



CRITICAL CHANGE LAB

Deliverable D1.4

Critical ChangeLab Model: Framework and Toolkit



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Glossary

Critical ChangeLab	Democracy meets arts: Critical change labs for building democratic cultures through creative and narrative practices
Critical Literacies Framework	The Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies Framework
D	Deliverable
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
O	Objective
PAR	Participatory Action Research
P	Phase
T	Task





Executive Summary

Critical ChangeLab (Democracy Meets Arts: Critical Change Labs for Building Democratic Cultures through Creative and Narrative Practices) is a Horizon Europe research and innovation project addressing democratic erosion trends by strengthening youth participation in society. The project is carried out by 10 partner institutions and examines the current state of democracy in learning environments across Europe, generating a robust evidence base for the design of a participatory democratic curriculum. Critical ChangeLab develops a model of democratic pedagogy using creative and narrative practices to foster youth's active democratic citizenship at a time when polarisation and dwindling trust in democracy are spreading across Europe. At the Critical ChangeLabs, diverse actors from formal and non-formal education and civic organizations work together with youth to rethink European democracy and envision futures that are justice-oriented.

This deliverable presents the first version of the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy, introducing its key elements which include i) the Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies Framework, ii) the Critical ChangeLab process, iii) methods and tools, as well as the iv) facilitation approach. Information about the use of co-design and co-creation approaches for the definition of some elements of the Model, as well as for guiding the design of the Critical ChangeLabs is included. The deliverable also provides an overview of the Critical ChangeLabs organized during PAR cycle I in order to showcase how the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy is implemented in real settings.





1 Introduction

1.1 About Critical ChangeLab

Critical ChangeLab (Democracy Meets Arts: Critical Change Labs for Building Democratic Cultures through Creative and Narrative Practices) is a Horizon Europe research and innovation project addressing democratic erosion trends by strengthening youth participation in society. The project is carried out by 10 partner institutions and embraces a transdisciplinary approach combining expertise from Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, as well as Science and Technology.

Specifically, the Critical ChangeLab project develops a model of democratic pedagogy using creative and narrative practices to foster youth's active democratic citizenship at a time when polarisation and dwindling trust in democracy are spreading across Europe. The Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy fosters learners' transformative agency and strengthens democratic processes in education through collaborations across formal and non-formal education and local actors around global/local challenges relevant for youth. The Model promotes creative and narrative practices to explore the historical roots of local and EU-wide challenges, understanding the value-systems and worldviews underlying distinct types of relations (human-human, human-nature, human-technology). At the Critical ChangeLabs, young people are introduced to approaches such as theatre of the oppressed, transmedia storytelling, as well as speculative and critical design to rethink European democracy and envision alternative democracy futures.

Throughout the project lifespan, the Critical ChangeLab project examines the current state of democracy within education institutions developing instruments such as the Democracy Health Questionnaire and Index, as well as conducting case studies to identify youth's perspectives on everyday democracy. As part of the project, a scalable and tailorable model of democratic pedagogy in formal and non-formal learning environments is designed. The Critical ChangeLab Model is co-created and implemented with youth and stakeholders and evaluated to provide recommendations for policy and practice. Strategies to sustain the model and its outcomes over time are also produced.

The Critical ChangeLab project uses mixed model research design combining quantitative and in-depth qualitative research on democracy and youth with participatory action research (PAR) cycles to generate a robust evidence base to support democratic curriculum development using participatory, creative, and critical approaches.





1.2 Context of the deliverable within WP1 - Map & Design

This deliverable (D1.4) has been developed in the context of T1.3 and T1.4 led by UOULU with the contribution of all partners and responds to WPI's objective of designing a model for democratic pedagogy using creative and narrative practices with learners and civic education stakeholders. The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy is presented as part of this deliverable (see sections 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6), as well as the Critical ChangeLabs' designs implemented during PAR cycle 1 conducted in conjunction with learners, educators, and civic stakeholders (see section 7).

1.3 Relationship of the deliverable to other work packages

This deliverable (D1.4) responds to Critical ChangeLab project objectives:

- O2: Design a scalable and tailorable model - Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy
- O3: Co-create and implement the Critical ChangeLab Model in collaboration with stakeholders

The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democracy (D1.4) provides the ground for WP2, WP3 and WP4 tasks as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Connection between WP2, WP3 and WP4 tasks and D1.4

WP	Task	Ways in which D1.4 informs the task
2	T2.2 PAR Cycle 2: implementation of the first iteration of the Critical ChangeLabs	PAR cycle 1 Critical ChangeLabs' designs might be used and adapted for PAR cycle 2
2	T2.3 PAR Cycle 3, implementation of the second iteration of the Critical ChangeLabs	PAR cycle 1 Critical ChangeLabs' designs might be used and adapted for PAR cycle 3
2	T2.4 Development of the Critical ChangeLab Educator's Handbook	The approaches outlined in D1.4 influence the ways of working and the strategies formulated as part of this task
3	T3.1. Process evaluation	The data analysed as part of this task will be collected in the context of the Critical ChangeLab PAR cycles





4	T4.3 Community empowerment activities for a sustained take up of methods	The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy will be shared through teacher education and educators' professional development actions
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2 Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy

2.1 Background

The purpose of democracy education is to educate children and young people to become members of a democratic society through fostering democratic attitudes and providing necessary skills and knowledge for engaging in political participation and voting. (Lawy & Biesta, 2006.) The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy considers the young people already as citizens who have political agency (Sanchini et al., 2019), as well as rights and responsibilities in cosmopolitan and increasingly globalized societies (Osler & Starkey, 2003). Another key idea is the assumption that participatory democracy is learned through participation (Biesta, 2007). The Model also aligns with Dewey's notion that democracy is more than a form of government, it's "primarily a form of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (Dewey, 1966, p.91). Democracy education is thus understood as collective and shared, and learning is seen as a shared construction of knowledge, with students and teachers being relatively equal (Hopkins, 2018).

The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy is inspired by a research assisted intervention method called the Change Laboratory, adaptations of which have been used in various settings including schools, hospitals, postal services, libraries and entrepreneurship education (Engeström et al., 2023; Kajamaa, 2011; Haapasaari et al., 2016; Engeström et al., 2013; Morselli et al., 2014). Drawing from cultural-historical activity theory (Vygotsky, 197; Leont'ev, 1978) and the theory of expansive learning, the Change Laboratory method aims to structure collaborative design efforts by helping participants to identify, analyse and resolve systemic contradictions and conceptualize the object of collective activity (Kajamaa & Hyrkkö, 2022). Figure 1 depicts the expansive learning cycle.



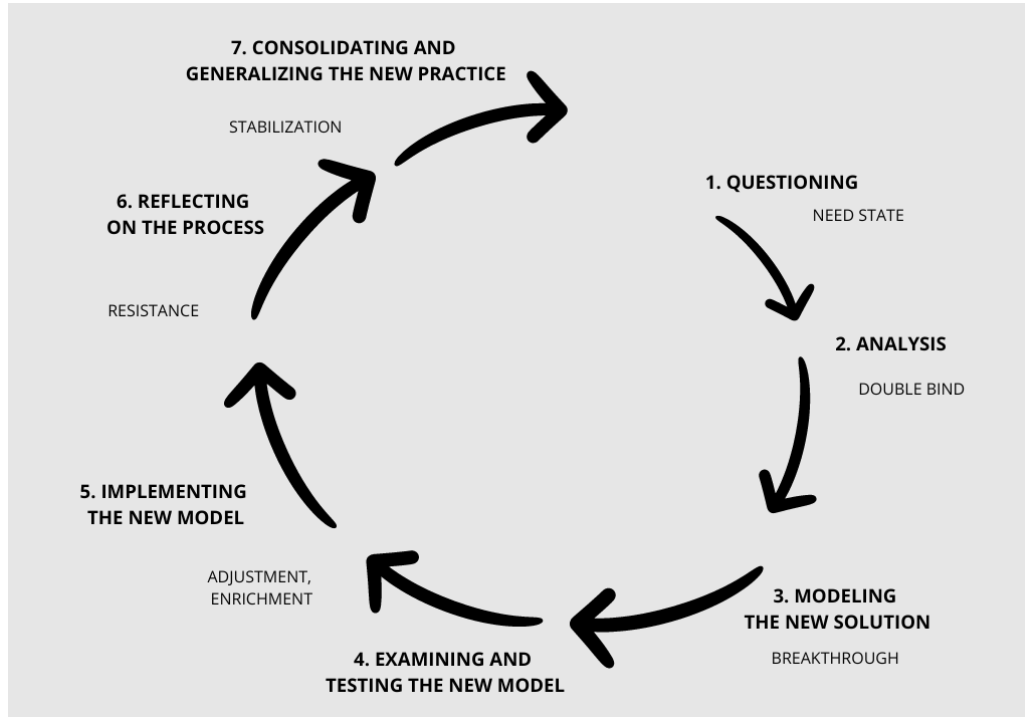


Figure 1. Expansive learning cycle (re-created from Engeström, 1999, p. 384).

The Change Laboratory process follows the expansive learning cycle, which consists of seven epistemic learning actions through which systemic contradictions and their manifestations in the activity system are identified and resolved. Namely, questioning the current practices, analysing tensions and contradictions, modeling a new solution, examining and implementing the model, reflecting on the process and lastly, consolidating the model as a new form of practice. However, the process should not be understood as linear, as iterative transitions between phases are typical for an expansive learning process (Engeström et al., 2007.). At the heart of expansive learning is the idea of learning something that is not yet there (Engeström, 2015), which further emphasises its participatory nature allowing the participants to make use of their own voices, knowledge and experiences in the collective design process and taking ownership of the process (Kajamaa & Hyrkkö, 2022).

Overcoming the systemic contradictions require transformative agency of those who are involved in the activity system. Transformative agency can be described as “breaking away from a given frame of action and taking initiative to transform it” (Virkkunen, 2006, p.49). In other words, mediating artefacts, which are filled with meaning and turned into signs, can





enable a person or a group to resolve a conflict of motives and make meaningful changes (Engeström et al., 2022). Transformative agency is also connected with “a transformative activist stance”, in which a person or a group, for personal or collective reasons, work to transform the existing activity, while potentially also developing their own identity and learning (Kajamaa & Kumpulainen, 2019).

2.2 Approach

The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Education aims to contribute to advancing 21st century learning among youth (aged 11–18 years) by promoting communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and reflection competencies to tackle current democracy challenges. The key features of the Model are i) youth-centredness, ii) participation and iii) orientation towards change.

Constructivist approaches to learning, as well as the participatory design tradition (Papert & Harel, 1991) are at the center of the Critical ChangeLab Model. The constructivist and the participatory design tradition stress the importance of the process and the experience of those who are involved (Bødker et al., 1988). Following these approaches, in the Critical ChangeLab Model design and learning are seen as experiences that take place over time and in which interaction and dialogue play a key role. Thus, at the Critical ChangeLabs, young people and education and civil society actors are considered experts of their needs and wishes to engage in associated living with others (Dewey, 1966).

A Critical ChangeLab is a democracy education format where young people work together to identify, question and examine issues generating tensions in their everyday relations to envision alternatives towards desirable futures. Critical ChangeLabs revolve around issues that are close and relevant to the young people involved and their local context. At the Laboratories, youth get the opportunity to explore these issues in collaboration with various stakeholders from education and civil society. The orientation towards change is understood in a broad sense, ranging from change in how democracy issues permeating everyday relations are perceived and comprehended to change through actions in youth's everyday environments. In both cases, the notion of change is connected to reimagining Western democracies' anthropocentric worldviews, cultivating relations of care with other humans, the environment, and other sentient beings. Recognizing the mediating role of tools





and technology and rethinking how these can contribute to build desirable futures is also part of the change processes triggered at the Critical ChangeLabs.

The Critical ChangeLab Model runs on the premise that anyone can run a Critical ChangeLab and that Laboratories can happen everywhere. Given that the Model is framed in the context of democracy and citizenship education, the Model has been conceived with enough flexibility to accommodate the specificities of formal and non-formal education. For this reason, the Model is kept open making it necessary to adapt it based on the local context, the setting, the participants, as well as the stakeholders involved. The minimum requirements for running a Critical ChangeLab deal with its project-based orientation and the need to ensure some time for reflection between sessions. Thus, as a minimum a Critical ChangeLab is expected to last three sessions, held on three separate (ideally non-consecutive) days.

In the spirit of openness, the Model does not define the format, nor the tools adopted at the Lab. In this sense, Critical ChangeLabs can be conducted face to face, online or through hybrid sessions. Nevertheless, face to face is strongly recommended, especially when involving young people during more than three sessions.

2.3 Elements of the Critical ChangeLab Model

The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy is structured around the following elements: i) A conceptual framework, ii) A specific process, iii) A particular set of methods and tools, and iv) Distinct facilitation strategies.

Critical ChangeLab conceptual framework

The conceptual framework underlying Critical ChangeLab process and selection of methods has been named as the Critical Literacies Framework. The Critical Literacies Framework's influences stem from literature on criticality, relationality and futures (see section 3 for further elaboration on the Framework). This Framework should be regarded as a compass, aiming to support Critical ChangeLab designers to identify aspects to emphasize during the Lab sessions.





Critical ChangeLab process

The Critical ChangeLab process draws inspiration from the Change Laboratory Methodology, as well as from project and inquiry-based learning approaches. Learning is understood as a process, led by the learners who start by i) questioning everyday life relations, identifying issues and tensions connected to democracy values and ways of doing; and from here engage in explorations to ii) analyse the links between past-present temporalities to understand how a particular issue has unfolded through time, iii) imagine alternatives, broadening current versions and understandings of democracy; as well as iv) materializing their ideas for change. Reflective thinking is embedded throughout the process, and at the Lab final session participants are invited to reflect on their experiences during the Critical ChangeLab. The Critical ChangeLab process can be accommodated to various durations and thus, two versions of the process are proposed (a long and a short version). Further details of the Critical ChangeLab process are provided in section 4.

Critical ChangeLab methods and tools

The methods used at the Critical ChangeLabs stem from various traditions such as critical pedagogy, arts and design, and activism. In practice, this means that practices based on futures thinking, embodiment and performance, narration and storytelling, as well as making might be combined to foster the Lab participants' collaboration, critical thinking and creativity to tackle current democracy challenges. As part the tools to support Critical ChangeLab's participants externalize their thinking a set of boards are provided to i) identify evidence of issues creating conflicts and tensions ii) capture ideas and suggestions and iii) document collective insights and alternative practices. Further elaboration on the Critical ChangeLab methods is provided in section 5.

Facilitation

Democracy values such as respect for human dignity, freedom to act, express and think, equality and a safe and secure community are at the core of the Critical ChangeLab Model. The Critical ChangeLab hosts and facilitators are responsible, together with the participants, of actively committing to these values, making it visible throughout the Lab activities. Given the emphasis on active and meaningful participation from the youth joining the Laboratories, strategies for building horizontal relations between facilitators, adult





stakeholders and young people are an important aspect of the facilitation strategies used at the Critical ChangeLabs.

Alignment of the Critical ChangeLab Model elements

The Critical Literacies Framework allows alignment between the different elements of the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy. The conceptual Framework is a practical tool for Critical ChangeLab designers and facilitators, aiding them to make decisions on aspects connected with the process, the methods and tools, as well as the facilitation strategies to use at various moments of the Lab. Alignment of the Critical ChangeLab Model elements through the Critical Literacies Framework is depicted in figure 2.

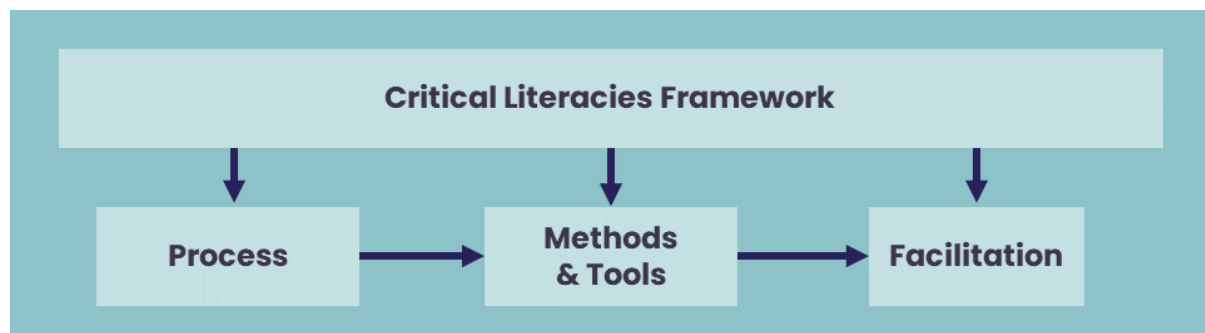


Figure 2. Alignment of the Critical ChangeLab Model Elements through the Critical Literacies Framework.

2.4 Co-creation and co-design of the Critical ChangeLab Model

The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy is meant as a flexible model, applicable to a variety of learning environments with different conditions. The Model itself should be seen as the result of a co-creation process involving various stakeholders through a series of PAR cycles¹. In design, the term stakeholder is usually used to refer to the people who may be directly or indirectly affected by a project. Regarding the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy, the key stakeholders are i) the education and civil society organizations with whom the project partners collaborate to run a Critical

¹ To date of this deliverable (D1.4), the first PAR cycle in which the Model is implemented is still in progress. An updated version of the Model will be provided in D3.2 Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy: Developing 21st Century Skills for Democratic Participation.





ChangeLab, ii) the educators, facilitators and civil society actors involved in the Lab activities, as well as iii) the young people who participate in the Laboratories.

The adoption of a co-creation approach for the development of the Model is motivated by research evidence highlighting co-creation as a suitable strategy to create value by fostering engagement, collective intelligence, and creativity of the stakeholders' involved (Durall et al., 2019; Frow et al., 2015; Sanders & Stappers, 2008). In the Critical ChangeLab project, co-creation is understood as an overarching concept that materializes through co-design instances. In this sense, co-design activities can be seen as a "specific instance of co-creation" (Sanders & Stappers, 2008) in which various stakeholders engage in joint exploration, planning and learning about a specific issue (Mattelmäki & Visser, 2011).

Co-creation and co-design share an emphasis on the process (Durall et al., 2019) since the attention is on supporting change and transformation (Manzini, 2014; Voorberg et al., 2015). In the Critical ChangeLab project, co-creation of the Model of Democratic Pedagogy happens at various levels and among various stakeholders: between consortium partners to define a first version of the Model, between consortium partners and other organizations involved in the planning and co-design of a Critical ChangeLab, and between the researchers and facilitators from project partners, the educators from the education environments involved and the young people who participate in the Laboratories.

The Model co-creation orientation is reflected in the Critical ChangeLabs where the active engagement of the young people taking part in them is central. Thus, from the very beginning the Laboratories seek to create opportunities for young people to decide what issues they want to explore, as well as taking the lead in how to make change. Youth's active engagement in the Critical ChangeLabs is expected to promote a sense of ownership over the everyday democracy issues identified, as well as over the alternative practices ideated to tackle those problems. As noted in research on collaborative design approaches, the development of a sense of ownership over the problem and the solutions is key for practice change (Mättelmäki & Visser 2011, Voorberg et al. 2015, Ramirez 2008, Roschelle et al., 2006).

The Critical ChangeLabs are conceived as collaborative endeavours, not just from the youth taking part in the activities, but also from the designers and facilitators who team up with various stakeholders from education organizations (formal and non-formal). In this regard,





the very design of the Lab should be understood as the result of a co-design process involving various stakeholders.

Research on collaborative design approaches such as participatory design and co-design approaches has highlighted the value of such approaches for the sustainability of the design process by supporting adoption and practice change (Durall et al., 2019; Treasure-Jones & Joynes, 2018) fostering engagement, collaboration and empowerment (Durall et al., 2019; Kwon et al., 2014; Matuk et al., 2016). In the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy, the adoption of a co-design approach seeks to ensure ownership and joint responsibility from the educators, civil society actors and youth involved in the activities over the Lab purpose and results.

To support the co-design of the Critical ChangeLabs, a **co-design toolkit** has been produced, which includes the following materials (the Critical ChangeLab Co-design Toolkit is included in the annex):

- Introduction of the Critical ChangeLab (slides)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (text document)
- Critical Literacies Framework cards (7 cards)
- Design canvas (2 templates)

Roughly, the materials included in the co-design toolkit can be divided into those oriented at introducing the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy and its elements, and those oriented at supporting design and decision-making. Clear communication of the Model and its elements is key to ensure all stakeholders share the space of possibilities that a Critical ChangeLab creates. To support communication a set of **slides introducing the Model and its elements**, as well as a **FAQ document** answering most common questions and doubts in plain language have been produced.

Among the materials aiding design tasks, there is an adapted version of the Critical Literacies Framework, which has been developed as an infographic and as a set of cards. The **Critical Literacies Framework infographic** presents a summarized visualization of the various dimensions and the relations among them. The **cards** are meant to act as triggers to remind the Framework dimensions and inspire educators, facilitators and stakeholders





when working together for planning a Critical ChangeLab. As part of the materials supporting planning and design activities two design canvases have been created. A design canvas is a template presenting a structured approach to plan a design-led process. The Critical ChangeLab Co-design Toolkit includes the Critical ChangeLab Design Canvas, and the Critical ChangeLab Session Design Canvas.

The **Critical ChangeLab Design Canvas** summarizes the main aspects to consider when planning a Lab, such as

- Context, identifying whether it is formal or non-formal education
- Collaborators, in reference to the stakeholders with whom the Lab is organized
- Participants, summarizing relevant background information as well as their motivation to join
- Objectives and gains, making explicit what is expected to change through the Lab and what participants get from their participation
- Duration
- Format, indicating whether the sessions will be arranged face to face, virtual or in hybrid mode
- Thematic focus
- Mirror of experiences board, specifying how it will be used
- Facilitators' roles
- Facilitation strategies
- Invitation to join the lab, outlining how this will be framed

The **Critical ChangeLab Session Design Canvas** is more specific and points at key aspects to think about when planning the Lab sessions focusing on Question, Analyse, Envision and Examine, Act and Reflect. Each of these design canvases is adapted to the specific phase by including information about the guiding question that summarizes the phase's focus. Beyond the guiding question, the overall structure of the Critical ChangeLab Sessions Design Canvases remains the same. Among the session key aspects included in the template are:

- Duration
- Location
- Resources and requirements
- Methods focus, specifying whether it relates to futures thinking, embodiment and performance, narrative or making approaches





- Methods names
- Objectives
- Connection with the Critical Literacies Framework, indicating the dimensions emphasised
- Session general description
- Facilitation strategies

The Critical ChangeLab design canvases are support tools, aiming to guide and facilitate planning activities, especially when these involve collaboration among teams from various organizations. Thus, organizers of Critical ChangeLabs are encouraged to modify and adapt the canvases as they see fit for their own needs and interests.





3 Critical Literacies Framework

The Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies Framework (hereafter referred to as the Critical Literacies Framework) serves as a robust instrument for guiding the planning and facilitation of Critical ChangeLabs, ensuring that participants undergo a comprehensive development of critical literacies. Rooted in the seminal work of Paulo Freire (1970), critical literacy is fundamentally concerned with fostering a critical consciousness, or *conscientização*, which empowers individuals to identify and challenge prevailing power dynamics and systems of oppression within society. In the contemporary context, being critically literate extends beyond conventional textual comprehension, encompassing various forms of media such as video, online content, music, and immersive technologies like Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality environments, as well as more traditional texts. To become critically literate means that students will have mastered the ability to read and critique messages from a wide variety of sources in order to better understand whose knowledge is being privileged (Lewison et al., 2006), and to begin to understand and foster the capacity to be agents of change against social injustices (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Shor, 1999).

The Critical Literacies Framework was constructed following scoping and systematic literature reviews of existing critical literacy frameworks for youth in formal and non-formal education settings, including the Four Resources Model (Luke and Freebody, 1997), the Four Dimensions of Critical Literacy (FCDL) model (Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys, 2002), the Five Steps Framework (Janks, 2014), among other established frameworks and suggested dimensions. The applied Critical Literacies Framework also integrates aspects from relational literature from the fields of ethics (De La Bellacasa, 2012; Metz & Miller, 2016) pedagogy (Biesta et al., 2004; Hickey & Riddle, 2022), sustainability (West et al., 2020), as well as from other fields influenced by a relational turn such as social sciences (Powell & Dépelteau, 2013; Selg, 2016), design (Nielsen & Bjerck, 2022) and Human-Computer Interaction (Filimowicz & Tzankova, 2018). Other relevant sources of inspiration stem from posthumanism (see Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Sheridan et al., 2020; Zapata et al. 2018). Adding to the prior influences, pedagogical frameworks focused on futures literacy (see Häggström & Schmidt, 2021; Mangnus et al., 2021) are also particularly relevant to the goals of the Critical ChangeLab Model.





The Critical Literacies Framework comprises four key dimensions and one transversal dimension. Engagement with all five dimensions is required to foster and develop critical literacies in students meaningfully. While the framework is structured in a semi-linear progression, commencing with 'Understanding' and culminating in 'Activating Change', the developmental journey of critical literacies inherently entails nonlinear trajectories. Educators and participants alike may traverse dimensions non sequentially or concurrently engage with multiple dimensions, reflecting the dynamic and multifaceted nature of critical literacy development.

The dimensions of the Framework are as follows (see also figure 3 for a visual summary):

- Understanding
- Identifying
- Deconstructing
- Activating change
- Processes of becoming

3.1 Understanding

The base level of comprehension and contextual knowledge needed before the journey of developing critical literacies can begin. This includes (i) meanings of critical literacy, (ii) democratic practices and citizenship, and (iii) basic knowledge of the subject or topic that is the focus of the Critical ChangeLab.

3.2 Identifying

The second dimension is about recognising issues that are creating conflict and contradictions in democratic systems. This includes examining the embodied nature of conflicts, their situated and interrelated character, and the historical dimension or trajectory that has led to a particular situation.





3.3 Deconstructing

The third dimension involves interrogating the cultural construction of the “source” (e.g. text, concept, object), its social and political context, and societal transformation. This includes three different aspects:

(a) Disrupting the commonplace

Challenging assumptions and accepted norms and analysing their impact. This includes (i) understanding the world as a complex system, in which entities have intrinsic value (ii) questioning ideas of past-present-future and the associated discourses (e.g. ideas of progress and continual growth), and (iii) opening up questions about what participants want and why (affect and desire).

(b) Embracing multiple perspectives

Engaging with diverse voices and contexts to develop more nuanced understandings. This includes (i) a move away from dualistic thinking and binaries such as us/them, human/animal, natural/human-made, and appreciation for the many co-existing worlds and (ii) broadening the past-present-future, making space for histori(es), present(s) and future(s) around any situation/phenomena.

(c) Investigating power and agency

Critically examining power relations and socio-political inequalities from an intersectional perspective. This includes (i) the biases underpinning worldviews (e.g. anthropocentrism, eurocentrism, colonialism) and networks of discrimination and privilege (ii) identifying hierarchies, as well as the dependencies and possibilities of action embedded in power relations, and, (iii) questioning and historicising narratives to rethink the present.

Note: engagement in at least one, but not necessarily all three, aspects of Deconstructing is required for progression to the next dimension (Activating Change).

3.4 Activating change

The fourth dimension involves employing critical literacies to confront eco, social, political, and educational inequalities, imagining alternative futures, and identifying potential





pathways to change through critical practices and speculative design. Students work towards desirable/preferable futures through experimentation using diverse transformative tools, e.g. creative interventions or political activism. The emphasis may be on small-scale changes which have a meaningful impact on young people's lives. Activating Change is crucial to the development of critical literacies in students and to the implementation of the Critical ChangeLab Model.

3.5 Processes of becoming

The transversal dimension requires students to engage in meta-reflection. The dimension is of great importance within the Critical ChangeLab Model, playing a pivotal role in both the immediate learning process and in sustaining critical literacies beyond the confines of the Critical ChangeLab setting. Fostering a culture of continual self-examination regarding the methodologies of learning rather than merely the subject matter empowers students to continue their learning journey.





CRITICAL CHANGE LAB

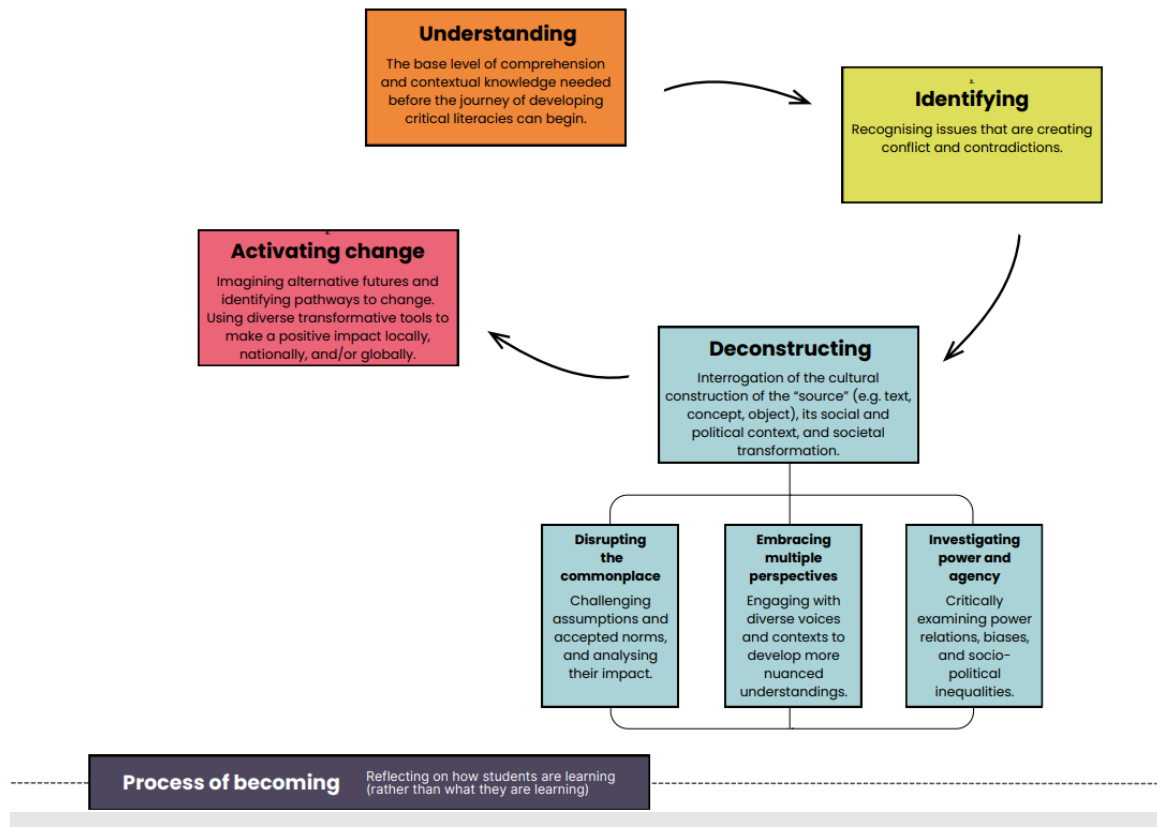


Figure 3. The Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies Framework, detailed. This visualisation provides descriptive detail for each dimension within the framework and will be useful for educators planning and implementing a Critical ChangeLab.





4 Critical ChangeLab Process

Adapting the epistemic learning actions of the expansive learning cycle (see section 2.1), the Critical ChangeLab process follows six phases (P), namely 0) OnBoard, 1) Question, 2) Analyse, 3) Envision and Examine, 4) Act, and 5) Reflect. Similar phasing can be found, for example in the framework for inquiry-based learning, which consists of orientation, conceptualization, investigation, conclusion, and discussion (Pedaste et al., 2015), and in the cycle of project-based learning, which involves defining the problem and identifying knowledge gaps through discussion, information gathering and self-study, and debriefing or reporting (Wijnia et al., 2024). All these approaches emphasise learning as an activity based on the learner's own motivation and agency, which can also be seen as promoting connection to the learning content, which are also central ideas behind the Critical ChangeLab process.

There are two versions (long and short) of a Critical ChangeLab process, and the number of phases varies according to each version. A long version of a Critical ChangeLab has five phases some of which can be merged to create a shorter version of the Critical ChangeLab. There is an additional Phase 0 or "OnBoard" phase to set the stage for the coming phases. Table 2 describes the two versions of a Critical ChangeLab process.

It is important to keep in mind that though there is a sequence of phases involved in running a Critical Change Lab, the process itself is not strictly linear. However, it is important to consider that the laboratories should start from the "OnBoard" Phase to ensure clarity and understanding of the process and at the end there should be a "Reflect" phase to look back to the overall Critical ChangeLab process. OnBoarding must come first to ensure that everybody is clear about what we are going to do and how. In the later phases there is flexibility to move back and forth to iterate or add new things as you move on the boards.





Table 2. Versions of Critical ChangeLab process.

Long version	Short version
P0: OnBoard	P0: OnBoard
P1: Question	P1: Question and Analyse
P2: Analyse	
P3: Envision and Examine	P2: Envision and Act
P4: Act	
P5: Reflect	P3: Reflect

4.1 Phase 0: OnBoard

This phase focuses on introducing the participants to the Critical ChangeLabs and its context (democratic relations and democratic practices in everyday life) and discussing practicalities regarding the process. It aims at bringing clarity by providing information about the Critical ChangeLabs and addressing any questions or concerns that the participants might have. Key aspects of the OnBoard phase are depicted in table 3.

The session can be divided into three sections:

I) Providing Information about Critical ChangeLabs

The focus here is to make the participants aware of the main concept behind Critical ChangeLabs and explaining different phases of the Critical ChangeLabs. Providing answers to the following questions can be one way to start and from there this may lead to answering any and all questions the participants might have related to the Critical ChangeLabs.

- What is a Critical ChangeLab?
- What are we going to do during the workshops?
- Why are we doing this?
- Who is going to benefit?

II) Getting to know each other

This is a very appropriate time for the researchers and the participants to get familiar with one another. This is done by using icebreakers and energizers that would provide a fun and light way of interacting and would set the mood for the coming





activities during the session. Researchers/organizers can use this opportunity to connect with young people by taking an active part in all the activities and thus can set the stage for promoting horizontal and non-hierarchical relations.

III) Co-defining a code of conduct

Co-defining a code of conduct to be followed during all the phases of Critical ChangeLab is important as it ensures the creation of a safe space for everyone. It is an ideal time to ask participants what would help them to feel comfortable and safe in voicing their opinions and ideas and taking part in the activities during the Laboratories. A safe space is built on the principles of trust, respect, empathy, consideration for others and a focus not only on our rights but also on responsibilities towards others. Participants' input about what a safe space means to them and what other ideas they have related to a safe space should be asked and added to the list.

Table 3. Summary of P0: OnBoard key aspects

Phase	Focus	Objectives	Dimensions of the Critical Literacies Framework stressed
P0: OnBoard	Describing and explaining the process Bringing clarity Creating safe space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the Critical ChangeLab aim and process Co-defining the group rules 	Understanding

4.2 Phase 1: Question

This phase of the Critical ChangeLab focuses on questioning, criticizing, or rejecting some Western democracies values or practices such as the ones stemming from an anthropocentric worldview, that create tensions in young people's everyday lives. This phase is connected to the "Identifying" dimension of CCLAB Critical Literacy Framework. The aim here is to trigger discussion and try to identify the issues that are creating conflict and contradictions in young people's everyday lives and to foster critical thinking among the





participants. One way of doing this is by inviting Critical ChangeLab participants to brainstorm what type of issues they feel uneasy and uncomfortable with. This process can be kickstarted through plain-language trigger questions such as:

- What things create conflicts and tensions in our everyday lives? What behaviours bother us? What are we fed up with?

The participants can give multiple ideas and later vote to decide the final idea they would like to explore in detail in small groups. Key aspects of the Question phase are depicted in table 4.

Table 4. Summary of PI: Question key aspects

Phase	Focus	Objectives	Dimensions of the Critical Literacies Framework stressed
PI: Question	Trigger thinking and discussion about issues in democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster critical thinking 	Identifying

4.3 Phase 2: Analyse

This phase focuses on analyzing the democratic relations of the current situation and its historic evolution and having a systemic view of the issue. The aim here is to gain understanding of the issue under analysis and deconstructing previously held beliefs and notions related to democracy by looking at the issue from multiple perspectives. The main guiding questions for this phase are:

- What are the causes and conditions that create these tensions?
- To what kind of societal level contradictions are the tensions connected to or originated from?

These questions help to question and deconstruct the old notions, the dimensions of “deconstructing” mostly at work in this phase are “embracing multiple perspectives” and “unveiling power and agency”. In some cases, depending on the context, this phase might also involve a focus on “disrupting the commonplace”. Key aspects of the Analyse phase are presented in table 5.





Table 5. Summary of P2: Analyse key aspects

Phase	Focus	Objectives	Dimensions of the Critical Literacies Framework stressed
P2: Analyse	Building perspective and systemic view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain understanding of structural issues 	Deconstructing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing multiple perspectives Investigating power and agency

4.4 Phase 3: Envision and examine

This phase focuses on imagining different futures and fostering collaboration among the participants. This aim here is to co-create ideas that critically explore the recognized tensions and offer a solution, a way to influence or to further investigate it and to think of ways to eliminate the tensions, finding possible solutions and critically examining those ways.

The guiding questions for this phase are:

- What kind of solutions can be imagined for these tensions?
- How can the underlying contradictions behind the tensions be addressed?
- Which solution ideas are feasible and why?

The focus here is on “*disrupting the commonplace*” dimension of “*deconstructing*” with an aim to look for out of the box solutions that would solve or prove to be the first step towards solving these tensions and critically examining those solutions. Key aspects of the Envision and Examine phase are outlined in table 6.





Table 6. Summary of P3: Envision and Examine key aspects

Phase	Focus	Objectives	Dimensions of the Critical Literacies Framework stressed
P3: Envision and examine	Imagining different futures and fostering collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-creating ideas to explore tensions • Thinking ways to eliminate the tensions • Finding possible solutions • Critically examining those solutions 	Deconstructing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrupting the commonplace Activating Change

4.5 Phase 4: Act

This phase focuses on finding meaningful ways to create change in local environments and is based on the “*activating change*” dimension of the Critical Literacies Framework. The aim here is to imagine alternative futures and to identify pathways to change. Using diverse transformative tools to make a positive impact locally, nationally and/or globally. Thus, the participants work towards bringing the desired and meaningful changes by taking practical actions in everyday life by keeping in mind the following guiding question:

- How will the solution ideas be implemented?

It is important to remember that the Emphasis can be placed on a small-scale change which has a meaningful impact in young people’s lives. Thus, the change does not have to be a big one; it can be a simple, small, and personal change in one’s own actions and activities that would be the first step towards achieving the envisioned outcomes or goals. Key aspects of the Act phase are presented in table 7.





Table 7. Summary of P4: Act key aspects

Phase	Focus	Objectives	Dimensions of the Critical Literacies Framework stressed
P4: Act	Finding meaningful ways to create change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagining alternative futures and identifying pathways to change Taking practical actions for bringing the desired meaningful change 	Activating Change

4.6 Phase 5: Reflect

The last phase focuses on reflecting on and evaluating the Critical ChangeLabs process and outcomes with participants to have a deeper understanding of what worked, what did not and why. Also, what could be improved for the next PAR cycle. As far as Critical Literacies Framework is concerned, here the focus is on the “Processes of Becoming” as we reflect on how the students are learning rather than what they are learning. Key aspects of the Reflect phase are depicted in table 8.

Following questions act as the guiding questions for planning the session:

- What was learned during each phase of the process?
- What were the impacts of the actions taken?
- What future plans are there to keep making meaningful changes in democratic practices?

Table 8. Summary of P5: Reflect key aspects

Phase	Focus	Objectives	Dimensions of the Critical Literacies Framework stressed
P5: Reflect	Reflecting and evaluating the Critical ChangeLabs process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-reflection and co-evaluation of process and outcomes 	Process of Becoming





5. Critical ChangeLab Methods and Tools

As indicated in section 2, the Critical ChangeLab Model is influenced by critical pedagogy, as well as arts and design. Using creative and narrative practices, the methods used in the Critical ChangeLabs seek to support participants move from the identifications of individual and instances of a given issue to a systemic understanding of the contradictions and challenges affecting Western democracy. While the methods might vary in each of the Laboratories' designs, the Critical ChangeLab Model incorporates a set of tools to foster a structured approach to document evidence, ideas as well as collective insights and alternatives. These tools are referred to as "the Critical ChangeLab Boards". Next, the Critical ChangeLab methods and tools are elaborated in further detail.

5.1 Methods

The methods included in the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy are informed by i) futures thinking, ii) embodiment and performance, as well as iii) narrative practices and iv) making. At the Critical ChangeLabs, methods stemming from these traditions are combined to trigger collaboration and discussion about current societal challenges connected with democracy.

Futures thinking

Developing the capacity to imagine what is not there yet is key for activating change processes in the present (Miller 2018). The complexity and scope of current societal challenges has put futures literacy on the spotlight, with international actors like UNESCO² advocating for a capability-based approach to futures. Being able to think about the future involves appreciating the past(s), understanding the present(s) and being able to engage in forecasting of potential futures, envisioning and experiencing alternative ones, as well as creating them (Dator 2019). A central aspect of futures literacy is the assumption that the future is not given, but constructed in the present, and that many futures are possible. Rethinking the present, fostering diversity and promoting agency and empowerment are at the heart of futures thinking. In the context of school compulsory education, futures thinking

² For further information on UNESCO approach to futures literacy see [https://www.unesco.org/en/futures-literacy#:~:text=What%20is%20Futures%20Literacy%20\(FI,and%20invent%20as%20changes%20occur](https://www.unesco.org/en/futures-literacy#:~:text=What%20is%20Futures%20Literacy%20(FI,and%20invent%20as%20changes%20occur)





which has been defined as a meta-literacy encompassing “language, digital/information, and scientific/critical literacies” (Vidergor 2023, p.1).

The methods adopted in the Critical ChangeLabs seek to contribute to re-imagine democracy, supporting the youth participating in the laboratories to envision alternative futures and take action towards their preferable futures. Relevant methods stemming from futures traditions that might be used or adapted for the Lab activities with youth are the Futures Triangle (Abdullah, 2023; Inayatullah, 2013), futures scenarios (Candy & Dunagan, 2017; Zhang et al., 2023), speculative design (Auger, 2013; Durall, 2021; Malinverni et al., 2023; Wargo & Alvarado, 2020), design fiction (Hardy, 2018; Sharma et al., 2022) and the Thing from the future (Candy, 2018).

Embodiment and performance

In the Critical ChangeLab Model, the emphasis on embodiment and performance is influenced by research on embodied cognition and embodied learning. These approaches acknowledge the role of experience, as well as the need to overcome the separation between mind and body (Shapiro, 2019; Skulmowski & Rey, 2018; Stolz, 2015). Considering that in the context of democracy education deliberative approaches have been questioned for prioritizing rational thinking (Lo, 2017; Sant, 2019), the Critical ChangeLab Model highlights the value of methods that signal the importance of feelings and emotions in learning and foster bodily engagements.

At the Critical ChangeLabs, young people might be invited to engage in embodied forms of expression such as theatre of the oppressed (Boal, 1985; Bhukhanwala, 2014; Ventä-Olkkonen et al., 2022), as well as role-playing techniques (Belova et al., 2015; Shapiro & Leopold, 2012; Spyropoulos et al., 2022).

Narrative practices

In the context of the Critical ChangeLab Model of Pedagogy, narrative practices are an important part of the pedagogical repertoire. Prior research has shown the value of narration and storytelling for the construction of identity and culture, with works focusing on the role of storytelling in education settings (Luke & Freebody, 1997), as well in collective mobilization (Beeson & Miskelly, 2005; Freire, 1994; Haraway, 1991). Stories have been





considered as means for making sense of the world, but also as a means by which change is enacted (Coulter et al., 2007; Roney, 1994).

Critical ChangeLab participants might use worldmaking (Goodman, 1978) as strategy to create stories, engaging in transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2014) to identify and express problems, dilemmas, and opportunities around European Democracy futures. Some of the methods used to this purpose might consist in creating scenarios, designing artefacts (such as games) and producing audiovisuals conveying stories and particular worldviews, as well as visual narratives in the form of comics and zines.

Making

During the last decades making, understood as the process of creating something, has gained traction in learning and education with the rise of maker education and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM, with approaches advocating for the inclusion of Arts such as STEAM) education. According to Pepler and Bender (2013), making activities range from welding, robotics, and building to cooking, sewing, painting, to name a few. In recent years spaces associated with making such as makerspaces have been integrated in various settings (such as libraries, museums, and schools), and makerspaces have been the subject of research examining them as a learning environment of its own (Pepler et al., 2016a; 2016b).

From a learning perspective, it has been claimed that making practices foster exploration, purposeful play (i.e., tinkering), discovery, and understanding with others, as well as through the tools and materials provided (Wardrip and Brahm 2015). Making has also been associated with peer-learning, mentoring and coaching (Halverson and Sheridan 2014; Sheridan et al. 2014). The Critical ChangeLab Model builds on the making tradition by embracing approaches like Do-It-Yourself (DIY), Do-It-With-Others (DIWO), rapid prototyping and hacking (Hunsinger & Schrock, 2016; Maravilhas & Martins, 2017; Martin, 2015; Orton-Johnson, 2014) as part of the methods participants experience at the Laboratories.

Criticality has also been embedded into making through approaches like critical making (Ratto, 2011) and critical design (Dunne, 2006; Dunne & Raby, 2013). The methods implemented at the Critical ChangeLabs with young people combine making and digital





making with critical practices inspired by prior work (see for instance Hughes, 2017; livari et al., 2023; Knochel & Patton, 2015; Ventä-Olkkonen et al., 2022).

The Critical ChangeLab Model does not define a specific set of methods to be implemented in each of the phases but leaves this open to decide in each Critical ChangeLab. Thus, the methods are selected, combined, or adapted based on each Lab context, which might vary depending on the thematic approach, the participants' needs and wishes, as well as the specific phase of the process in which the method is implemented. It is also worth mentioning that the same methods might be used in different phases. In this case the aims will vary, and the method would be adapted based on what the emphasis is. Table 9 shows the interconnection between the phases, aims and the Critical Literacies Framework, together with some examples of methods.

Table 9. Overview of Critical ChangeLab methods in relation to each of the phases, the aims and the connection with the Critical Literacies Framework

Phase	Aims	Connection with the Critical Literacies Framework	Example of methods
P0: OnBoard	Introducing the project, the type of issues to explore and the participants themselves	Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performative still lives: Creation of visual compositions based on objects brought by participants that represent them. • Walking debate: Participants express their stance on a given issue by moving around the room. • Games (the situation room II): Role-play game in which participants need to deliberate and take decisions on emergency scenarios.





D1.4 Critical ChangeLab Model

<p>P1: Question</p>	<p>Questioning, criticizing or rejecting some Western democracy related values or practices related to young people's everyday lives</p>	<p>Identifying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping: Graphic representation of aspects such as emotions, concepts or relations. • Brainstorming and rapid ideation: Fast idea generation activity to foster participants' creativity.
<p>P2: Analyse</p>	<p>Analyzing the democratic relations of the current situation and their historic evolution</p>	<p>Deconstructing: (b) Embracing multiple perspectives (c) Investigating power and agency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines: Temporal representations to explore the evolution of a given issue. • Futures Triangle: Method for mapping temporal competing factors on a specific issue: the pull of the future, the push of the present, and the weight of history. • Critical cartographies: Mapping practices aiming to unveil power relations favouring dominant groups in the generation of maps.
<p>P3: Envision and examine</p>	<p>Imagining different futures and fostering collaboration</p>	<p>Deconstructing: (a) Disrupting the commonplace Activating change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speculative design: Design practice oriented the critical exploration of various futures about complex issues. • Futures scenarios: Generation of visions about futures through narration and storytelling. • Design fiction: Design practice to explore and criticise possible futures through provocative scenarios narrated through





D1.4 Critical ChangeLab Model

P4: Act	Finding meaningful ways to create change	D4. Activating change	designed artifacts.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre of the oppressed: Performative method in which participants act out a local issue engaging with the audience in testing and discussing different solutions. • The thing from the future: Collaborative imagination game in which players describe objects from a range of alternative futures. • Exhibition as inquiry: Creation of artifacts to produce and exhibition to discuss an issue with the local community.
P5: Reflect	Fostering individual and collaborative reflection and evaluation	Processes of becoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective story writing: Generation of a group narration of a shared past experience. • Zines: Self-published booklet created by participants. • Postcard to your future self: Writing of an important event or lesson the participants have experienced and that they want to remind themselves together with some commitments for the future.





5.2 Tools: The Critical ChangeLab Boards

As part of the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy, a set of boards are offered as a tool to support the participants' collective design and learning process. The boards are used to i) identify evidence of issues creating conflicts and tensions ii) capture ideas and suggestions and iii) document collective insights and alternative practices. The boards provide the participants a way to externalize their thinking with writing, drawing and other multimodal materials. The boards also guide the focus of work and help to address the past-present-future temporalities throughout different phases of the Critical ChangeLab process. In the laboratories, the boards can be used either in digital or physical form.

There are a total of nine boards that can be used during the Critical ChangeLab process. They consist of three vertical columns (from left to right): Mirror of experiences; Ideas; and Alternatives as well as three horizontal rows depicting temporalities: Past; Present; and Future. The vertical dimension of the boards supports moving between experience and analysis, from tensions to contradictions (and back), while the horizontal dimension supports moving between understanding the historical developmental paths and connections of tensions and contradictions and imagining possible (actionable) solutions to them as well as alternative futures. The boards are adapted from the ones used in the Change Laboratory method (see for example, Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). The Critical ChangeLab boards are depicted in figure 4.





	MIRROR OF EXPERIENCES Presenting examples of different relations and their tensions in everyday democracy: providing material for collective reflection	IDEAS Documenting shared concerns and ideas for analysis and used or needed tools and actions	ALTERNATIVES Developing a shared understanding of the mirror material and creating shared insights and solutions, and visions for the future activities
PAST Revisiting			
PRESENT Identifying			
FUTURE Imagining			

Figure 4. The Critical ChangeLab boards.

Mirror of experiences

The Mirror of experiences boards are used to present material that acts as a trigger for collective reflection of tensions in everyday democracy. On these boards, the facilitator together with the participants collect observations and evidence of democracy related local and global issues that are creating conflicts or tensions for further analysis. By supporting the building of an emotional connection to the observed challenges, the mirror material motivates problem posing and creates a collective need for change. On the vertical temporalities dimension, material can be used to bring forward notions of historicity or possible futures, as well as to depict the current situation. Typical examples of mirror material include videos, interviews or quotes, pictures, news articles, social media posts, art pieces, data reports and research. Embodied activities, such as theater or a living library, can also be used as mirror material.

Ideas

The Ideas boards are used for documenting gained insights, ideas, plans and used or needed intermediate tools during the Critical ChangeLab process. On the vertical





temporalities dimension, the Ideas present board is used to document the identified current problems in everyday democracy and democratic relations as well as ideas and tools needed for further analysis. Also, preliminary solution ideas to identified problems can be added. The Ideas past board is used to decide on tools to identify periods and turning points in the development of the identified problems and tensions. Last, the Ideas future board is used to examine new ways for realizing visions and solutions as well as designs and plans of first experiments. Examples of gained insights and ideas include identifying the most important problem for further investigation, identifying periods of significant change and ideas for solutions. Examples of intermediate tools could be schedules and timelines, role playing, problem-solving or brainstorming techniques and analytical tools such as the cycle of expansive learning.

Alternatives

The Alternatives boards are used to document collective analysis and visioning. Collective analysis refers to the participants taking expansive learning actions by connecting tensions manifested in everyday lives to systemic contradictions and examining their historical development, whereas visioning refers to the participants imagining alternative futures and representing possible shared solutions. On the vertical temporalities dimension, the Alternatives present board is used for examining the most important changes related to the problematic issues and analyse the historically developed contradictions behind the tensions manifested in everyday lives. The Alternatives past board is used for analysing the past forms of the problematic issues. Last, Alternatives future board is used for visioning a future in which the current contradictions would be overcome.





6 Facilitation

Facilitation refers to the act of assisting or making the process easier for the participants. In the context of the Critical ChangeLabs, the focus is on encouraging participation and involvement of different stakeholders involved in the process. It is the responsibility of the facilitators to use such strategies that would make the process understandable as well as maintain non-hierarchical relations with the participants. Next, information about the facilitation principles, as well as the strategies used at the Critical ChangeLabs is presented.

Critical ChangeLab facilitation principles

The facilitation principles emphasize particular ways of doing things and are built on values based on the Critical ChangeLab Code of conduct (included in D4.1). The main principles guiding the Critical ChangeLabs are included below:

- **Respect and Inclusivity:** Fostering an inclusive environment by respecting the differences and making sure that all voices are heard. The focus here is also on hearing silent or weak voices that are not always heard.
- **Accessibility:** Providing alternative ways of participation and contribution by keeping in mind the diverse needs and preferences of the participants. For example, providing an option to use digital tools as well as pen and paper for activities. This allows the participants to feel comfortable and at ease with what they do or want to do.
- **Clear communication:** Striving for clarity and simplicity in communication and instructions for different tasks.
- **Active listening & empathy:** Listening actively to what others have to say and showing empathy and understanding towards different perspectives, points of view and thoughts. Embracing conflicts and differences as ways of knowing and growing
- **Genuine and meaningful participation:** promoting genuine and meaningful participation of the individuals which creates a sense of ownership of the decisions made, actions taken, and solutions envisioned throughout the process of Critical ChangeLabs.
- **Mutual learning:** Aiming for mutual learning between different actors and striving to support mutual understandings; by using such tools and techniques that promote collaboration and interaction.





Facilitation strategies

The facilitation strategies to use at the Laboratories are geared towards setting the suitable atmosphere for each of the phases and work sessions. Thus, starting each session with energizers and icebreakers is a recommended practice for setting the mood for the session's upcoming activities. These energizers can be planned in such a way that they align with the requirements of the phase within which they are incorporated. For example: A "Many uses" icebreaker in which participants look for alternate uses of common objects present in their surroundings, can be used at the start of "envision and examine" phase to foster participants' creative thinking which would ultimately help them envision alternative solutions around tensions and issues connected to democracy.

Throughout the Critical ChangeLab process, explicit attention is made to equalize power relations between all the stakeholders involved in the Laboratories, which include the young people taking part in the Laboratories, and adult actors such as researchers, educators and civil society representatives. For this purpose, it is emphasised maintaining horizontal and non-hierarchical relations that acknowledge and foster young people's agency. At the Laboratories young people are encouraged to think about their rights and responsibilities, also from the perspective of the research activities conducted during the implementation of the Laboratories during the PAR cycles. An example of this can be found in the informed consent process which includes clear communication of the Critical ChangeLab project aims before the start of a Critical ChangeLab in simple and plain language. For this purpose, a reader-friendly comic has been created for informing participants about data privacy, highlighting their rights as research participants. As part of the ethical commitments permeating Critical ChangeLab facilitation strategies, specific attention is dedicated to cultivating a relational and dialogical ethics of care, also encouraging participants to critically revise human-nonhuman relations towards non-exploitive forms of co-existence (de La Bellacasa, 2017).

Similarly to the definition of the methods, the Critical ChangeLab Model leaves it open to each of the Laboratories' facilitators the choice of the specific facilitation techniques that contribute to implement the Critical changeLab principles in practice, setting the mood, as well as cultivating horizontal relations and care. As mentioned in section 2.3, alignment between the different elements of the Critical ChangeLab Model is important to ensure consistency and coherence. In regard to facilitation, this means that the strategies used





during a Lab’s sessions should align with the aims of the phase in which that session is framed. Table 10 describes the facilitation aims for each of the Critical ChangeLab phases with examples of energizers.

Table 10. Facilitation aims for each of the Critical ChangeLab phases, with examples of facilitation strategies

Phase	Facilitation aims	Examples of facilitation strategies for setting the mood
P0: OnBoard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting the tone and mood • Building trust and a sense of safe space • Fostering ownership over the Lab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group photo assignment (icebreaker fostering group self-organization) • Values Tree (icebreaker for finding common values)
P1: Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering curiosity and attention to everyday matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two truths and a lie (icebreaker for getting to know each other) • Writing with string (energizer fostering team building)
P2: Analyse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging an inquisitive attitude • Critical thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitting in? (Group game and discussion) • Translating Hanna Arendt’s quote “Equality is the result of human organization. We are not born equal.” into practice (discussion trigger)
P3: Envision and Examine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering creativity and imagination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gift giving (energizer inviting to think about futures) • Pressure cooker design choices (energizer to encourage fast decision-making)
P4: Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting hands-on and making • Externalizing thoughts and ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marshmallow tower (icebreaker encouraging building with physical objects) • ‘Yes, and...’ game (energizer encouraging collaborative text building)
P5: Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting introspection and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One word to describe the experience





	<p>self-awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting sharing without feeling judged	<p>(reflection trigger)</p>
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6 Participatory Action Research cycle 1

The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy is implemented through three PAR cycles. During each PAR cycle, Critical ChangeLabs will take place in various locations and settings, involving diverse groups of youth and triggering collaborations between informal, non-formal and formal education actors. As noted by Reason and Bradbury (2001), PAR is not so much a methodology as an orientation to inquiry. Thus, each PAR cycle is conceived as a collaborative endeavour, where the Critical ChangeLab project partners join forces with various stakeholders to create change. Next, the context and stakeholders involved in PAR cycle 1 Critical ChangeLabs are introduced. A summary of the Laboratories' themes and methods is also presented.

PAR cycle 1 is conducted during the period Feb–May 2024. The information presented in this section refers to the state of things to date as of March 2024. Thus, some aspects of the Laboratories reported in the following sections might change and some details might be incomplete. Reporting and evaluation of the Critical ChangeLab PAR cycles is done as part of WP3 tasks and will be presented in its associated deliverables.

7.1 Contexts and stakeholders

PAR cycle 1 Critical ChangeLabs take place in 18 countries, involving more than 20 learning environments. The Laboratories are located in countries from Europe, North Macedonia, SERBIA and the United Kingdom, in rural and urban locations. The type of environments where the Laboratories are set can be described as collaborations between formal and non-formal settings, for the most part ($n=17$). In some cases, the Laboratories are also run as part of Civil Society Organizations' activities, which can be considered as informal learning settings ($n=5$).

The distinction between formal, informal and non-formal learning draws on the literature review developed as part of SySTEM2020 Horizon project, presented in the project conceptual framework (Brown et al., 2019). Thus, according to Brown et al. (2019):

- Formal learning can be described as learning that is organized through a structured instruction program which is generally recognised as a formal qualification or award such as a certificate or a degree.





- Informal learning results from daily activities and it is not organised or structured, as in formal learning. In most cases, this type of learning is unintentional from the learner's point of view, and it typically does not lead to certification.
- Non-formal learning is a structured educational activity but does not qualify as formal learning. Non-formal learning may happen within and outside educational institutions.

The stakeholders involved in PAR cycle 1 Critical ChangeLabs include young people, middle, secondary and high school teachers, vocational schoolteachers, as well as educators and facilitators working with youth in out of school activities organized by nature, arts and technology centers, a makerspace, an arts and technology festival, and civil society actors offering training and counseling, family services, facilitating social movements forums, and working with migrants and refugees. Researchers are also part of the stakeholders involved in the Critical ChangeLabs.

The ages of the youth taking part in the PAR cycle 1 Laboratories range from 11 to 24 years, the majority of them being teenagers aged 15-18 years. In most of the cases, the Lab participants are students joining as part of their school courses. In a couple of cases, the youth are already involved in Civil Society Organizations such as student unions and other types of associations. Table 11 presents a summary of the Critical ChangeLabs run by project partners during PAR cycle 1.

Table 11. Critical ChangeLabs run by project partners during PAR cycle 1

Lab#	Location	Learning environment	Organizations involved	Participants
#1	Oulu, Finland	Formal and non-formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary school • Interact unit at Oulu University • Oulu University FabLab3 	17-19 years old students taking a sociology course
#2	Oulu, Finland	Non-formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tyttöjen Talo Oulu4 	15-18 years old participants attending

³ <https://www oulu.fi/en/university/fab-lab-oulu>

⁴ <https://likka.fi/>





			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact unit at Oulu University • Oulu Business Asema FabLab⁵ 	an afternoon open doors weekly meeting
#3	Helsinki, Finland	Formal and non-formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower-secondary school • Oulu University • Haltia Nature school⁶ 	14-15 years old students in the nature and science focused curriculum
#4	Barcelona, Spain	Formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary school • University of Barcelona 	14-15 years old students taking part in training to be part of the conflict resolution team at the school
#5	Kildare and West Wicklow, Ireland	Civil Society Organization activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • InSync Youth & Family Services⁷ • Trinity College Dublin 	Young people aged 16-24 years who are members of the Junior Board of InSync Youth & Family Services
#6	City of Amsterdam and Hilversum, The Netherlands	Non-Formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMC Weekendschool On tour⁸ • Waag FuturesLab 	11-12 years old young people in refugee center
#7	Rijk van Nijmegen and Land van Cuijk region, Netherlands	Formal and non-formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roc Nijmegen⁹ • Waag FuturesLab 	16-17 years old students
#8	Linz, Austria	Non-formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediações • Ars Electronica create your 	17-19 years old students

⁵ <https://businessasema.com/en/#fablab>

⁶ <https://haltia.com/en/nature-school/>

⁷ <https://insync.ie/>

⁸ <https://www.imcweekendschool.nl/english/>

⁹ <https://www.roc-nijmegen.nl/>





			world ¹⁰	
#9	Ljubljana, Eslovenia	Non-formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rampa Lab • Kersnikova Institute 	9 - 14 years old youth
#10	Marseille, France	Civil Society Organization activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Common Space for Alternatives¹¹ • European Alternatives 	Youth at risk of social exclusion aged 16-18
#11	Lesvos, Greece	Formal and non-formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student associations and movements • University of the Aegean¹² • Iliaktida¹³ • Creative Hub¹⁴ • THEO.R.¹⁵ • LATRA 	18-23 years old university students, involved with politics, activism, culture and the arts
#12	Zabok, Croatia	Formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary art school • Institute for Social Research in Zagreb 	16-17 years old students who participate in the civic education subject "School & Community"

In addition to the 11 Critical ChangeLabs run by Critical ChangeLab partners, another set of laboratories with external organizations (n=10) from other countries is coordinated by one of the project partners (Tactical Tech). These external laboratories have been selected through an open call. The type of organizations involved include Civil Society Organizations (n=3) such as Arts and technology festival, and a cultural association; Non-formal education (n=7) such as language and media education providers, scouts, nature school

¹⁰ <https://ars.electronica.art/createyourworld/en/>

¹¹ <https://spaceforalternatives.eu/>

¹² <https://www.aegean.gr>

¹³ <https://iliaktida-amea.gr>

¹⁴ <https://creativehub.gr/en/>

¹⁵ <https://theori.eu/>





and a science center, as well as formal education such a research unit focused on education and learning (see Table 12 for a summary of the external Critical ChangeLabs).

Table 12. External Critical ChangeLabs coordinated by the project partner Tactical Tech

Lab#	Location	Learning environment	Organization	Participants
#13	Prague, Czech Republic	Civil Society Organization activities	• Platforma Uroboros ¹⁶	Youth in Prague
#14	Skopje, North Macedonia	Non-formal education	• Goethe Institut Skopje ¹⁷	Youth of various ages
#15	Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina	Non-formal education	• Laboratorium ¹⁸	Girls taking part in STEAM activities
#16	Bremen, Germany	Civil Society Organization activities	• FabLab Bremen e.V. ¹⁹	Youth in Southern Germany
#17	Carpi, Italy	Non-formal education	• La Tata Robotica ²⁰	Secondary school students aged 16-17 years
#18	Scotland, UK	Civil Society Organization activities	• Neon Digital Arts ²¹	Young people aged 12-14
#19	Lisboa, Portugal	Non-formal education	• Ciencia Viva ²²	Youth participating in STEAM clubs in pre-university ages
#20	Farnham, UK	Non-formal education	• Farnham Scout Group ²³	Teenagers aged 11-13 years
#21	Budapest, Hungary	Non-formal	• Televele Médiapedagógiai	16-18 years old learners

¹⁶ <https://2023.uroboros.design/>

¹⁷ <https://www.goethe.de/ins/mk/mk/index.html>

¹⁸ <https://laboratorium.ba/>

¹⁹ <https://fablab-bremen.org/>

²⁰ <https://www.latatarobotica.it/>

²¹ <https://neondigitalarts.com/>

²² <https://www.cienciaviva.pt/en/>

²³ <https://farnhamscouting.com/website/>





			Műhely Egyesület ²⁴	
#22	Belgrade, Serbia	Formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EduLab²⁵, University of Belgrade 	University students

²⁴ <https://televle.hu/>

²⁵ <https://ifdt.bg.ac.rs/edulab/?lang=en>





7.2 Summary of PAR cycle 1 Laboratories

During Critical ChangeLab PAR cycle 1, a total of 21 laboratories are organized (see Table 12 for a summary of the Critical ChangeLabs organized during PAR cycle 1). The themes explored at the laboratories are varied, ranging from overtly focusing on teenagers' everyday democracy and democratic education, to issues connected to self-care, relations between humans and nature, technology and digital influence, identity, as well as cultural rights. In most of the cases, project partners have identified a broad theme together with the education organizations with whom the Lab is organized, which has been later narrowed down by the participants based on their own interests. In other cases, the Lab theme, as well as the methods have been left open to decide with the young people during the initial sessions.

The diversity of environments involved during PAR cycle 1 also has an impact on the Laboratories' duration. Most of the PAR cycle 1 Laboratories follow the short version of the Critical ChangeLab process, which consists of three to four sessions (n=17). The long version of the process is implemented in four Laboratories, in which participants meet together to explore a societal challenge linked to democracy during five to six sessions.

From a methods perspective, the Critical ChangeLabs showcase a varied array of methods informed by futures thinking, embodiment and performance, as well as by narration and making practices. Before the start of PAR cycle 1, some of the methods were piloted in two environments:

- A youth ambassador program organized during June 2013 in Oulu, Finland.
- An after-school program linked to arts and technology festival organized during September to November 2023 in Dublin, Ireland.

The **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Youth Ambassador programme** was a summer work programme for 15–17-year-old participants. This was a joint initiative of the city of Oulu and the University of Oulu, with the collaboration of stakeholders such Oulu Business Asema FabLab in some of the sessions. As part of the programme, a two-day workshop on critical data literacy was arranged with the 12 participants. During this workshop, participants explored issues related to biases and discrimination connected to datafication of society





through narrative and digital making practices such as worldmaking, narrative game design and prototyping using various open-source tools such as Scratch²⁶ and Ren'Py²⁷.

The **Beta after school programme** consisted of a six-week programme in which 16 teenagers aged 15-17 years explored the future of Dublin 8 in 2050. At the workshop, participants used creative tools such as Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) to envision alternative futures. The works created during the programme were showcased in the Beta Festival²⁸, a novel Arts and Technology Festival. The Beta after school programme was organized by researchers from Trinity College Dublin in collaboration with the Digital Hub,²⁹ a state agency clustering technology and digital media companies and creatives in Ireland. During the workshop sessions, participants were invited to engage in futures thinking through methods like mind mapping, debating, sketching, AR/VR World Building, Walking Debate, as well as critically examining images of the future.

The feedback received from the youth taking part in these workshops was taken into consideration for the refinement of the methods selection criteria (see section 5). Table 13 provides an overview of the methods selected for the Critical ChangeLabs organized during PAR cycle 1.

Table 13. Summary of PAR cycle 1 Critical ChangeLabs themes, duration and methods to date of March 2024

Lab # Country	Thematic focus	Duration	Examples of the methods selected
#1 • Finland	Everyday democracy	Long version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Mind mapping • Actor Mapping • Digital Fabrication and making Zines
#2 • Finland	Self-love in the age of False Idols	Short version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and crafts • Zine making

²⁶ <https://scratch.mit.edu/>

²⁷ <https://www.renpy.org/>

²⁸ <https://betafestival.ie/>

²⁹ <https://thedigitalhub.com/>





	and Social pressures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital fabrication
#3 • Finland	Nature-Human relations	Long version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind mapping • Backcasting • Circles of influence • Futures scenarios
#4 • Spain	Adult centism in social structures	Long version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performative Still Lives • Collaborative mapping • Critical cartographies • Speculative design • Making
#5 • Ireland	Identity & Community	Short version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid ideation • Timeline • Mind mapping • Zines • Sticky dot survey
#6 • The Netherlands	Identity and clothes	Short version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making • Role-playing • Games • Magic machine
#7 • The Netherlands	To be defined	To be defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be defined
#8 • Austria	To be defined with participants	Short version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy mapping • Interactive Storytelling • Self-Care-Zines
#9 • Eslovenia	Democratic education and new approaches to passing the knowledge	Long version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIY • DIWO • Art Thinking • Peer-to-peer learning
#10 • France	Climate change, solidarity and migrant rights	Short version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiction workshop • Role-playing • Simulation games
#11 • Greece	Democratisation of Education	Short version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytelling • Zines • Theatre of the





			<p>oppressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid hackathons Peer-to-peer learning • Peer mentorship
<p>#12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croatia 	<p>Cultural rights, cultural participation and barriers to cultural participation among youth</p>	<p>Short version</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photovoice • 5 whys • Speculative design • Exhibition as enquiry
<p>#13-22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Czech Republic • North Macedonia • Bosnia-Herzegovina • Germany • Italy • UK • Portugal • UK • Hungary • Serbia 	<p>Digital influence</p>	<p>Short version</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speculative design • Spectorgrams • Idea clustering • Map of Influence • Show and Tell • Advocacy Gallery • Collaborative object creation





6 Conclusions and next steps

This deliverable (D1.4 Critical ChangeLab Model: Framework and Toolkit) presents the first version of the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy, introducing its key elements which include the Critical literacies Framework, the Critical ChangeLab process, methods and tools, as well as the facilitation approach. The production and implementation of the Model emphasizes the value of participatory approaches such as co-design and co-creation. This deliverable also provides an overview of the Critical ChangeLabs organized during PAR cycle 1. It is worth highlighting that this deliverable does not include information regarding evaluation, which will be conducted as part of WP3 tasks and its associated deliverables.

The insights gained through the process evaluation (T3.1) will inform further iterations of the Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy. The revised version of the Model will be presented in the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy: Developing 21st Century Skills for Democratic Participation (D3.2). Dissemination of the Model will be conducted through specific actions oriented at teacher training and professional development organized in the context of Community empowerment activities for a sustained take up of methods (WP4, T4.3).





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Annexes





ANNEX 1

Critical ChangeLab Co-design Toolkit





Introduction of the Critical ChangeLab





Democracy Meets Arts: Critical Change Labs for Building Democratic Cultures through Creative and Narrative Practices



The overall goal of the Critical ChangeLab project is to strengthen democracy in Europe by creating and implementing a flexible **model of democratic pedagogy** using a **bottom-up** approach that empowers young people to 'own' everyday democracy and engage in **direct action** towards justice-oriented transformations.

The Model is created following a **participatory process** with youth, educators, and other stakeholders, using Participatory Action Research (PAR) and participatory evaluation.

Democracy as part of our everyday lives

Democracy is more than formal politics and elections, it is present in the values and practices we see in our daily lives.



Everyday democracy is, for example:

- the opportunity to influence matters that affect you at school, at home and in your leisure activities
- the opportunity to be yourself in safety
- the willingness to solve challenges democratically
- respect for other people and for nature
- Participation in collective decision-making
- trust in public authorities and the democratic system





What issues worry you?

Short description in plain language



Critical ChangeLab Approach

Youth-centered

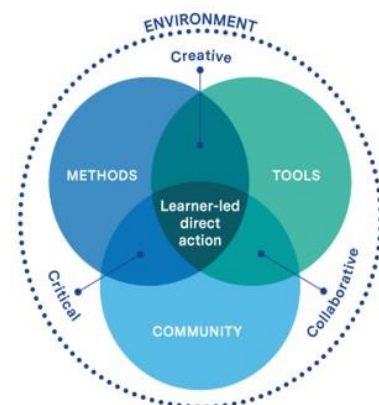
At the Critical ChangeLabs, young people explore issues that are relevant for them

Participatory approach

The Labs foster collaboration between youth and various stakeholders (educators, CSOs...)

Orientation towards change

As part of change processes, at the Labs participants develop a systemic understanding of Western democracy contradictions





What is a critical changelab?

A youth-centered, participatory and change-oriented format



Young people identify, question and examine issues generating **tensions in their everyday relations** to envision alternatives towards desirable futures.

Focus on **reimagining Western democracy**.

Fostering democratic explorations involving **youth** with **various stakeholders** from education and civil society.

CCLAB Process

PHASES [LONG]	PHASES [SHORT]	DESCRIPTION
0- ONBOARD	0- ONBOARD	Introducing the participants to the CCLAB and its context (democratic relations and democratic practices in everyday life) and discussing practicalities regarding the process.
1- QUESTION	1- QUESTION & ANALYSE	Questioning, criticizing or rejecting some Western democracy related values or practices related to young peoples' everyday lives.
2- ANALYSE		Analyzing the democratic relations of the current situation and their historic evolution .
3- ENVISION & EXAMINE	2- ENVISION & ACT	Constructing a model, activity etc. of a new idea that critically explores the problematic situation, and offers a solution, a way to influence or further investigating it.
4- ACT		Making meaningful changes in local environments.
5- REFLECT	3- REFLECT	Reflecting on and evaluating the Critical Change Lab process.





Why joining a critical changelab?

- Express your views on everyday practices connected to democracy and imagine alternatives.
- Making a change (small actions matter!)
- Make your voice heard and influence the project findings.



CCLAB

Critical Change Lab
At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum.

© 2023





Frequently Asked Questions

1 About Critical ChangeLabs

What is a Critical ChangeLab?

A Critical ChangeLab is a youth-centered, participatory and change-oriented format where young people identify, question and examine issues generating tensions in their everyday relations to envision alternatives towards desirable futures. Reimagining Western democracy is at the core of the Critical ChangeLab. At a Critical ChangeLab young people engage in democratic explorations in collaboration with various stakeholders from education and civil society.

Who can organize a Critical ChangeLab?

Anyone can run a Critical ChangeLab. The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy is intended for education environments, and thus it includes materials to help educators and facilitators design the labs.

Where can a Critical ChangeLab take place?

The Critical ChangeLab Model of Democratic Pedagogy is designed for formal and non-formal education environments. Besides that, a Critical ChangeLab can happen anywhere.

How long can a Critical ChangeLab last?

There is no maximum time limit for a Critical ChangeLab. As a minimum, a Critical ChangeLab is expected to last three sessions (about 1 hour each), during three days. It is recommended to leave some time between each session to give participants time for reflection and making links with other aspects of their life.

What interaction formats are used in the Critical ChangeLab Model?

Critical ChangeLabs can happen face to face, online and hybrid. Face to face interaction is recommended, especially when involving children during more than three sessions.





Can the Critical ChangeLab Model be adapted?

Adaptation to the local context and the participants' needs and interests is key. The Critical ChangeLab offers a flexible model for democratic pedagogy in formal and non-formal education contexts. Because of this flexibility many aspects are open and need to be adapted.

2 Critical Literacies Conceptual Framework

What are the key concepts of the Critical ChangeLab conceptual framework?

The Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies Framework has four key dimensions:

- Understanding
- Identifying
- Deconstructing
- Activating Change

In addition, the Critical Literacies Framework has one transversal dimension – the process of becoming – which focuses on how (rather than what) participants learn.

Critical literacies are skills that require participants to embrace multiple perspectives, understand power relations, and question the sources they are presented with throughout their lives. Development of critical literacies is a process of expansive or cyclical learning, rather than a linear or static process of acquisition. Participants must, however, engage with all four key dimensions of the Framework for the development of critical literacies.

The Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies Framework applies and updates Paolo Freire's conceptualization of literacy as 'not only the ability to read texts, but also the capacity to take action to transform the world and promote social justice.

What is the role of the Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies framework?

The Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies Framework is designed to support facilitators in the planning, designing, and implementing of Critical ChangeLabs. The Framework provides a structure to plan for the development of critical literacies in Critical ChangeLab participants and to ensure critical literacies are central to the Critical ChangeLab process.





How is the conceptual framework expected to be used as part of the Critical ChangeLab Model?

The Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies Framework should be used by facilitators to (a) guide the type of learning taking place in ChangeLabs and (b) support the selection of methods and activities at the different stages of the ChangeLabs. It is expected that participants will develop and/or enhance their critical literacies as they progress through the phases of the Critical ChangeLab Model.4 Critical ChangeLab Boards.

What is the purpose of the boards?

The boards are tools to support analysis of tensions and design work of novel insights and shared alternatives (to the identified tensions and problems) by providing the participants a tool to externalize their thinking with writing and drawing. The boards also guide the focus of work and help to address the temporalities (Past-Present-Future) throughout different phases of the Critical ChangeLab process.

How many boards are part of the Critical ChangeLab Model? Do they all need to be used?

There are a total of nine boards that can be used during the Critical ChangeLab process. They consist of three vertical columns (from left to right): Mirror of experiences; Ideas; and Alternatives and three horizontal rows depicting temporalities: Past; Present; and Future. The vertical dimension of the boards supports moving between experience and analysis, from tensions to contradictions (and back), and the horizontal dimension supports moving between understanding the historical developmental paths and connections of tensions and contradictions and imagining possible (actionable) solutions to them as well as alternative futures.

The boards don't all need to be used. The important thing is that the facilitator is aware of these processes (socio-cognitive and temporal) and can communicate them to the participants in a meaningful way and fosters their own agency.

- This could mean, that of the vertical boards, the facilitator only shares the "Ideas" board with the participants, while the Mirror of experiences is presented (and possibly in part co-created) digitally, and the Alternatives in ways where the analysis and imagining is documented in timelines, theater scripts, mind maps etc. The facilitator then checks that the temporalities are addressed during the process.





- This could also mean that the boards are used by the participants together or in smaller groups to make notes during their work process. The boards could be printed as a canvas template or larger sheets of paper, or digital tools could also be used.
- It's also ok to skip or go back to boards, if it benefits the overall process.

When are the boards used? Is there any particular order?

The boards are used in each phase of a Critical ChangeLab, except the onboarding. The movement on the boards depends on many things. Sometimes there could be a need to skip some boards or go back and re-analyse or iterate a solution idea. The boards are meant as a helpful facilitation tool not a strict script to follow. Below, there is one example of how to use the boards in each of the phases of the (long version) the Critical ChangeLab process.

3 Process

How many phases are part of the Model? Is it possible to skip some phases?

There are two versions of a Critical ChangeLab Model and the number of phases varies according to the version you plan to use. Phases from the longer version of the Critical ChangeLab are merged to create a shorter version of the Critical ChangeLab Model.

Long Version:

- Phase 0 - On Board
- Phase 1 - Question
- Phase 2 - Analyze
- Phase 3 - Envision and Examine
- Phase 4 - Act
- Phase 5 - Reflect

Short Version:

- Phase 0 - On Board
- Phase 1 - Question and Analyze
- Phase 2 - Envision and Act
- Phase 3 - Reflect





Does the Critical ChangeLab Model follow a linear process?

Not necessarily. While there is a sequence of phases involved in running a Critical Change Lab, the process itself is not strictly linear. However, it is important to consider that you start from the “Onboard” Phase and at the end you “Reflect” on the Critical ChangeLab process. Onboarding has to come first to ensure that everybody is clear about what we are going to do and how. In the later phases there is flexibility to move back and forth to iterate or add new things as you move on the boards.

4 Critical ChangeLab Boards

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When are the boards used? Is there any particular order?

The boards are used in each phase of a Critical ChangeLab, except the onboarding. The movement on the boards depends on many things. Sometimes there could be a need to skip some boards or go back and re-analyse or iterate a solution idea. The boards are meant as a helpful facilitation tool not a strict script to follow. Below, there is one example of how to use the boards in each of the phases of the (long version) the Critical ChangeLab process:

LONG PHASE 1 Question	MIRROR OF EXPERIENCES Presenting examples of different relations and their tensions in everyday democracy; providing material for collective reflection	IDEAS Documenting shared concerns and ideas for analysis and used or needed tools and actions	ALTERNATIVES Developing a shared understanding of the mirror material and creating shared insights and solutions, and visions for the future activities
PAST Revisiting	The facilitator (or the youth) collect material concerning issues, and identify historical changes and question current practice		
PRESENT Identifying	The facilitator combines and presents samples of issues related to everyday democracy and democratic relations causing challenges in the present	The youth document ideas and tools needed for further analysis and preliminary solution ideas to identified tensions	
FUTURE Imagining			





LONG PHASE 2 Analyse	MIRROR OF EXPERIENCES Presenting examples of different relations and their tensions in everyday democracy; providing material for collective reflection	IDEAS Documenting shared concerns and ideas for analysis and used or needed tools and actions	ALTERNATIVES Developing a shared understanding of the mirror material and creating shared insights and solutions, and visions for the future activities
PAST Revisiting	The facilitator (or the youth) collect and analyse material concerning important historical changes related to the identified tensions	The youth ideate and decide on tools to identify periods and turning points in the development of the tensions	By using intermediate tools, the youth analyse historically developed contradictions behind the tensions manifested in everyday lives
PRESENT Identifying			
FUTURE Imagining			

LONG PHASE 3 Envision & Examine	MIRROR OF EXPERIENCES Presenting examples of different relations and their tensions in everyday democracy; providing material for collective reflection	IDEAS Documenting shared concerns and ideas for analysis and used or needed tools and actions	ALTERNATIVES Developing a shared understanding of the mirror material and creating shared insights and solutions, and visions for the future activities
PAST Revisiting			
PRESENT Identifying		The youth document ideas and tools needed for further analysis and preliminary solution ideas to identified tensions	The youth continue to analyse the historically developed contradictions behind the tensions manifested in everyday lives while moving towards new insights and solutions.
FUTURE Imagining			The youth vision the future in which the current contradictions would be overcome





LONG PHASE 4 Act	MIRROR OF EXPERIENCES Presenting examples of different relations and their tensions in everyday democracy; providing material for collective reflection	IDEAS Documenting shared concerns and ideas for analysis and used or needed tools and actions	ALTERNATIVES Developing a shared understanding of the mirror material and creating shared insights and solutions, and visions for the future activities
PAST Revisiting			
PRESENT Identifying			
FUTURE Imagining		The youth examine new ways for realizing the vision and design first experiments	The youth vision the future in which the current contradictions would be overcome

LONG PHASE 4 Act	MIRROR OF EXPERIENCES Presenting examples of different relations and their tensions in everyday democracy; providing material for collective reflection	IDEAS Documenting shared concerns and ideas for analysis and used or needed tools and actions	ALTERNATIVES Developing a shared understanding of the mirror material and creating shared insights and solutions, and visions for the future activities
PAST Revisiting			
PRESENT Identifying			
FUTURE Imagining		The youth examine new ways for realizing the vision and design first experiments	The youth vision the future in which the current contradictions would be overcome





Who fills the boards?

The facilitator takes responsibility for introducing the boards as a tool and preparing the first version of the Mirror of experiences board. The Mirror of experiences can be modified by the participants if they are inspired to do so, or in case it looks like the topics/issues chosen by the facilitator don't resonate with the youth.

The Ideas board is preferably filled by the participants. Here can be documented notes of even individual ideas and suggestions. We recommend choosing one participant (can be a different participant on each session) as a scribe to fill the board during the session, of course the facilitator can also fill the board with participants' suggestions.

The Alternatives board is meant to depict shared, collective insights and solutions. This board is therefore filled by the participants (can use a scribe or everyone writes) and populated with content that is agreed by the participants not just individual ideas.

5 Methods

What type of methods are used in the Critical ChangeLab?

The methods used in Critical Change Laboratories are informed by critical pedagogy, arts and design, and activism. The methods can combine, for example, the following practices:

- Futures thinking
- Embodiment and performance
- Narrative
- Making

These creative methods are meant to support the participants to "move" and to proceed on the cycle of expansive learning, and to collectively define and solve tensions and contradictions they have experienced in everyday democracy. Tensions always have roots, which are useful to detect, to better understand the present, and to envision alternative futures. Some tensions may for example derive from the school's history, from a curriculum change, from the changing population in the local area etc. Usually shared solutions (even small things to be changed in everyday practices) can be created / developed, even though some of the root causes of the tensions in everyday democracy relate to big (societal, systemic) issues.





How to decide what methods are suitable?

When selecting methods for the Critical ChangeLab sessions, the facilitator should consider the aims of the phases (the expansive learning actions, please see the following table column called "phases") of the Critical ChangeLab process and the Critical Literacies (applied) Framework.

PHASES [LONG]	PHASES [SHORT]	BOARDS	FRAMEWORK	METHODS
0- ONBOARD	0- ONBOARD		UNDERSTANDING	Building a safe space
1- QUESTION	1- QUESTION & ANALYSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mirror of Experiences - Present • Ideas - Present 	IDENTIFYING	Triggering thinking about issues and tensions in democracy
2- ANALYSE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mirror of Experiences - Past • Ideas - Past • Alternatives - Past 	DECONSTRUCTING	Building perspective and systemic view
3- ENVISION & EXAMINE	2- ENVISION & ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas - Present • Alternatives - Present • Alternatives - Future 	DECONSTRUCTING ACTIVATING CHANGE	Imagining different futures and fostering collaboration
4- ACT		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas - Future • Alternatives - Future 	ACTIVATING CHANGE	Finding meaningful ways to create change
5- REFLECT	3- REFLECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mirror of Experiences - Future 	PROCESSES OF BECOMING	Reflecting on the process

6 Facilitation

What aspects should be taken into account before starting a Critical ChangeLab?

The following aspects should be taken into account before starting a Critical ChangeLab:

- Familiarize yourself with the Critical ChangeLab Model, the Boards and the recommended methods.
- To think about:
 - The type of learning environment in which the Critical ChangeLab is located
 - The stakeholders involved
 - Background/Context of the youth involved
 - Critical ChangeLab version: Long/short
 - Interaction Mode (face to face/ virtual/ hybrid)
 - Motivation for the participants (what do they get by participating?)





- Identify the issue that you can use as a starting point to choose initial material for the Mirror of Experiences Board.
- Think about energizers/icebreakers to use during facilitation
- Think about your roles and strategies in facilitation

Who can facilitate a Critical ChangeLab?

The Critical ChangeLab Model is addressed to education environments and thus, education practitioners (teachers, educators, trainers) are expected to facilitate the Labs in collaboration with other stakeholders such as researchers and civil society actors (associations, NGOs, SMEs...).





Critical ChangeLab Design Canvas

CONTEXT	DURATION	FACILITATORS' ROLES
<input type="checkbox"/> Formal	How many sessions will be organized? <input type="checkbox"/> Long version <input type="checkbox"/> Short version	What roles do you plan to adopt in the different phases of the Critical ChangeLab?
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-formal		
COLLABORATORS	How many days/months will the lab last?	FACILITATION STRATEGIES
With which stakeholders will you collaborate?		
PARTICIPANTS	How long does each session last?	What facilitation strategies do you plan to use?
	Who will take part in the lab? (age, background...) What is their motivation to join?	
OBJECTIVES & GAINS	FORMAT	INVITATION TO JOIN THE LAB
	<input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid	
What is expected to change through your Critical ChangeLab? What participants get from participating in the lab?	THEMATIC FOCUS	How would you invite participants to join the lab? How would you sustain active involvement?
	How is the lab theme defined?	
	MIRROR OF EXPERIENCES BOARD	
	How is the mirror of experienced produced?	





Critical ChangeLab Session Design Canvas

PHASE	METHODS FOCUS	SESSION GENERAL DESCRIPTION
QUESTION	<input type="checkbox"/> Futures thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Embodiment and performance <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative <input type="checkbox"/> Making	
PHASE GUIDING QUESTION		
What issues can we identify in Western democracy related values or practices that are creating conflict and tensions in youth's experiences of democratic systems in their everyday lives?		
METHODS NAMES		
DURATION	OBJECTIVES	
LOCATION		
RESOURCES & REQUIREMENTS	CONNECTION WITH THE CRITICAL LITERACIES FRAMEWORK	FACILITATION STRATEGIES
Is there a minimum number of participants?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Understanding	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Identifying	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Deconstructing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 3a. Disrupting the commonplace o 3b. Embracing multiple perspectives o 3c. Investigating power and agency 	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Activating change	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Processes of becoming	





Critical Literacies Framework Cards



1

UNDERSTANDING

The base level of comprehension and contextual knowledge needed before the journey of developing critical literacies can begin.



2

IDENTIFYING

Recognising issues that are creating conflict and contradictions.





3

Deconstructing

Interrogation of the cultural construction of the “source” (e.g. text, concept, object), its social and political context, and societal transformation.



Deconstructing Investigating power and agency

Critically examining power relations, biases, and socio-political inequalities.



Deconstructing Embracing multiple perspectives

Engaging with diverse voices and contexts to develop more nuanced understandings.



Deconstructing Disrupting the commonplace

Challenging assumptions and accepted norms, and analysing their impact.





4

Activating Change

Imagining alternative futures and identifying pathways to change.

Using diverse transformative tools to make a positive impact locally, nationally, and/or globally.

