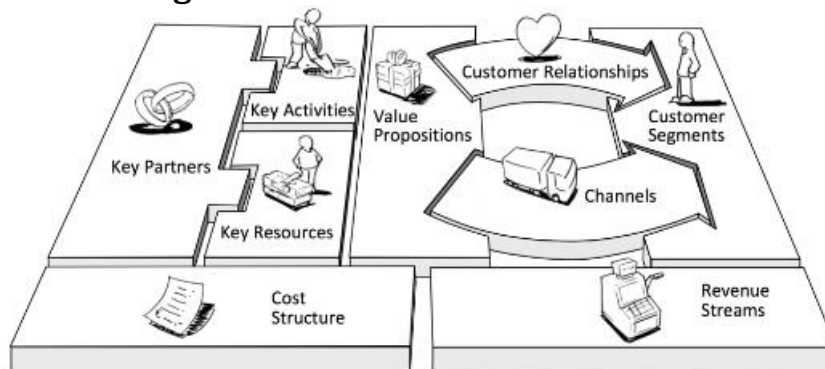
Business Model and Planning

Figure 6. Business Model Canvas: A visual representation of the key elements

Developing a robust business model is the next step. This includes defining the products or services offered, identifying the target customers, and outlining how the enterprise will create, deliver, and capture value. The business model should integrate social and financial goals, ensuring that achieving social impact is aligned with financial sustainability.

Key components of the business plan include:

- Value Proposition: What unique benefits does the enterprise offer, and how does it address the identified social issues?
- Revenue Streams: How will the enterprise generate income? This could include sales, donations, grants, or a combination of these.
- Cost Structure: What are the major costs involved, and how will they be managed?
- Key Partners and Resources: Who are the essential partners, and what resources are needed to operate?

Legal Structure and Registration

Choosing the appropriate legal structure for the social enterprise is essential as it affects everything from tax obligations to fundraising options and liability. Common structures include non-profit organizations, for-profit companies, cooperatives, and hybrid models like Community Interest Companies (CICs). Each structure has different implications for governance, funding, and the ability to reinvest profits.

Once the structure is chosen, the enterprise must be legally registered according to the relevant national or local regulations. This process often includes drafting legal documents like articles of incorporation, bylaws, and registering with appropriate government bodies.

Funding and Financial Planning

Securing funding is often one of the biggest challenges for social enterprises. A clear financial plan is essential, detailing how much capital is needed and how it will be used. Funding sources can include grants, donations, investments from social investors, crowdfunding, or earned income through the sale of products or services.

Building a Team and Organizational Culture

The success of a social enterprise largely depends on the team behind it. Recruiting people who are passionate about the mission and possess the necessary skills is vital. Building an inclusive and motivated organizational culture is also important. This involves setting clear values, promoting transparency, and ensuring that all team members are aligned with the enterprise's social goals.

Launch and Operations

Launching the social enterprise involves executing the business plan and starting operations. This phase includes finalizing products or services, marketing, setting up operational processes, and beginning to deliver on the mission. It is important to start with a pilot or a smaller-scale launch to test and refine the approach.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are critical to assess the enterprise's performance and impact. This involves setting clear metrics for success, such as the number of people reached, social outcomes achieved, or financial performance. Regularly reviewing these metrics helps in making informed decisions, improving processes, and scaling the impact.

Sub-unit 3.4 - Leadership and Community Engagement

Effective leadership and strong community engagement are critical components of a successful social enterprise. Leadership in this context goes beyond managing operations—it involves inspiring and mobilizing others towards a shared vision of social change. Community engagement ensures that the enterprise's activities are relevant, inclusive, and have a meaningful impact. This section explores the key aspects of leadership and strategies for engaging with the community.

Engaging with the community starts with **understanding their needs, strengths, and cultural context.** This involves listening to community members, conducting needs assessments, and respecting local knowledge and practices. Building this understanding helps tailor interventions to the community's specific circumstances.

Trust is the foundation of effective community engagement. **Building trust** requires consistency, transparency, and a genuine commitment to the community's well-being. It is important to be present, responsive, and to follow through on promises.

Involving community members in decision-making processes ensures that the social enterprise's initiatives are relevant and supported. This can be achieved through participatory workshops, community forums, and advisory boards that include representatives from various community groups.

Community engagement is an ongoing process, not a one-time event. **Sustained engagement** requires regular interaction, feedback mechanisms, and adaptability to changing community needs and circumstances. Continuous engagement helps in refining and evolving the enterprise's approach.

Innovative business processes that facilitated women's economic activity and at the same time complied with local social and cultural norms that constrain their agency contributed to changing the social order itself.

Figure 7. Associative image

Examples and case studies:

- Fair Trade Coffee Cooperatives: Many fair-trade coffee cooperatives involve farmers directly in the decision-making process, ensuring that the farmers receive fair prices for their produce. These cooperatives often reinvest profits into community development projects, such as building schools or healthcare facilities.

- Co-Creation in Health Interventions: In many public health initiatives, such as those addressing HIV/AIDS, organizations like Partners in Health work closely with local communities to design and implement interventions. This includes training local healthcare workers and integrating traditional practices with modern medicine. Such co-creation ensures that the solutions are culturally appropriate and more likely to be accepted and maintained by the community.

- Community-Driven Water Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa: Organizations like Water.org work with local communities in Sub-Saharan Africa to provide access to safe drinking

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Projects For Europe

water and sanitation. These projects often involve community members in every stage, from planning to implementation and maintenance.

Unit 4: The Power of Youth Led-Advocacy

Arguably one of the single most influential levers for achieving the SDGs – and social change – has been youth led-advocacy campaigns (Piselli et al., 2019; Voices of Youth, n.d.). Young people are more receptive to new ideas and ways of doing, using their creativity and facility with technology to develop effective responses to far-reaching challenges.

Their advocacy helps raise awareness about the SDGs among peers and the general community, especially through the use of social media and other digital platforms, whereby at the click of a button, they rapidly mobilise big audiences (Cortés-Ramos et al., 2021).

Young people can further drive attitudes and behaviours of peers in creating a culture of sustainability and responsibility from an early age. In that respect, youth-led movements further afford young advocates an opportunity to influence policy change at the highest levels and hold governments and institutions accountable for delivering on all commitments towards attaining the SDGs (Ho et al., 2015; Sloam et al., 2022). Therefore, we need to recognise young people as major stakeholders in global development processes, but also ensuring that their voices and innovative solutions find expression for a sustainable future.

This topic will enable young people to gain knowledge and skills for organising and implementing effective youth led-advocacy campaigns.

Sub-unit 4.1 Planning your campaign

Identifying Community Needs and Challenges

An effective youth led-advocacy campaign requires a clear understanding of the needs and challenges within the community. Therefore, identification of these needs requires direct interaction with members of the community to collect various insights and viewpoints. This is attainable through brainstorming techniques and capture tools recording all kinds of opinions and ideas. Check more resources here: https://www.voicesofyouth.org/tools-resources

- **Surveys** are potent tools for gathering quantitative data on a wide audience. They could be taken over the internet or in person to assess community opinion about issues. Surveys should consist of clear and concise questions so meaningful results can be obtained. In this way, multiple-choice and open-ended questions would be part of quantitative analysis with some   enriched   qualitative   insight.

- **Focus groups** are interactive ways through which issues within the community could be discussed further. With a group of people from the community, the focus groups could delve successfully into the discussions that unwind and explore solutions to potential problems.

The nuance of the challenge within the community can be perceived through such discussions, which may not come out with mere surveys.

- **Community forums** are another means of organising events wherein members have a chance to share their ideas and views and where everybody gets a platform to voice their ideas. These meetings might also turn out to be an excellent venue to present preliminary ideas and take comments from others.

The data collected using the above techniques needs to be analysed to prioritise the issues. This will involve trends and patterns in data isolating the most critical issues. From this evaluation of the prevalence and degree of seriousness of the different problems, the youth advocate can then shortlist issues that fall within the scope of the SDGs and are most relevant to develop a campaign.

Develop Campaign Goals

When prioritising issues, it is important to consider both short-term and long-term goals. There are some challenges that may be urgent and therefore need to be addressed, while others may need to be considered as part of a broader strategic plan. In this balancing act, prioritisation ensures that young advocates focus their efforts on initiatives that can make the biggest difference while remaining within the realms of possibility.

Figure 8. Associative image

Setting clear and achievable goals, based on a need's assessment, is the second step in ensuring that your advocacy will be effective and successful in addressing community needs and advancing the SDGs. Therefore, translating your vision into concrete actions for a successful advocacy campaign requires the systematic development and implementation of clear and achievable goals. These steps include:

1. Define SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
2. Set goals in respect to identified needs and challenges.
3. Develop strategic plans specifying what tasks are required to meet each goal.
4. Identify required and available resources and specify constraints.

Sub-unit 4.2 Taking Action

Young advocates can ensure that the reach and impact of a campaign is broadened by building potential allies, using diverse fundraising methods, and using both old and new communication channels. This is further amplified by the leading potential that digital tools give to online petitions, social media campaigns, and crowdfunding pages driving campaigns for change.

1. Effective **mobilisation of resources** needs to identify who the potential allies and collaborators in such communities are, ranging from local NGOs and community groups to local government entities. Equally central to keeping these initiatives running are fundraising approaches, which also have some creative strategies: crowdfunding, grant applications, and so on. Proper management of resources is essential to increase impact.
2. **Community awareness raising** can be done in both traditional and modern ways. Flyers, posters, and event approaches at the community level form a good tool in reaching local communities and people. Social media platforms and online tools give wider outreach. You come up with very strong messages or slogans that can capture people's attention in both traditional and digital audiences, thereby deriving engagement.
3. Use of **digital platforms** becomes imperative to extend its reach and influence. Online petitions would rally support, and through social media, awareness could be created much faster. One can create engaging content in the form of videos and infographics to educate and motivate audiences. Besides, online fundraising platforms make it easy and accessible for pooling financial resources so that your advocacy effort may be effective and sustainable.

Sub-unit 4.3 Evaluation and Sustainability

In the space of youth led-advocacy campaigns, evaluation for effectiveness and sustainability serves to make a mark that can be continued further with the key elements that follow:

1. Measuring the impact of the campaign would be in the dimension of developing strategies to set clear metrics and benchmarks to track progress towards the outcome.
2. Tracking progress towards attaining campaign objectives involves checking at regular intervals, based on the earlier set metrics.
3. Pinpoint improvement and adjustment areas to give you an opportunity for refining the approach in pursuit of effectiveness.
4. Strategic foresight in planning for sustainability which incorporates long-term action with the continuous availability of support and resources, strong networks, and a roadmap for running future campaigns.

Sub-unit 4.4 Youth Led-Advocacy Examples

Fridays for Future

A youth-led movement that began in August 2018, after 15-year-old Greta Thunberg and other young activists sat in front of the Swedish parliament every school day for three weeks, to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis.

Figure 9. Protest against fossil fuel financing

World's Youth for Climate Justice (WYCJ)

A global youth-led movement which aims to define the responsibilities of nations in safeguarding the rights of current and future generations against the harmful effects of climate change.

Figure 10. Climate action protests

Connect4Climate

Connect4Climate works to catalyse a global climate movement with youth at the centre, building coalitions to drive ambition, and spurring robust climate action commitments from international policymakers, private sector organizations, and on-the-ground citizens.

Figure 11. Youth engagement in climate action

Sub-unit 4.5 Advocacy Strategy Development - Practical activity

Advocacy Strategy Development

Participants collaboratively develop a long-term advocacy strategy that includes phases of mobilization and partnership-building.

Step 1:
Split into teams representing different aspects of an advocacy campaign (e.g., community engagement, media outreach).

Step 2:
Work together to develop a cohesive strategy that integrates all these elements.

Step 3:
Present the strategy to the group, simulating a pitch to funders or another stakeholder.

Sub-unit 4.6 The SDG Advocacy Game - Practical activity

Participants in groups (4-6 people) will design, implement, and evaluate a mini-advocacy campaign on a chosen SDG in a fun, game-based approach. Each group progresses through the different phases of planning a campaign, taking action, and evaluation while encountering real-life challenges and opportunities for game cards. Groups are awarded with points whenever they demonstrate effective problem-solving, innovative ideas, or efficient resource management. At the end, the group with the most points/resources remaining is declared the "Campaign Champions."

Materials Needed
- SDG cards: cards with various SDGs on them, like Climate Action, Gender Equality, Quality Education.
- Action cards: cards containing the actions that the group can do.
- Challenge cards: cards with unexpected challenges.
- Evaluation sheets: worksheets for groups to track their progress and evaluate their campaign.
- Tokens or Points: representing campaign resources, such as money, time, and volunteers.

Instructions
Step 1: Planning your campaign
- Each group randomly selects an **SDG card**, which will be the theme for their campaign.
- Groups brainstorm and plan a campaign to address their SDG, considering the target audience, key messages, methods (e.g., social media, workshops, protests), and timeline.

- Assign each group a certain number of **tokens/points**, representing their resources (e.g., 10 tokens).

Step 2: Taking action
- Each group draws **Action cards** and then decides how to use their resources to carry out the specific Action. For example, an "Organize a community workshop" card costs 3 tokens.
- Every 5 minutes, draw a **Challenge card** that introduces a scenario to which they must respond. Examples include "Bad weather affects your outdoor event," "You receive unexpected media coverage".
- Groups revise their plans to reflect what has just happened and decide how to continue their campaign with the resources they have left.
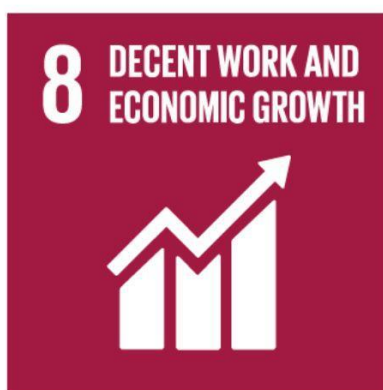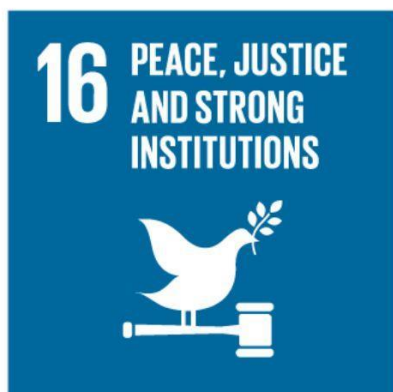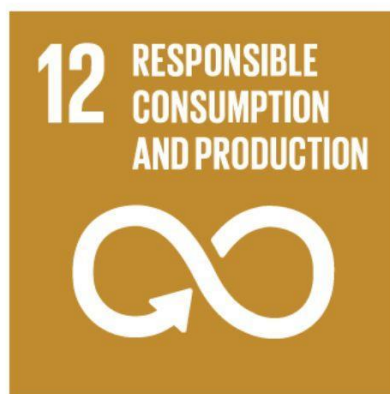
Step 3: Evaluation and Sustainability
- Groups complete the Evaluation sheet at the end of the campaign simulation where they reflect upon:
  - What worked and what didn't.
  - How they adapted to challenges.
  - The impact their campaign could have had in real life.
  - How they could make their campaign sustainable over time.
- Groups score themselves based on how many goals they met, resources they have left, and how well they handled challenges.

Step 4: Presenting Youth-Led Advocacy
- Each group presents their campaign to the whole class, highlighting their strategies, the challenges they faced, and lessons learned.

Appendix 1: SDG Cards

1 NO POVERTY

2 ZERO HUNGER

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

13 CLIMATE ACTION

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

15 LIFE ON LAND

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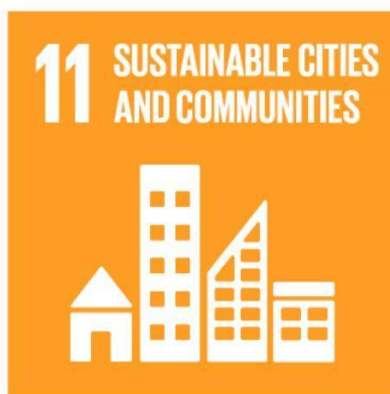
Appendix 2: Challenge Cards

Funding cut!
Your campaign's funding has been reduced by half. You must return 3 tokens to the bank. How will you adjust your plans?

Bad weather!
Your outdoor event is hit by bad weather and cannot take place as planned. You lose 2 tokens. What can you do to adapt your campaign?

Volunteer shortage!
Half of your volunteers didn't show up for an event. You can either spend 2 tokens to find replacements or modify your activity plan to work with fewer people.

Opposition from local authorities!
The local authorities have raised concerns about your campaign. You must spend 2 tokens to address the issue or come up with an alternative plan.

Media coverage!
A local newspaper is interested in covering your campaign. This gives you an extra opportunity to spread your message. You gain 1 additional token. How will you make the most of this media exposure?

Unexpected support!
A local celebrity has expressed support for your campaign, offering to promote it on social media. You gain 2 extra tokens! How will you use this opportunity?

Social media backlash!
Your campaign received negative comments on social media. You lose 1 token while addressing this issue. How will you respond and regain support?

Unexpected donation!
A local business offers to sponsor your campaign with extra funds. You gain 3 additional tokens! How will you use this boost?

Unexpected success!
Your campaign video goes viral! Gain 3 tokens and think about how you can capitalize on this momentum to expand your campaign.

Partnership opportunity!
An NGO working on a similar SDG wants to partner with you. You gain 2 tokens and access to more resources. How can you collaborate effectively.

Community resistance!
Some community members are resistant to your campaign's message. You need to spend 2 tokens to organize a meeting to address their concerns. How will you engage with them?

Policy change!
A sudden change in local government policy makes it harder to implement your campaign activities. You lose 2 tokens. What adjustments will you make?

Local school involvement!
A nearby school wants to involve their students in your campaign. Gain 2 tokens and brainstorm how to include them effectively.

Organize a Social Media Campaign
Cost: 2 Tokens
Use your social media platforms to raise awareness about your SDG. Create posts, videos, or stories to engage your target audience.

Host a Community Workshop
Cost: 3 Tokens
Organize an educational workshop to inform your community about your SDG. Invite local experts to speak and share insights.

Create and Distribute Flyers
Cost: 1 Token
Design and distribute flyers in your community to spread the word about your campaign. Choose locations where your target audience is most likely to see them.

Launch a Petition
Cost: 2 Tokens
Start a petition to gather support for your cause. Promote it online and offline to collect as many signatures as possibles.

Organize a Fundraising Event
Cost: 3 Tokens
Plan a fundraising event (e.g., bake sale, concert, or online auction) to raise money for your campaign. Use the funds to support your activities.

Collaborate with Another Youth Group
Cost: 1 Token
Join forces with another youth group working on a similar SDG. Pool your resources and ideas to make a greater impact.

Create a Podcast Episode
Cost: 2 Tokens
Record a podcast episode discussing your SDG, featuring interviews, stories, or expert opinions. Share it widely to raise awareness.

Create a Blog or Website
Cost: 2 Tokens
Develop a blog or website to share information about your campaign, SDG facts, success stories, and ways for others to get involved.

Set Up a Booth at a Local Event
Cost: 2 Tokens

Arrange to have a booth at a community fair, market, or festival. Use it to share information about your campaign and engage with the public.

Organize a School Awareness Campaign
Cost: 2 Tokens

Partner with a local school to educate students about your SDG through presentations, posters, or activities.

Organize a Peaceful Protest or March
Cost: 3 Tokens

Plan a peaceful protest or march to draw attention to your cause. Ensure that your campaign message is clear and visible.

Send Letters to Local Politicians
Cost: 1 Token

Write letters to local politicians or decision-makers explaining why your SDG is important and urging them to take action.

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MODULE 3: Being Creative in The Digital ERA

Introduction

Figure 12. https://creativeeducator.tech4learning.com/v06/articles/Advanced_Thinking

The present century of technological evolution, which gets its main feature from digital connectivity, has brought about a change in all sectors and fields, including the theme of storytelling. Digital storytelling combines the power of narration to multimedia elements to come up with engaged and impactful stories able to educate, inspire, and mobilize audiences and youth among them. This module aims at empowering rural youth workers and young people with relevant skills to effectively harness digital storytelling for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), active citizenship, and environmental sustainability. It will help facilitate and empower digital literacy and creativity among participants in contributing meaningfully towards issues of social change and climate action.

Unit 5: Digital storytelling

Sub-Unit 5.1 Defining Digital Storytelling

Digital Storytelling can be defined as the application of digital tools and media platforms for creating multimedia-rich stories, using images, videos, and audio (UNICEF, 2021). This approach is important in today's digital age since it allows the diffusion of the stories across the globe, allowing education and impacting audiences. This is where the skills of digital storytelling come in a key lever in meaningful youth participation in advocacy for sustainable development and climate action among youth workers and young people. Moreover, digital storytelling has a critical role in preserving and sharing cultural heritage in rural areas where traditional knowledge
and practice might otherwise be overlooked. Digital storytelling can be used to help young people build their identity and continuity through the documentation and sharing of stories on local customs, environmental practices, and community histories.

Figure 13. https://action.gr/2022/01/04/free-online-seminar-on-narrative-methods-for-the-improvement-of-social-inclusion-in-the-classroom/

It creates a voice for the marginalized people to participate in the global discourse on sustainable development and social justice by giving them a platform where communities can share challenges and solutions. It's this kind of inclusivity and empowerment that will help pave the way to a fairer and more sustainable future. Digital storytelling had its early beginnings in the early 1990s, which was concurrent with the arrival of the Internet. The medium first evolved into a text-based form but has evolved over the years to include several other digital formats, thus incorporating video and podcasts, among other interactive media. This has democratized storytelling more and more, making it an increasingly accessible and versatile media for storytellers to connect with and reach people, engage in new ways, and interact with diverse audiences.

Storytelling can create an echoing effect in audiences emotionally. It helps create empathy, understanding, and connection by providing relatable characters and situations. This impact is heightened in a digital arena through the use of multimedia elements that can trigger an audience's emotional and cognitive engagement (Thunberg, 2021). Moreover, the story itself, with its narrative structure involving characters, conflicts, and resolutions, is similar to human experience and therefore is an applicable tool for teaching and sharing intricate information and ideas. It spurs a reflection on values and a change in perspective for perceptions and behaviours when coming from well-crafted stories.

This aspect of storytelling becomes relevant in issues like climate combat and social justice, where engagement at the emotional level might allow for awareness creation and the will to act. Considering the power of stories to change, appealing to heart and mind alike, they become a strong component of any digital communication strategy for sustainable development. An extremely interesting example of successful digital storytelling is the 'Humans of New York' project, which captures personal stories from a very different range of individuals residing in New York City and beyond (Humans of New York, n.d.). This idea can easily trigger empathy and a much greater understanding of different cultures and lives by shining a light on unique personal experiences and challenges. Accompanied by portraits, these stories have often resonated with millions of people worldwide, proving that the power of personal narratives can evoke connections and compassion across global audiences. Another very powerful example of storytelling in action comes through the TED Talks, where speakers utilize the format to express complex ideas in an engaging and simple manner. A number of such talks invoke people to think differently and act differently after the blending of personal anecdotes with scientific insights and compelling visuals. These kinds of talks prove that good stories are excellent at simplifying complex themes and themes that make them more personable, hence changing individuals and societies. Digital storytelling also proves to be a critical tool in charity campaigns (LeBuhn, 2018).

The mechanism is employed by many non-profit organizations as a way of showing the impact of their work—that is, through videos, photos, and testimonials, it gives life to their cause. Like campaigns that embody the stories of persons directly affected by issues such as poverty, health crises, or environmental degradation can be very powerful in mobilizing support, resources, etc. These stories humanize abstract problems and give tangible outcomes, therefore providing feelings of generosity and advocacy, which evidences the extent of deep influence storytelling plays in motivating social change.
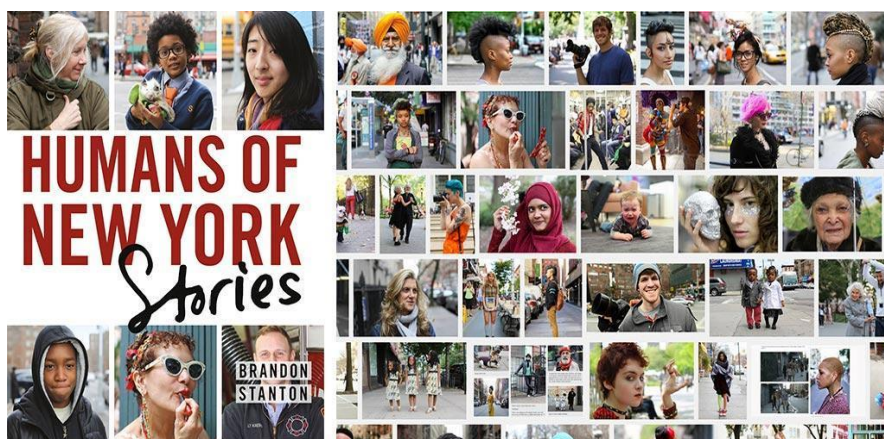

Figure 14. https://www.jebiga.com/humans-of-new-york-stories/

Digital storytelling happens on multiple platforms. All of them can offer truly unique opportunities for engagement and impact with the target group. For example, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter will provide versatile venues for storytelling, each with their unique features and best practices.

Figure 15. https://thehill.com/policy/technology/546957-youtube-user-growth-outpaces-social-media-rivals-poll/

In the case of Instagram, it will be very effective in visual storytelling through high-quality images and videos, backed by engaging captions and relevant hashtags with a view to raising awareness on SDGs and climate actions.

Facebook provides an opportunity for more elaborate storytelling and community building, as one can dive deeper into stories and have more interaction with audiences through posts, live videos, and discussion groups.

Twitter is exceptionally good at short messages and instant updateability and thus highly suitable for posting concise powerful statements and further creating message threads and hashtags to make the messages ring with resonance in themes related to sustainability and active citizenship.

Podcasts provide a totally different perspective on storytelling, relying on audio narratives that have the potential to engage deeply with listeners. That is what makes the creation of compelling podcasts content in episodes with structures of beginning, middle, and end, accompanied by interviews, sound effects, and music to enhance the storytelling experience. They can reflect on themes relevant to listeners at a personal level in relation to climate action or even community initiatives supporting the SDGs by providing a platform for voices that might otherwise not be heard.

Videos and blogs are another strong media for digital storytelling, especially through leading platforms such as YouTube and Tik Tok. YouTube allows one to create long-form visual content that may manifest environmental issues, present sustainable practices, and give inspiring stories of change. This type of format goes well with detailed storytelling or educational content. Tik Tok is great for quick, punchy messages that invigorate the viewer and let them know something more about the subject or take action. It's in a format lending itself very well to creative expression and is especially very effective with regards to younger age groups. Blogs will also be an integral part of digital storytelling in the future—providing a platform for more

contemplative and analytic content. Storytelling is applied while making technical information interesting for readers in blog posts and articles. Rich media, which includes images, infographics, and videos, can help to strengthen the narrative and keep the interest of readers.

It will share both local and global issues related to SDG and broadens the context to achieve a more reflective and action-oriented reader. All of these platforms have different advantages and challenges, and the effective digital storyteller plays to the strengths of each in pursuit of targeted audiences. By understanding the nuances of these platforms, youth workers and young people can more effectively craft narratives that advance sustainable development and positive social change.

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Unit 6: Digital Tools for Creative Expression

Sub-Unit 6.1 Introduction to Digital Creativity

Creative expression is the process of taking an idea and bringing it to life, encompassing a variety of forms such as visual art, music, writing, and dance. This practice often engages the physical body, promoting a deeper connection between body and mind. For youth workers, fostering creative expression in young people can be a powerful way to support their emotional and mental well-being, as well as to encourage their unique voices and talents.

In today's digital era, numerous tools are available to enhance and facilitate creative expression. Digital tools not only expand the possibilities for creating and sharing art but also make these processes more accessible. Whether it's using drawing apps for visual art, digital audio workstations for music production, writing platforms for storytelling, or video apps for dance, these technologies can play a pivotal role in helping young people explore and develop their creativity. By integrating these tools into their work, youth workers can offer more dynamic and engaging opportunities for creative expression.

Ice-breaker activity to promote digital creativity among youth: Using simple design tools like Canva or an avatar maker app, invite youth participants to create digital self-portraits that represent how they see themselves. They can use a combination of shapes, colours, and symbols to express their personality, then share their portraits and explain the choices they made.

This module explores the integration of digital tools into youth programs to enhance creative expression and engagement. It focuses on the benefits of digital creativity, practical examples from various EU initiatives, and effective ways to utilize platforms such as TikTok, Canva, and YouTube. By leveraging these tools, youth workers can support young people in developing essential skills, fostering community, and advocating for social causes through innovative digital projects

Sub-Unit 6.2. The Benefits of Digital Creativity for Young People

Digital creativity offers young people a rich avenue for expressing their thoughts, feelings, and working theories using various artistic languages and materials. Engaging with digital tools such as graphic design software, music production apps, video editing programs, and digital art platforms can open up new possibilities for playful learning and meaningful experiences. These tools, combined with traditional creative methods, allow for deeper exploration and connection, enhancing their personal and academic growth.

Often, the potential of young people's digital creativity is overlooked. Traditional discussions about play and learning have tended to separate their engagement with digital technologies from their natural creative activities. This has created a gap in understanding how young people interact with digital media. However, as digital technologies continue to evolve, it is crucial for educators to explore how these tools can be used creatively and expressively, helping young people integrate their digital and physical worlds.

A practical activity to pool different ideas of young people using digital tools: Using an online platform like Padlet or Miro, encourage each participant to contribute a photo, GIF, or digital

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artwork that represents something they love or enjoy doing. As more participants contribute, the collage grows, showcasing the diversity of interests within the group and sparking meaningful conversations.

Sub-Unit 6.3 Practical Examples of Digital Creativity in Youth Programs

Digital creativity in youth programs has been evolving, reflecting the broader changes in technology and its integration into various aspects of life. This shift is evident in several innovative approaches that combine digital tools with traditional methods to enhance learning and engagement.

European Digital Art Workshops: **Art Stations Foundation** in Poland offers workshops where young people can explore digital art forms. Using tools like digital drawing tablets and graphic design software, participants create their own digital artwork and animations. These workshops encourage creative expression while teaching valuable skills in digital art and design.

Coding and Robotics Initiatives: The **"European Code Week"** is an EU-wide initiative that promotes coding and digital skills among young people. During this event, numerous countries host coding workshops, robotics competitions, and digital game design activities. These events are designed to inspire and educate youth in digital technologies through hands-on, interactive experiences.

Virtual Reality Learning Experiences: The **"VR4Youth"** program in the Netherlands utilizes virtual reality to create immersive learning environments for young people. Through VR, participants can explore historical events, simulate scientific experiments, or engage in creative storytelling. This program provides a unique way to enhance educational experiences and stimulate creativity using cutting-edge technology.

Digital Media in Social Projects: The **"Youth Empowerment through Digital Media"** project in Spain supports young people in using digital media to address social issues. Participants learn to create digital campaigns, multimedia content, and social media strategies to promote causes such as environmental sustainability and social justice. This initiative combines digital skills with activism, encouraging youth to use technology for positive social change.

These examples from across the EU demonstrate how digital tools are being effectively used to enrich youth programs. By integrating technology into various aspects of learning and creativity, these programs help young people develop essential skills and engage with their interests in innovative ways.

Unit 7 Social Media and Online Platforms

Sub-Unit 7.1 Tik Tok and its influence on young people

TikTok has become a dominant platform in the digital landscape, especially among younger generations. With Gen Z leading the charge, TikTok's influence extends beyond mere entertainment, shaping how youth engage with content, learn, and express themselves.

TikTok offers a wide array of features that can be harnessed for creative projects. Youth workers can guide participants in using tools such as effects, filters, and music to enhance their videos. For instance, running a digital storytelling workshop where youth create short films or animated stories using TikTok's built-in editing tools can be a fun and educational experience. Encourage them to explore TikTok's effects to add creativity to their content, such as using augmented reality (AR) filters to create immersive experiences or themed video challenges to engage their peers.

TikTok can be a powerful platform for community building and advocacy. Youth workers can facilitate campaigns where participants use TikTok to raise awareness about social issues, such as climate change or social justice. Organize activities like hashtag challenges or trend participation to amplify their voices and reach a wider audience. For example, create a campaign encouraging youth to share their personal stories or initiatives related to community service, using specific hashtags to track and showcase their contributions. This approach not only fosters a sense of community but also empowers youth to be active advocates for causes they care about.

In 2020, TikTok users orchestrated a prank to affect a Trump rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The prank involved registering for free tickets to the rally with no intention of attending, aiming to create a significant gap between the expected and actual turnout. The Trump campaign had boasted about over a million registrations, but only about 6,200 people attended. The prank, widely shared on TikTok, contributed to the rally's low attendance and highlighted the power of social media in influencing political events and shaping public perception. *Thus, TikTok users demonstrated how social media platforms can be leveraged to influence real-world events and public discourse.*

Sub-Unit 7.2 Canva: Easy Design for Youth and Educators

Canva is a free design platform that simplifies the creation of visually engaging materials, making it an ideal tool for youth workers and educators. With its user-friendly interface and a vast library of templates, users can effortlessly design posters, social media graphics, presentations, and educational materials. Canva's templates cater to a wide range of needs, including mental health awareness, event planning, and educational content, allowing users to produce professional-looking designs without extensive design skills.

For effective dissemination, Canva offers tools like a content calendar to plan and schedule posts, ensuring consistent and timely communication. Educators can use

Canva to create visually appealing lesson plans, infographics, and promotional materials for school events, enhancing engagement and understanding. Youth workers can leverage Canva

to design materials for workshops, campaigns, and mental health resources, making complex information accessible and engaging.

For example, you can create a mental health calendar using Canva by selecting and customizing a template with relevant awareness dates and educational content by choosing a calendar template from Canva and customizing it with key mental health awareness days, local support resources, and motivational quotes. Populating the calendar with practical tips, coping strategies, and reminders for mental health practices, including links to digital resources. You can Share the completed calendar as a PDF or image via social media, email, or print, and update it regularly to keep the information current and relevant.

Sub-Unit 7.3 Other useful tools

Kahoot

Kahoot is an interactive quiz platform that allows youth workers to create and share quizzes to engage young people in learning. Use Kahoot to assess knowledge, introduce new topics, or foster competition in a fun, dynamic way.

Mentimeter

Mentimeter is a tool for real-time audience interaction that can be used to gather feedback, conduct polls, or brainstorm ideas. It's useful for making sessions more engaging and collecting instant input from youth participants.

Padlet

Padlet is a collaborative platform where users can create and share digital boards. It's great for idea sharing, facilitating group projects, and compiling resources in one accessible place.

Google Jamboard

Google Jamboard is an interactive whiteboard that enables collaborative learning and brainstorming. It can be used for interactive sessions, group brainstorming, and visual learning.

Storybird

Storybird is an online tool that helps users create and publish visual stories. It's ideal for encouraging creative writing, facilitating collaborative storytelling, and sharing stories within a community.

Mural

Mural is a digital workspace for visual collaboration that helps teams brainstorm, plan, and analyse projects together. It can be used for mind mapping, project planning, and engaging youth in problem-solving activities.

Unit 8 The Benefits of Digital Creativity for Youth

Sub-Unit 8.1 Enhancing Engagement and Motivation

Digital creativity enhances engagement and motivation by transforming learning into an interactive experience. Tools like video editing software, graphic design apps, and online platforms make content creation dynamic and relevant, capturing young people's interest. For instance, the "Youth Media Project" in Spain engages youth in creating digital stories and short films, turning learning into an exciting and impactful activity.

Sub-Unit 8.2 Developing New Skills and Competencies

Developing new skills and competencies is a significant benefit of digital creativity. Youth gain valuable technical skills in areas such as graphic design, video editing, and coding, which are essential in today's job market. Additionally, digital projects foster creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability, helping young people develop a growth mindset. The "Digital Skills for Youth" program in the UK exemplifies this by integrating digital media projects that enhance both technical and creative skills.

Digital creativity also promotes collaboration and communication skills. Working on digital projects often involves teamwork and the use of online tools, teaching youth how to collaborate effectively and manage projects. This hands-on experience in team-based tasks helps build essential skills for future academic and career success, preparing youth for diverse professional environments.

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Conclusion

The YESDGs training course is a valuable educational resource for youth workers and educators, designed to empower both them and the young people they work with. By covering key areas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), social entrepreneurship and activism, and digital creativity, the course provides youth workers with the knowledge and practical tools to inspire and guide young people in making a positive impact on their communities.

For youth workers, this course enhances essential skills in project planning, advocacy, and digital engagement. It equips them with strategies to help young people understand the SDGs, localize them to their communities, and take meaningful action. The focus on practical activities and real-world applications makes it easier for youth workers to translate global goals into every day, achievable actions that resonate with young people.

At the same time, the course builds critical skills among young people, such as leadership, problem-solving, and creative advocacy. It encourages them to take ownership of social and environmental issues, using tools like digital storytelling and social media to amplify their voices and drive change. The course fosters collaboration between educators and youth, creating a space for shared learning and innovation.

In summary, the YESDGs training course is an essential tool for educators and youth workers, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to support young people in becoming proactive, engaged citizens.