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 for 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 1 in order to showcase how the Critical ChangeLab Model for 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 WP1's objective of designing a model for democratic pedagogy using creative and narrative practices with learners and civic education stakeholders. The Critical ChangeLab Model for 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 for 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 for Democratic Pedagogy will be shared through teacher education and educators' professional development actions

2 Education for democracy: State of the art

2.1 Key concepts

Education for democracy is a rich field with main contributions stemming from civic and citizenship education. While these two traditions converge in many aspects, they present some differences. This section intends to present the key concepts and traditions informing the development of the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy.

Civic education

Civic education is an intentional and systematic educational effort to equip students with the necessary competences to enable them actively to participate in society. Thus, civic education is essential for a functioning democracy as it equips citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary to comprehend the complex challenges our societies face and to take action to address them. (Council of Europe, 2018; Slavkova & Kurilić, 2023).

Civic education has been framed as a broad subject, transversal to the school curriculum (Nogueira & Moreira, 2011). In line with this broad understanding, it has been highlighted that civic education is not confined to formal education, but also takes place outside the classroom, in non-formal and informal learning environments (Cino Pagliarello et al., 2019; Slavkova & Kurilić, 2023). Civic education encompasses civic competency, knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Civic content includes both fundamental knowledge and the capacity to apply this knowledge across various circumstances and settings. Civic skills include both intellectual and participatory abilities. Civic dispositions refer to the interpersonal and intrapersonal values, virtues, and behaviours that promote equality, achievable through effective communication, including active listening. (Muleya, 2018.).

Citizenship education

The cornerstone of citizenship education revolves around the concept of citizenship. Such starting point is not free from controversy (Ruitenberg, 2015). At the fundamental level, citizenship refers to the relation between individuals and a political body, which as noted by Bottery, may be understood as "the nation state" (Bottery, 2003). Thus, the mission of citizenship education has focused on helping individuals understand their role as citizens, fostering a practical commitment to these roles, and ultimately engaging them in critical reflection on the associated rights and responsibilities (Halstead & Pike, 2006). According to Muleya, citizenship education characterises

for its purpose to promote a framework of shared political and civic values that help living together as citizens (Muleya, 2018).

It is worth to note the differences between narrow and broad approaches to citizenship education. In its most limited form, citizenship education is framed as political literacy and is often described as a neutral activity focusing solely on providing information about citizenship, political ideas, institutions and issues (Halstead & Pike, 2006; Muleya 2018). This view of citizenship education has been contested with numerous voices advocating for transversal approaches that also foster moral and social responsibility and community involvement. From this perspective, citizenship education should encompass the development of values, dispositions, skills, aptitudes, and commitments, alongside knowledge and concepts (European Commission et al., 2017; Muleya, 2018). Furthermore, recent approaches to citizenship education are also calling for going beyond the "nation state" and embrace a global orientation to citizenship education (Goren & Yemini, 2017; Sant et al., 2018).

Civic and citizenship education

From a theoretical point of view, the distinction between citizenship and civic education is hard to establish due to the lack of rigour in the terminology. As noted by Slavkova & Kurilić, "In Europe, different countries use different terms to describe civic education" (Slavkova & Kurilić, 2023, p.54). Also, broader approaches to citizenship education might be considered as encompassing what had initially been ascribed to civic education (see for instance European Commission et al., 2017). Given that both civic and citizenship education aim to equip young people with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed for active and meaningful participation in society (Muleya, 2018), an increasing number of authors refer to "civic and citizenship education" as a single concept (see for instance Cino Pagliarello et al., 2019; Schulz et al., 2023).

Democratic culture

Democracy has been described as a form of life in which citizens collectively inquire into shared problems (see Dewey, 1916). From this perspective, a fundamental assumption is that democracy cannot thrive unless it is rooted in a culture that not only embraces democracy but also actively supports it. Although democracy requires democratic institutions and laws, these cannot function effectively unless they are rooted in a culture of democracy, encompassing democratic values, attitudes, and practices. Thus, rather than referring to "democracy", numerous voices have started placing the emphasis on the need to cultivate a "culture of democracy". (Jónsson & Garces, 2021; Council of Europe, 2016; 2018). As indicated in the Competences for Democratic Culture: Living Together as Equals in Culturally Diverse Democratic Societies, "The aim is not to

teach students what to think, but rather how to think, in order to navigate a world where not everyone holds their views, but we each have a duty to uphold the democratic principles which allow all cultures to co-exist." (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 7). This approach directly impacts how democracy and democratic citizenship are addressed within the framework of compulsory education. In this line, the *Reference framework on competences for democratic culture* identifies a set of competences that need to be acquired by learners if they are to become effective engaged citizens and live peacefully together with others as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies. The Framework points at i) values (valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing cultural diversity, valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law); ii) attitudes (openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices, respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, tolerance of ambiguity); iii) skills (autonomous learning skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, skills of listening and observing, empathy, flexibility and adaptability, linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills, co-operation skills, conflict-resolution skills); and iv) knowledge and critical understanding (knowledge and critical understanding of the self, knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication, knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability) as key areas to foster in order to preparing learners for life as democratically and interculturally competent citizens (Council of Europe, 2018).

Civic and critical democratic literacy

Historically, literacy has been closely related to democracy (Obenchain & Pennington, 2015). In this context, civic literacy has been defined as defined as including not only political knowledge but also the readiness to use that knowledge through political participation (Milner, 2002; Wahlström, 2022). It is wort to note the strong link between democratic literacy with critical literacy (Obenchain & Pennington, 2015), with the last been defined as a "political commitment to democratic and emancipatory forms of education" (McLaren & Lankshear, 1993, p. 380). Similar to civic literacy, critical literacy aims to cultivate among students more than just basic functional skills, empowering them to participate in, evaluate, and shape their worlds.

According to Obenchain and Pennington, critical democratic literacy involves understanding democracy as requiring collective action to address unequal opportunities for justice. From this viewpoint, democratic education is essential in a society that values informed and engaged participation (McDonnell, 2000; Parker, 2001). Being an informed and engaged citizen includes the responsibility to be literate. (Obenchain & Pennington, 2015.). In this line, the authors advocate for "preparing students to engage in the twenty-first century's increasingly complex democracy with

a type of literacy necessary for comprehending and thinking critically about their civic engagement from an informed stance, with resiliency and the ability to evaluate others' thoughts and views, as well as their own" (Obenchain & Pennington, 2015, p.19).

For this work, the term "**Democracy education**" is used as an overarching concept, viewing democracy as a way of life. It includes civic and citizenship education, civic and democratic literacy, and the competencies needed to live and actively participate in democratic societies.

2.2 Democracy education in Critical ChangeLab partner countries

This section provides an overview of the education systems of the countries (Finland, Ireland, Spain, The Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia, Greece, Germany, France, Croatia) where the Critical ChangeLab research and innovation activities on democracy education unfold. Each of the "country democracy education descriptions" includes information about the country population, overall score democracy index, its formal education system and the state education for democracy, covering the situation in the formal and non-formal education sectors.

The sources informing these descriptions consist of official documents recently issued by education governmental bodies, reports authored by EC as well as independent entities specialized in civic and citizenship education based on surveys and empirical research, and research conducting educational policy and curriculum analysis, as well general media.

2.2.1 Finland

Population: 5 428 792[1]

Overall score democracy index: 9.30 / 10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

The Finnish formal education system consists of early childhood education and care, pre-primary education, primary and lower secondary education (referred to as basic education), general upper secondary education, vocational education, higher education, and adult education. Compulsory education in Finland is mandated for all individuals aged 6 to 18 years, encompassing pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education. Following the completion of the 9-year basic education, students may choose between general upper secondary education or vocational upper secondary education and training. The general

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[1] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

upper secondary pathway culminates in the matriculation examination, while the vocational pathway leads to a vocational qualification. (Finnish National Agency for Education.) Education in Finland is publicly funded and free from pre-primary to higher education level. In addition, school meals and learning materials are free for the students. In Finland, 98 % of students attend public schools. (Eurydice, 2023.)

State of democracy education

The Finnish national core curriculum is built on democratic values such as respect for life and human rights, with a focus on promoting well-being, democracy, and active participation in civil society (*Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2014*). The core curriculum outlines seven transversal competences to integrate across all subject areas and school disciplines. These competences aim to foster personal development and equip students with the skills necessary for active participation in a democratic society and for leading a sustainable lifestyle. Especially one of the competences titled "Participation, Influence, and Building a Sustainable Future" is specifically aimed at fostering students' skills for active and responsible citizenship within a democratic society. The activities related to this competence should emphasize practical and experiential learning through which the students are able to gain understanding of democratic principles such as fairness, equity and reciprocity. (Warat et al., 2023.). According to the European Commission (2018), Finland excels in terms of knowledge acquired by students and boasts one of the most comprehensive educational approaches, characterized by a high number of recommended instructional hours and actively trained teachers.

In Finland, non- and informal civic education is seen as an important way of fostering democracy, inclusion, equality, community, societal cohesion and integration as well as offering opportunities for a wide array of recreational activities and enhancing individuals' skills and knowledge. Many of the organizations delivering civic education are affiliated with political parties or labour unions, while the remaining organizations function as independent non-governmental entities. (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023.) However, The Ministry of Education and Culture also subsidizes youth work conducted by municipalities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as its development, through central government transfers or discretionary funding. Local youth work, such as maintaining youth centers, supporting youth associations and groups, and providing specialized youth services, is the responsibility of municipalities. Additionally, various associations and organizations engaged in youth work operate at the municipal level. At the regional level, the responsibilities related to the youth sector are managed by the Regional State Administrative Agencies. These responsibilities include supporting young people in finding opportunities in

education, training, or employment, providing information and advisory services, and organizing recreational and leisure activities. The Regional State Administrative Agencies also provide funding for youth workshops and outreach work, collect data on municipal services, train youth workers, and administer some of the Ministry of Education and Culture's funding for the youth sector. (Ministry of Education and Culture.)

Youth work is fundamentally grounded in providing young people with an active role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of its activities. The Youth Act of 2027 mandates that young people must be given opportunities to participate in decisions related to youth work and youth policy. At the national level, the legislation requires that young people be consulted during the development of the National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme. (Youth Wiki, 2023.). In a survey conducted by the Civics Innovation Hub in 2023, 71,4 % of respondents (N=14) hold that further training in methods, tools and approaches in civic education, as well as about securing funding are needed in their organization (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023). Recently, the Finnish government has issued major cuts in the funding of peace work, which are expected to have serious repercussions on the operations of these organizations (Yle News, 26.4.2024).

2.2.2 Ireland

Population: 5 271 395[2]

Overall Score democracy index: 9.19/10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

In Ireland, education is compulsory from ages 6 to 16, or until a student has completed three years of second-level education. The Irish education system consists of primary and post-primary schools and all children are entitled to free education on these levels. Primary schools in Ireland include state-funded schools, such as religious, non-denominational, multi-denominational and Irish-medium schools, special schools and private primary schools. A large number of Ireland's 3106 primary schools are small schools (less than 500 students). (Eurydice, 2024.)

Ireland's post-primary education consists of secondary, vocational, community, and comprehensive schools. Secondary schools are established by the state but are owned by a Trustee or Patron and operated under the supervision of a Board of Management (BOM). The role of Trustee or Patron in voluntary secondary schools is often held by bishops, religious orders,

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[2] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

boards of governors, educational trust companies and private individuals, who hold both a moral and legal responsibility to ensure the proper operation of the school, maintaining it in alignment with a particular ethos or characteristic spirit. Vocational schools, also state-established, are governed by Education and Training Boards (ETBs), while Community and Comprehensive schools are administered by Boards of Management, each with a distinct organizational structure. In addition to the state-established secondary schools, there are also fee-paying State secondary schools, which operate without state funding except for the teachers' salaries that are paid by the State. Post-primary education ends typically at the ages of 17 to 18 with a Leaving Certificate Examination, of which there are three available programmes for the students to choose from: the traditional Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) or the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA). (Eurydice, 2024.)

Early childhood education and care services are organized outside of the formal education system by private, community and voluntary actors. Higher education is mainly organized by universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education as well as by other third-level institutions. (Eurydice, 2024.)

State of democracy education

Traditionalist and nationalist perspectives on citizenship, particularly the influence of the Catholic Church, have shaped the discourse on citizenship and democratic education in Ireland (Butler, 2019). Currently, citizenship education in Ireland is integrated into the post-primary curriculum through a cross-curricular approach and is further emphasized in Transition Year through social awareness and active citizenship programs as well as through specialized subjects in the senior cycle level (age 16 to 18). At the junior cycle level (age 12 to 15), citizenship education has been formally addressed through distinct subjects. Since 1997 the subject has been called civic, social and political education (CSPE), and it has faced challenges in its implementation related to the subjects considered low status and efforts made to make it more relevant. (O'Brien, 2023.). In his assessment of formal civic education Gearóid O'Brien concluded that "in Ireland, the dominant profile is knowledge and community participation, which suggests that CSPE equates to participatory citizenship."[2] CSPE forms part of a mandatory (since 2017) section on Wellbeing, which also encompasses Physical Education (PE) and Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE). Students have 400 hours of Wellbeing within the Junior Cycle framework (3 years) across all three short courses, which poses a challenge for civic educators in the formal space.

Non-formal civic education in Ireland is supported by various third-sector organizations and programmes, such as Foróige Youth Citizenship Programme, which is organized by the largest youth organization in Ireland to promote young people's civic and social skills through citizenship projects aimed at making a positive difference in their communities. The National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) serves as the quality assurance system for non-formal learning in Ireland. Its primary objective is to ensure that youth work organizations deliver high-quality services to young people. Indicators to measure good practice in youth civic engagement include that: organized efforts are required to promote youth civic engagement and encourage young people to see that they can make a difference; facilitate young people to input into what citizenship means rather than telling them what 'good citizenship' is; programmes should be action-oriented, providing real opportunities for young people to engage in civic action; promote skills development and reflection; provide clarity regarding the degree of youth ownership, avoid 'adultism'; promote adult-youth partnerships; have structured guidelines to encourage project completion; encourage exposure to diverse social networks; and encourage participation of young people who traditionally may not be involved in civic activities. (Youth Wiki, 2024.)

2.2.3 Spain

Population: 48 035 361[3]

Overall Score democracy index: 8.07/10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

In Spain, compulsory education begins at age 6 and lasts until age 16. Students usually complete general upper secondary programs by age 17. For vocational programs, the graduation age range is broader, with students typically finishing between ages 17 and 21. State legislation in Spain outlines the general structure of the education system, including knowledge areas, disciplines, and content sequences for different degrees. This ensures cultural and structural consistency across regional education models. The state determines the basic curriculum structure, defining 55% of the core learning content for regions with their own languages (like Catalonia, Galicia, and the Basque Country) and 65% for other regions (García Rubio, 2015). This allows each region to develop its own curriculum. The process involves complex negotiations among various social actors, including schools and teachers, tailored to the cultural and political characteristics of each region. Spain conducts at least two national assessments at the primary level, one at the lower secondary level, and one national examination at the upper secondary level.

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[3] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

A notable aspect of the Spanish education system is its mix of public schools, charter schools, and purely private schools. Almost three-quarters of charter schools are religious (Echazarra de Gregorio, 2024). Approximately two-thirds of students in primary and compulsory education attend public schools, while nearly one-third go to publicly funded private schools. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds or with migrant origins are concentrated in the public school system. The Spanish public education system faces chronic underfunding, a situation worsened by the austerity measures implemented during the economic crisis. Conversely, publicly funded private schools experienced an increase in public funding (Rodríguez Martinez, 2020). According to the latest PISA Report, Spain is the country with the largest socioeconomic gap between public and private schools in the countries integrated in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Echazarra de Gregorio, 2024).

In Spain, 46% of 15–19-year-olds attend general upper secondary education, 14% are in vocational upper secondary education, 8% are in lower secondary programs, and 19% are in tertiary education. The Spanish education system has a high school drop-out rate, one of the highest in the EU, which disproportionately affects students from low socio-economic and migrant backgrounds (Berral-Ortiz et al., 2022).

State of democracy education

Education in Civic and Ethical Values, as described in article 10 of Royal Decree 217/2022, is integrated as a compulsory curricular component in one of the courses of Compulsory Secondary Education with the aim of promoting active and committed citizenship, seeking to develop in students a set of values and attitudes that transcend the school environment. Likewise, the law establishes eight key competences, one of them being the Citizen Competence, which students must have acquired and developed by the end of basic education. These competences underpin the entire Compulsory Secondary Education curriculum, strategies and methodological guidelines for teaching practice (BOE-A-2022-4975 Royal Decree 217/2022).

There is ongoing debate about whether civic education should be transversal and thus integrated across all subjects, included as part of specific areas curriculum like social sciences, or treated as a standalone subject focused on understanding the formal workings of the political system (Arbués Radigales & Naval Durán, 2020). The Spanish Ministry of Education reports that the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2022 (ICCS 2022) shows Spain as one of the most equitable countries surveyed in terms of civic knowledge (Ministerio de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes, 2023).

Since the 2000s, the debate on civic education has been increasingly polarized between Catholic conservative and progressive education perspectives. This division is evident in the political orientation of regional governments. Regions with longer periods of conservative governments tend to adopt a more functional approach, limiting civic education to knowledge about the political system. In contrast, regions led by left-wing governments favor a more progressive approach with a broader understanding of civic education.

Non-formal civic education in Spain is supported by various third-sector organizations, including foundations, NGOs, and other institutions involved in development cooperation, education, and cultural activities. According to the 2021 online survey "Mapping Civic Education in Europe" (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023), the civic education sector in Spain faces several challenges, such as public scepticism towards civic education, insufficient specific training for future teachers in citizenship, and difficulties in reaching educational agreements between political parties. The survey results underscored the need for further training in impact evaluation, evaluative learning, innovation, and foresight planning. Securing funding and collaborating with local and international partners were also pointed out as areas requiring attention. Additionally, the survey identified increased opportunities to address citizenship issues among the youth through informal and non-formal activities.

2.2.4 Netherlands

Population: 17 811 291[4]

Overall Score democracy index: 9.00/10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

The formal education system in the Netherlands consists of early childhood education and care, primary education, secondary education (which is divided into pre-vocational, senior general and pre-university secondary education), special education, adult education and higher education. Compulsory education starts at age five and ends at age 18. At age 12, after primary education, the children are divided into different educational levels / paths for secondary school.

A fundamental characteristic of the Dutch education system is the principle of freedom of education. This principle encompasses the freedom to establish schools, to organize the curriculum and teaching methods, and to determine the underlying principles of education.

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[4] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

Schools can be established, and education can be provided based on religious, ideological or pedagogical beliefs. The schools in the Netherlands can be publicly or privately funded. However, all educational institutions that meet set qualifications are funded on an equal basis by the central government, which serves to underline the wish to impose less regulation on the schools and increase their degree of autonomy. (Eurydice, 2023.)

State of democracy education

Citizenship education is compulsory in the Netherlands for all schools at the primary and secondary levels, as well as in tertiary vocational education. However, as schools have considerable autonomy in designing their civics curriculum, there is limited guidance in laws and regulations regarding the content of civics education. In 2021 a new law called "Clarification of the citizenship assignment for schools in primary and secondary education", which aimed to specify requirements and expectations regarding citizenship education, took effect. According to the new law, schools must promote active citizenship and social cohesion, emphasizing a) respect for democracy and the rule of law; b) the development of social and civic competencies necessary for participation in a pluralistic, democratic Dutch society; and c) knowledge and respect for diversity in religion, belief, political opinion, origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation, ensuring equal treatment for all. (Groot, Daas & Nieuwelink, 2022.) The formal citizenship education is supported by the non-formal sector, which produces material, such as programs on different sexualities or guest lectures on religious differences and tolerance for democracy education. Schools collaborate with non-formal sector partners at their own discretion. (Veugelers, 2021.)

2.2.5 Austria

Population: 9 104 772[5]

Overall Score democracy index: 8.28/10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

In Austria, school education is compulsory for nine years from the age of 6 until the age of 15. However, young people under 18 are required to attend education or training even after completing general compulsory schooling. In addition, kindergarten attendance is obligatory for all 5-year-old children. Formal education system in Austria is highly diversified in its programs across all educational levels, and Austria's vocational education sector is particularly strong. The system comprises primary education (ages 6-10; years 1-4) in which all classes are organized as mixed-ability classes, lower secondary level (years 5-8), which consists of compulsory secondary

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[5] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

education and lower level of academic secondary school, upper secondary level (years 9-13), which consists of general education branch and vocational education, higher education, which is provided by public and private universities and finally adult education programmes, which may or may not lead to legally regulated qualifications. Around 90 % of students attend publicly funded schools where education is free for families. Special education is organized within the same system in mainstream schools or in special needs schools. (Eurydice, 2024.)

One of the most recent key education reforms is the 2018 passed educational package, which encompasses five reforms aimed at enhancing fairness and transparency within the education system at the primary and secondary school levels. These reforms also extend to all lower academic secondary school cycles and the upper secondary cycle, with the objective of strengthening competency-based education across Austria. The five reforms include: i) Clear school-readiness criteria for all, introduction of a new developmental diagnostic tool to evaluate relevant skills of school-ages children; ii) Contemporary curricula in primary and lower secondary schools, a transition from syllabus-based to competence-based learning; iii) The new Performance Evaluation Ordinance (Leistungsbeurteilungsverordnung – LBVO), which provides a framework for interaction between curricula and performance evaluation; iv) Individual competence and potential measurement (iKPM), which is used to evaluate students' competences and development as well as for school quality management; and v) Compulsory education, which aims to ensure that all the students acquire basic skills during schooling. (Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research.)

State of democracy education

The fundamental principles of education in Austria include democracy, humanity, solidarity, peace, justice, and openness and tolerance towards all individuals, irrespective of race, social status, or financial background, according to the constitution (Eurydice, 2024). One of the aims of the Austrian school system is that by the completion of their education students are able to recognize the significance of democratic participation and shared decision-making processes (Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research). Civic education is included in formal education as both teaching principle in schools and as an independent or combined subject in secondary school. In the non-formal and informal sector, young people's participation at all political and societal levels is considered highly important in Austria. As an example, the national voting age is 16 and the Austrian Youth Information Centres and their Youth Portal Website have been strengthened to support young people's informed decision-making. (Youth Wiki, 2023.) Despite challenges, such as growing political disengagement and a loss of trust in

democratic institutions, in the non- and informal sector it is considered important to narrow the gap between recognized importance of civic education and its practical implementation by employing various methods and platforms, such as workshops, publication as well as public events (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023).

2.2.6 Slovenia

Population: 2 116 972[6]

Overall Score democracy index: 7.75/10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

In Slovenia, compulsory education starts at 6 and ends at 15. Slovenian public schools are secular and autonomous by law. The formal education system consists of preschool (11 months to 6-year-olds), integrated single-structure compulsory basic and upper secondary (15–19-year-olds), tertiary and adult education. After basic education, students may choose to continue their education in either general or vocational programmes. (Eurydice, 2023.)

Formal primary education is offered through public and private kindergartens, basic schools, basic schools with adapted education programs, music schools, and institutions dedicated to children with special educational needs. Secondary education is offered through upper secondary schools and secondary schools, and is categorized into general education, vocational technical education, and secondary professional or technical education. (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.) Education is free for the families in both public and private institutions with a concession, and schools are only allowed to charge students for matters specifically permitted by the law, such as material costs of organizing outdoor school, parts of meal costs and some exam costs. Less than 1 % of Slovenian children attend private schooling. (Eurydice, 2023.)

State of democracy education

In formal primary and secondary education, citizenship education is integrated into other subjects such as language studies and geography and not offered as a separate subject. At the upper secondary level, the topic is covered cross-curricular, usually through compulsory elective content. In the non-formal and informal sector, citizenship education is provided by a variety of public and private non-governmental organizations, including associations and institutes (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023). However, there is no legal regulation or policy-level structures to

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[6] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

support third sector citizenship education or their partnerships with schools (Youth Wiki, 2023). With the unpredictability of project funding, long-term planning and organization of non- and informal citizenship education is challenging (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023).

2.2.7 Greece

Population: 10 413 982[7]

Overall Score democracy index: 8.14/10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

In Greece, education is compulsory from the ages 4 through 15. The formal education system consists of pre-school (ages 4-5), primary school (ages 6-12), lower secondary school (ages 12-15), upper secondary school (ages 15-18), which divides into general and vocational upper secondary school, second chance schools for 18-year-old and older students, who have not completed compulsory education, post lower secondary vocational education and training, post-secondary vocational training, and higher education. Public education is free at all three levels. The Greek education system strives to prevent preferential treatment and differentiation among students, teachers, schools, or regions, except based on objective criteria. (Eurydice, 2024.) Greece offers a diverse range of specialized schools, such as music, ecclesiastical, and athletic institutions, catering to students with particular interests. The education system also includes intercultural education programs specifically designed for minority groups, such as the Muslim community in Thrace and Gypsies (Roma). (MFA, 2024)

Additionally, Greece has prioritized lifelong learning through alternative education pathways that support continuous education for adults, particularly in vocational training and programs aimed at enhancing social inclusion and integration into the labour market. This includes specific initiatives targeting vulnerable social groups, ensuring equal access to education for all ages, in line with the country's efforts to foster democratic participation and social cohesion (Eurydice, 2024.)

State of democracy education

Democratic principles such as decentralization, democracy, democratic participation, transparency, equality, solidarity, mitigation of social inequalities and evaluation as well as autonomy, responsibility and accountability are behind the Greek national strategy for education.

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[7] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

One of the key objectives of primary and secondary education is to support students' growth into "free, responsible, democratic citizens that defend national independence, the nation's territorial integrity and democracy, to be inspired by the love for man, life and nature and be driven by loyalty towards their country and the fundamental principles of the orthodox Christian tradition." However, in the Greek education system, freedom of religious conscience is guaranteed for everyone. (Eurydice, 2024.)

In formal education, there is no single national policy that guides citizenship education. However, in upper secondary education, Social and Political Education is taught as a subject. (Youth Wiki, 2024.) In the non- and informal sector citizenship education is carried out through actors such as museums, NGOs, social initiatives and volunteers. In a survey conducted by the Civics Innovation Hub in 2023 73,3 % of the responded civic educators (N= 15) mentioned that there is a need for new methods, tools and approaches in the field of citizenship education. (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023.)

Recent studies suggest that innovative educational practices have the potential to significantly enhance democratic education in the country. Kioupkiolis (2023) explores the role of common education in schools as a means of promoting democratic transformation. By emphasizing collective participation and fostering critical thinking, common education encourages students to engage deeply with democratic principles, making them active participants in the process of democracy. This approach highlights how Greek schools can create environments where democratic values are not just taught, but lived through collaborative educational practices (Kioupkiolis, 2023). Similarly, Sykas and Peonidis (2022) conducted an experiment that introduced direct democracy into Greek high schools. Their study demonstrated that when students are given the opportunity to participate directly in decision-making processes within their schools, they develop a stronger understanding of democratic principles and a sense of responsibility as citizens. This experiment provides a practical example of how democratic education can be enacted in a real-world school setting, aligning with the broader goal of fostering active citizenship in young people (Sykas & Peonidis, 2022). Both studies emphasize the importance of integrating participatory practices into formal education to bridge the gap between theory and practice in democracy education. These innovative methods align with EU educational goals of preparing students for active participation in democratic life while addressing the demand for new tools and approaches, as indicated by the 2023 Civics Innovation Hub survey.

2.2.8 Germany

Population: 84 358 845[8]

Overall Score democracy index: 8.80/10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

In Germany, education is compulsory from the age of six and lasts for nine years. Even after compulsory education, young people need to attend at least part-time schooling for three years. Early childhood education is not part of the formal school system but organized by the child and welfare sector. The formal education system consists of primary education (grades 1-6), lower-level secondary education, which is divided into several educational paths, upper secondary education, which is divided into general education and vocational education, as well as vocational training, tertiary education, and adult and lifelong learning. Public primary and secondary education are free for families. (Eurydice, 2024.)

In 2023, a survey by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation found that almost half of Germans are satisfied with the state of democracy, though many are still sceptical, particularly those with lower educational levels. Furthermore, there is rising support for right-wing populist narratives, especially in the former East Germany. The study recommended increasing democracy education to counteract the rise of populism. (Fürstenau, 2023)

State of democracy education

In Germany, citizenship education is organized as its own subject in all schools and grades from 9th grade and above. However, the exact name, scope and curriculum of the subject is decided by each federal state. The general aims of citizenship education are teaching the ideas of freedom and democracy; bringing young people up as tolerant people who respect other people and their convictions; fostering the belief in international understanding; strengthening social commitment and political responsibility; and enabling young people to assume their own rights and duties. In addition to formal education, there are many state-funded activities in the non-formal sector aimed at supporting young peoples' participation and providing democracy education. (Youth Wiki, 2024.) One of the most pressing threats to democracy education especially in the German context is the rise of right-wing populism (Engartner & Schedelik, 2023).

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[8] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

**Funded by
the European Union**

Many governmental and non-governmental organizations, including political foundations and religious groups, contribute to democracy education outside of schools. Recent trends suggest that public funding for such initiatives is on the decline, while private funding increases. Some are concerned that the increasing focus on economic skills may be taking precedence over critical citizenship education needed to sustain democratic engagement (Heldt & Langen, 2021).

2.2.9 France

Population: 68 172 977[9]

Overall Score democracy index: 8.07/10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

In France, compulsory education starts at age 3 and ends at age 16. The formal education system consists of pre-primary education (ages 3-6), primary education (ages 6-11), lower secondary education (ages 11-15), upper secondary education, which divides into general and technological lycées and vocational lycées and last for three years, and finally higher education. At the end of lower secondary education, an appropriate path for upper secondary level studies is recommended by the school to the families, based on school reports and the student's interests. Public education in France is secular and free for the families (Eurydice, 2024).

A notable feature in the French school system is that it's strongly centralized. The State prepares the curricula for all educational levels; oversees the teachers' admission process and provides them with in-service training; monitors the quality of the education system; and acts as the public education system's main funding body as well as subsidizes private "contract schools," which educate approximately 20% of students (Eurydice, 2024).

State of democracy education

France's approach to citizenship education is shaped by the historical context of formation of the French state, which has since the 19th century promoted the values of the republic through the formal education it provides (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023). In schools, citizenship education is provided through multidisciplinary education and civic programmes, such as the Civic Path, which is aimed at secondary level students and covers topics such as secularism, gender equality, discrimination, antisemitism and sexual minorities, environment and sustainability education (Youth Wiki, 2023).

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[9] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

Non-formal and informal citizenship education in turn is used to complement formal education and foster lifelong learning and personal development through arts, culture, sports, politics, and other fields. Recently, there have been many tragic incidents in France that have ignited public debate on issues such as secularism, freedom of religion and expression, education, and the promotion of coexistence in a diverse society. (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023.)

2.2.9 Croatia

Population: 3 850 894[10]

Overall Score democracy index: 6.50/10 (EIU, 2023)

General description of the formal education system

In Croatia, education is compulsory and free from the age of 6 until the age of 14 (Ministry of Science, Education and Youth). The formal education system consists of early childhood and care, primary and lower secondary education (single structure system), upper secondary education, which is divided into grammar schools, vocational schools and art schools, and finally higher education (Eurydice, 2023).

A notable feature in Croatia's formal education system is that the education of members of national minorities is provided for in the Croatian Constitution, which mentions 22 national minorities: Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Bosniaks, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Turks, Vlachs and Albanians. There are three models of organizing classes for students from minority backgrounds and 16 minorities use one of the education models in their native language and script. (Eurydice, 2023; Ministry of Science and Education, 2018.)

State of democracy education

Croatia, with its young democratic tradition and complex historical background, encounters challenges, such as political polarization and lack of high quality teacher training in the field of citizenship education e.g. research results regarding teacher participation in pre-service or in-service training courses covering 13 topics (human rights, voting and elections, the constitution and political systems, citizens' rights and responsibilities etc.) related to civic education shows that respondents from Croatia indicated a level of participation for each of the examined topics

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[10] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en

more than 10 percentage points below the ICCS 2022 study average. (Schulz et al., 2023). These challenges are reflected as differing perspectives on the content and purpose of citizenship education in schools and might hinder the effectiveness of initiatives related to democracy education. (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023.) For example, research results on political literacy among final-year upper secondary school students in the 2020/2021 school year indicate that their level of political knowledge is low and that they exhibit low levels of political participation and trust in various institutions and sources of information. (Baketa, Bovan & Matić Bojić, 2021.) Currently, citizenship education is organized in the formal education system as cross-cultural and interdisciplinary contents in elementary and secondary education. However, there are some regional governments that have also introduced citizenship education as their own extracurricular activity[1] or optional subject[2]. (Youth Wiki, 2024.)

In a survey conducted by the Civics Innovation Hub in 2023, the vast majority of participants declared that their civic education activities take place in non-formal settings (93,8 % of answers, N=48) and as local-level activities (72,9 % of answers). The focus in methods is for example in civic engagement, social inclusion, campaigns and events. From the perspective of the educators who answered the survey, main aspects needing improvement were funding, evaluation, analysis and training in these areas as well as in media, innovation and foresight. (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023.)

2.3 Challenges and opportunities in democracy education

This section summarizes the current state of democracy education based on the analysis of formal and non-formal education among Critical ChangeLab partners countries (Finland, Ireland, Spain, The Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia, Greece, Germany, France, Croatia), pointing at the key challenges identified through desk research and through Critical ChangeLab empirical research on democracy health in formal and non-formal learning environments (see Critical ChangeLab deliverables D1.2).

Among Critical ChangeLab partner countries and in line with comparative reports across EU countries (see for instance Cino Plagiarello et al., 2019; Warat et al., 2023), democracy education is provided to young people at various stages of their schooling. Although democracy education may be mandatory across all levels of general education, its status, duration, placement, and format differ significantly from one country to another. As described in the country democracy education descriptions (see section 2.2), it is possible to identify three primary approaches, which

can be used individually or in combination: as a cross-curricular theme taught by all teachers, as a topic integrated with other compulsory subjects, or as a dedicated, separate school subject.

Non-formal democracy education is increasingly gaining traction across Europe. In all Critical ChangeLab partner countries, non-formal democracy education was recognised as valuable for promoting active citizenship and democratic society. As reported by Slavkova & Kurilić (2023), main actors in non-formal democracy education are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), spanning from large, well-established organizations to small, community-based groups. These actors tend to concentrate their activities on specific topics or groups, such as human rights, environmentalism, or youth engagement. Another important aspect to highlight is the increasing collaboration between formal and non-formal education actors. As reported in Critical ChangeLab D1.2 On Everyday democracy in formal and non-formal education institutions (Jokić et al., 2024), formal and non-formal education institutions share similar perceptions on the importance of democratic values, ranking equality, diversity and inclusion as the most important one. According to the results of the survey conducted with the Democracy health Questionnaire across nine European countries, main differences between formal and non-formal democracy education institutions relate to the perception of most important aspects in democratic practices. For instance, in formal education the priority was on ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to complete their education, while non-formal education institutions ranked conflict resolution as the most important democratic practice. It is worth noticing that the differences are minor and might be regarded as different emphasis based on the different context and conditions in which formal and non-formal education providers operate (see Critical ChangeLab D1.2 for further detail).

The challenges faced in democracy education (in formal and non-formal environments) cannot be isolated from broader societal trends. As indicated in the democracy education descriptions of Critical ChangeLab partner countries, important factors affecting formal and non-formal education in this field deal with the increasing political disengagement and declining trust in democratic institutions (Slavkova & Kurilić, 2023), the growing political polarization and the rise of right-wing populism (Engartner & Schedelik, 2023). As recent reports warn, the polarization of public opinion undermines both the commitment to democracy and essential human rights, leading to a rise in negative attitudes towards gender equality and immigration (Warat et al., 2023).

In the context of formal education, main challenges deal with i) discrepancies between national guidelines and legislation and the actual classroom instruction; ii) low status of democracy

education subjects, which creates difficulties for implementation and making it relevant for students; iii) conflicting views regarding democracy education, influenced by increasing polarized political debates and which hinders reaching educational agreements; iv) shortage of resources and time for teachers; as well as v) insufficient specific training for teachers. Challenges for democracy education in non-formal learning environments are connected to the i) absence of legal regulations or policy frameworks to support third sector citizenship education; ii) lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of activities and programs; iii) inadequate specialized training, as well as iv) limited and inconsistent funding, which affects the long-term sustainability of the initiatives.

On a general level, the recommendations for improving democracy education sustainability and impact include capacity building, strengthening collaboration, fostering research, as well as increased and stable funding (Slavkova, & Kurilić, 2023). Further suggestions for strengthening democracy education have also emphasized the need to promote critical approaches (Heldt & Langen, 2021; Slavkova & Kurilić, 2023), with special attention to enhancing young people's self-perception of their ability to influence and make change in society (Warat et al., 2023). The importance of civil society for promoting and carrying out democracy education is also highlighted (Slavkova & Kurilić, 2023).

Critical ChangeLab identifies opportunities for action in the context of pedagogical development and teacher training based on the analysis of the current state, building on existing research and recommendations on democracy education. In particular, Critical ChangeLab aims to contribute to democracy education by developing a critical pedagogical model based on i) youth participation; ii) collaboration among formal and non-formal education, and civic society actors; and iii) orientation to youth-led social change and transformation. The project proposes a range of methods for implementing democracy education in various environments that build on creative and speculative practices. Throughout the project lifespan, special attention is devoted to collaborating with existing actors and networks in democracy education, providing specialized training to educators working in various environments. The following sections introduce the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy, and describe the laboratories conducted during the first implementation cycle. A detailed analysis of Critical ChangeLab implementation cycles is provided in D3.1 Critical ChangeLab process and recommendations for practice (due in M30).

3 Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy

3.1 Theoretical Influences

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 for 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, 1916, 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 for 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.
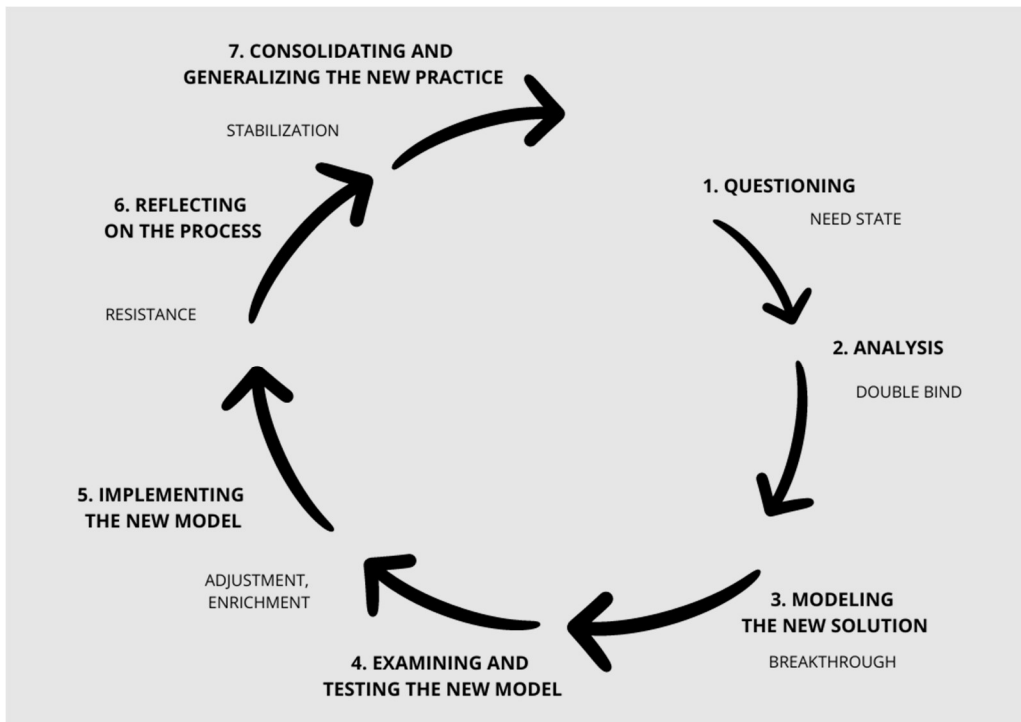
Figure 1. Expansive learning cycle (re-created from Engeström, 1999, p. 384).

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).

3.2 Approach

The Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy 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 Change Labs, young people and education and civil society actors are considered experts of their needs and wishes to engage in associated living with others (Dewey, 1916).

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 Change Labs 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 Change Labs.

The Critical ChangeLab Model runs on the premise that anyone can run a Critical Change Lab 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 Change Lab deal with its project-based orientation and the need to ensure some time for reflection between sessions. Thus, as a minimum a Critical Change Lab 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 Change Labs 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.

3.3 Elements of the Critical ChangeLab Model

The Critical ChangeLab Model for 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 Change Lab. 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 Change Labs 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 Change Lab'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 Change Lab 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 Change Labs.

Alignment of the Critical ChangeLab Model elements

The Critical Literacies Framework allows alignment between the different elements of the Critical ChangeLab Model for 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.
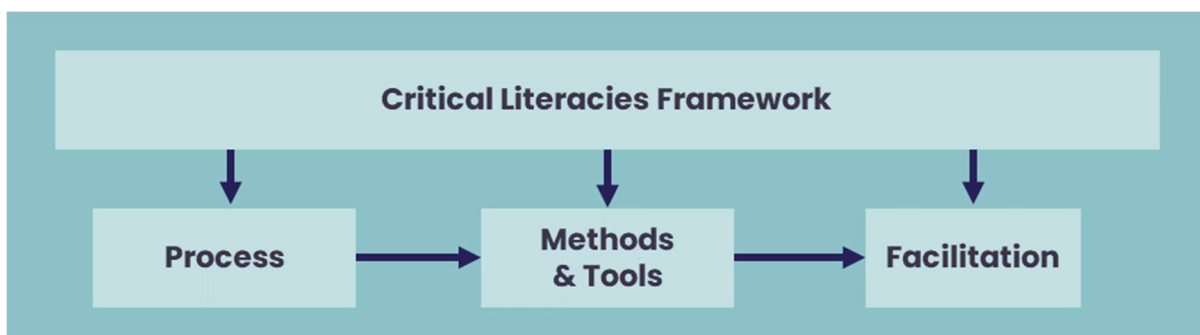

Figure 2. Alignment of the Critical ChangeLab Model Elements through the Critical Literacies Framework.

3.4 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 cycles[11]. 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 for Democratic Pedagogy, the key stakeholders are i) the education and civil society organizations with whom the project partners collaborate to run a Critical Change Lab, 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;

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[11] 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.

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 Change Lab, 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 Change Labs 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 Change Labs 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 (Mättelmaki & Visser 2011, Voorberg et al. 2015, Ramirez 2008, Roschelle et al., 2006).

The Critical Change Labs 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 for 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 Change Labs, 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 for 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 Change Lab 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 Change Lab. 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 Change Labs are encouraged to modify and adapt the canvases as they see fit for their own needs and interests.

4 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 Change Labs, ensuring that participants undergo a comprehensive development of critical literacies. Rooted in the seminal work of Paolo 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

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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).

4.4 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.

4.5 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 Change Lab 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.
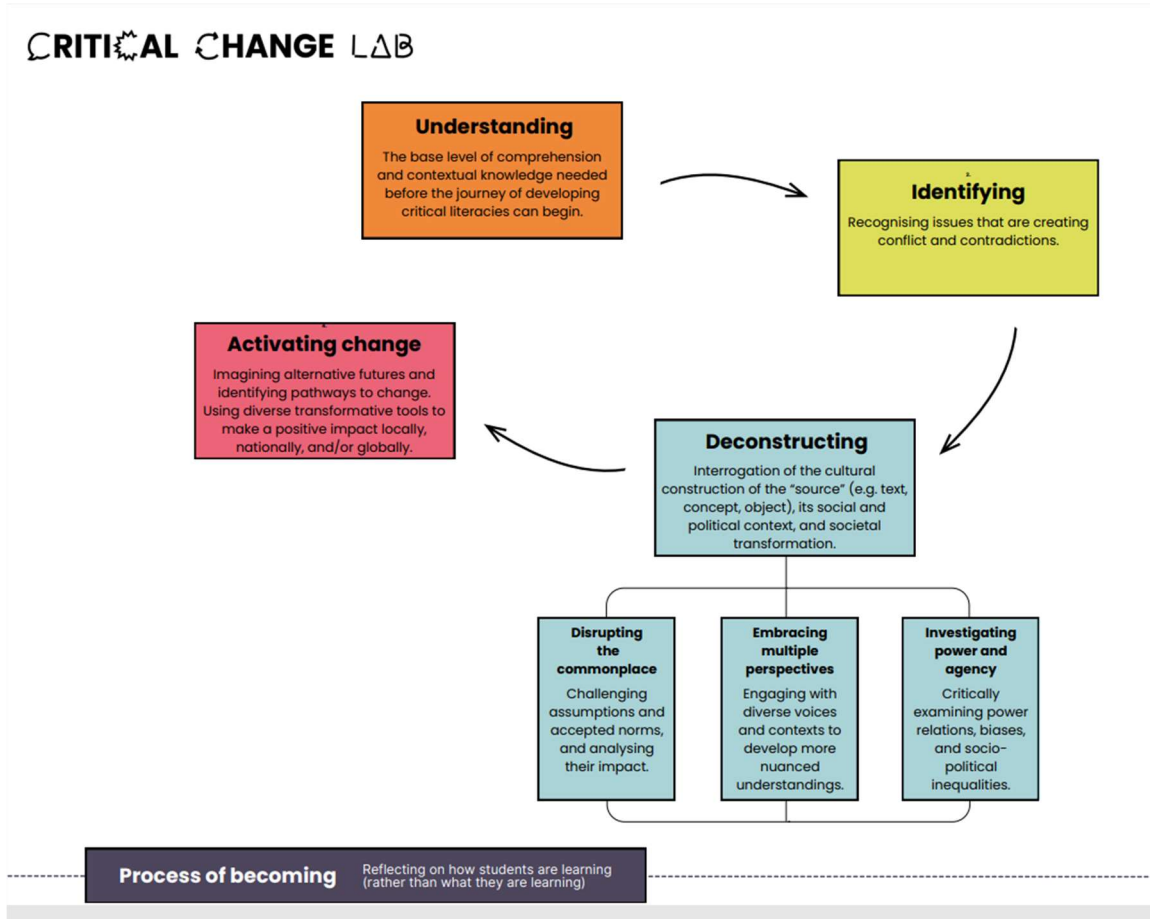

Figure 3. The Critical ChangeLab Critical Literacies Framework, detailed. This visualisation provides descriptive detail for each dimension within the framework and will be useful for educators planning and implementing a Critical Change Lab.

5 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 Change Lab has five phases some of which can be merged to create a shorter version of the Critical Change Lab. 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

5.1 Phase 0: OnBoard

This phase focuses on introducing the participants to the Critical Change Labs 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 Change Labs 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 Change Labs

The focus here is to make the participants aware of the main concept behind Critical Change Labs and explaining different phases of the Critical Chang eLabs. 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 Change Labs.

- What is a Critical Change Lab?
- 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	● Explaining the Critical ChangeLab aim and process ● Co-defining the group rules	Understanding

5.2 Phase 1: Question

This phase of the Critical Change Lab 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 Change Lab participants to brainstorm what type of issues they feel unease 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 P1: Question key aspects

Phase	Focus	Objectives	Dimensions of the Critical Literacies Framework stressed
P1: Question	Trigger thinking and discussion about issues in democracy	● Foster critical thinking	Identifying

5.3 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	● Gain understanding of structural issues	Deconstructing: ● Embracing multiple perspectives ● Investigating power and agency

5.4 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	• Co-creating ideas to explore tensions • Thinking ways to eliminate the tensions • Finding possible solutions • Critically examining those solutions	Deconstructing: • Disrupting the commonplace Activating Change

5.5 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	● Imagining alternative futures and identifying pathways to change ● Taking practical actions for bringing the desired meaningful change	Activating Change

5.6 Phase 5: Reflect

The last phase focuses on reflecting on and evaluating the Critical ChangeLab 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 ChangeLab process	● Co-reflection and co-evaluation of process and outcomes	Process of Becoming

6 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 Change Labs 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.

6.1 Methods

The methods included in the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy are informed by i) futures thinking, ii) embodiment and performance, as well as iii) narrative practices and iv) making. At the Critical Change Labs, 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 UNESCO[12] 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

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[12] For further information on UNESCO approach to futures literacy see https://www.unesco.org/en/futures-literacy#:~:text=What%20is%20Futures%20Literacy%20(FL,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 Change Labs 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 Change Labs, 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 Peppler 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 (Peppler 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 Brahms 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 Change Labs with young people combine making and digital

making with critical practices inspired by prior work (see for instance Hughes, 2017; Iivari 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 Change Lab. 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	- 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.

P1: Question	Questioning, criticizing or rejecting some Western democracy related values or practices related to young people's everyday lives	Identifying	• Mapping: Graphic representation of aspects such as emotions, concepts or relations. • Brainstorming and rapid ideation: Fast idea generation activity to foster participants' creativity.
P2: Analyse	Analyzing the democratic relations of the current situation and their historic evolution	Deconstructing: (b) Embracing multiple perspectives (c) Investigating power and agency	• 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.
P3: Envision and examine	Imagining different futures and fostering collaboration	Deconstructing: (a) Disrupting the commonplace Activating change	• 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

			designed artifacts.
P4: Act	Finding meaningful ways to create change	D4. Activating change	• 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	• 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.

6.2 Tools: The Critical ChangeLab Boards

As part of the Critical ChangeLab Model for 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.

7 Facilitation

Facilitation refers to the act of assisting or making the process easier for the participants. In the context of the Critical Change Labs, 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 Change Labs 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 Change Labs 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 Change Labs.
- **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 Change Lab 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	- Setting the tone and mood - Building trust and a sense of safe space - Fostering ownership over the Lab	- Group photo assignment (icebreaker fostering group self-organization) - Values Tree (icebreaker for finding common values)
P1: Question	Fostering curiosity and attention to everyday matters	- Two truths and a lie (icebreaker for getting to know each other) - Writing with string (energizer fostering team building)
P2: Analyse	- Encouraging an inquisitive attitude - Critical thinking	- 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	Fostering creativity and imagination	- Gift giving (energizer inviting to think about futures) - Pressure cooker design choices (energizer to encourage fast decision-making)
P4: Act	- Promoting hands-on and making - Externalizing thoughts and ideas	- Marshmallow tower (icebreaker encouraging building with physical objects) 'Yes, and...' game (energizer encouraging collaborative text building)

P5: Reflect	• Inviting introspection and self-awareness • Supporting sharing without feeling judged	• One word to describe the experience (reflection trigger)

8 Participatory Action Research cycle 1

The Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy is implemented through three PAR cycles. During each PAR cycle, Critical Change Labs 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 Change Labs are introduced. A summary of the Laboratories' themes and methods is also presented.

8.1 Contexts and stakeholders

PAR cycle 1 Critical Change Labs take place in 18 countries, involving more than 20 learning environments. The Laboratories were located in countries from Europe, North Macedonia, Serbia and the United Kingdom (UK), in rural and urban locations. The type of environments where the Laboratories are set can be described as formal (n=8) and non-formal education settings (n=14), for the most part. In some cases, the Laboratories were 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 Change Labs included young people, middle, secondary and high schoolteachers, 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 were also part of the stakeholders involved in the Critical Change Labs.

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

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

Lab#	Location	Learning environment	Organizations involved	Participants
#1	Oulu, Finland	Formal and non-formal education	• Secondary school • Interact unit at Oulu University • Oulu University FabLab[13]	17-19 years old students taking a sociology course
#2	Oulu, Finland	Non-formal education	• Tyttöjen Talo Oulu[14] • Interact unit at Oulu University • Oulu Business	15-18 years old participants attending an afternoon open doors weekly meeting

[13] https://www.oulu.fi/en/university/fab-lab-oulu
[14] https://iikka.fi/

			Asema FabLab[15]	
#3	Helsinki, Finland	Formal and non-formal education	● Lower-secondary school ● Oulu University ● Haltia Nature school[16]	14-15 years old students in the nature and science focused curriculum
#4	Barcelona, Spain	Formal education	● 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	● InSync Youth & Family Services[17] ● 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	● IMC Weekendschool On tour[18] ● Waag FuturesLab	11-12 years old young people in refugee center
#7	Vienna, Austria	Non-formal education	● Create Your World[19] ● Ars Electronica	17-19 years old students
#8	Linz, Austria	Formal education	● Secondary school ● Ars Electronica	12 years old students
#9	Ljubljana, Eslovenia	Non-formal education	● Rampa Lab ● Kersnikova Institute	9 - 14 years old youth
#10	Paris, France	Civil Society Organization	● Maison de	Youth aged 19 – 23 years old

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[15] https://businessasema.com/en/#fablab

[16] https://haltia.com/en/nature-school/

[17] https://insync.ie/

[18] https://www.imcweekendschool.nl/english/

[19] https://ars.electronica.art/createyourworld/en/

		activities	l'Europe [20] • European Alternatives	
#11	Lesvos, Greece	Formal and non-formal education	• Student associations and movements • University of the Aegean[21] • Iliaktida[22] • Creative Hub[23] • THEO.R.I[24] • LATRA	18-23 years old university students, involved with politics, activism, culture and the arts
#12	Zabok, Croatia	Formal education	• 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 12 Critical Change Labs run by Critical ChangeLab partners, another set of laboratories with external organizations (n=11) 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 cultural associations and non-profit organisations; Non-formal education (n=6) such as language and media education providers, scouts, nature school and a science center, as well as formal education actors (n=2) such as a school and a research unit focused on education and learning (see Table 12 for a summary of the external Critical Change Labs).

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[20] https://paris-europe.eu/

[21] https://www.aegean.gr

[22] https://iliaktida-amea.gr

[23] https://creativehub.gr/en/

[24] https://theori.eu/

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

Lab#	Location	Learning environment	Organization	Participants
#13	Prague, Czech Republic	Civil Society Organization activities	● Platforma Uroboros[25]	Youth in Prague
#14	Skopje, North Macedonia	Non-formal education	● Goethe Institut Skopje26	Youth of various ages
#15	Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina	Non-formal education	● Laboratorium[27]	Girls taking part in STEAM activities
#16	Hamburg, Germany	Civil Society Organization activities	● 105Viertel[28]	Youth in Southern Germany
#17	Carpi, Italy	Non-formal education	● La Tata Robotica[29]	Secondary school students aged 16-17 years
#18	Scotland, UK	Civil Society Organization activities	● Neon Digital Arts[30]	Young people aged 12-14
#19	Lisboa, Portugal	Non-formal education	● Ciencia Viva[31]	Youth participating in STEAM clubs in pre-university ages
#20	London, UK	Formal education	● Elleanor Holles School[32]	Teenagers aged 11-13 years
#21	London, UK	Non-formal education	● Big Leaf Foundation[33]	Teenagers aged 16-18 years
#22	Budapest, Hungary	Non-formal	● Televele Médiapedagógiai	16-18 years old learners

[25] https://2023.uroboros.design/
[26] https://www.goethe.de/ins/mk/mk/index.html
[27] https://laboratorium.ba/
[28] https://www.105viertel.de/
[29] https://www.latatarobotica.it/
[30] https://neondigitalarts.com/
[31] https://www.cienciaviva.pt/en/
[32] https://www.lehs.org.uk/
[33] https://www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/

			Műhely Egyesület[34]	
#23	Belgrade, Serbia	Formal education	● EduLab[35], University of Belgrade	University students

8.2 Stakeholders' needs assessment

One important aspect to highlight in the implementation of Critical ChangeLab PAR cycle 1 is that in all the cases, CCLAB partners made efforts to collect the needs of the stakeholders taking part in the laboratories. The identification of needs was part of an ongoing dialogue happening in various forms and through diverse channels. The following sections elaborate on the stakeholders' needs, as well as their initial motivations and expectations for joining the Critical Change Labs, as well as the ways how their needs were captured before and during the implementation of the laboratories.

8.2.1 Making visible young people's voices as transversal need

It is noticeable that all stakeholders recognized the need to support young people to voice their opinions and take action to make positive transformations of their close environments. In fact, for the education institutions, the educators and the civic society actors involved in the laboratories this was one of the main reasons why they wanted to host a Critical Change Lab. Young people were also vocal about their need for **being heard and having influence** in society on topics that were important for them. Lab #4 was a good example to showcase how the need to foster students' agency was expressed from multiple perspectives. In this case the school pedagogical coordinator identified the need to make the students realize their potential to influence decision-making in real contexts by giving them the opportunity to take action to improve the school. From the students' side, they also expressed the need to be heard by the school and be able impact the school spaces.

8.2.2 Stakeholders' initial motivations and expectations

The stakeholders involved in the Critical Change Labs were diverse and included education institutions, civic society actors, educators and the youth taking part in the activities. Below,

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[34] https://televele.hu/
[35] https://ifdt.bg.ac.rs/edulab/?lang=en

a summary of the main motivations of each of these groups, as well as their expectations regarding their participation in the laboratories is provided.

<u>Educational institutions</u>

The institutions involved in the laboratories included formal and non-formal education. In both cases, they had similar motivations for joining the Critical ChangeLab and focused on promoting learning about society and democracy, as well as enriching their educational offerings. The differences in the contexts in which they operated reflected on their expectations and requirements for participating in a Critical Change Lab.

Supporting learning about society and democracy through participatory and critical approaches

One of the main motivations for the educational institutions joining the Critical Change Labs was that the students could learn more about the society and democratic decision-making processes by exploring issues related to democracy from a critical perspective. Enriching students' understanding of socio-political challenges, especially those faced by marginalized minorities and vulnerable groups was also an important motivation in many cases (specially in those working with participants with a migrant background such as in Labs #4, #6, #11 and #21). For instance, in Lab #6 the laboratory activities aimed to contribute to participants' understanding of Dutch society and democratic processes through first-hand experience. For the education institutions, the Critical Change Labs created opportunities for fostering students' ability to contribute meaningfully to societal issues and their communities. One example of such motivation can be found in Lab #4, hosted in a school setting as part of a voluntary Service-Learning program, where the use of participatory methods was considered valuable for promoting students' engagement in everyday democracy in the school context. Overall, education institutions welcomed the use of participatory action research since they perceived this approach as engaging for the young people they served.

Enriching the educational offerings

For many education institutions, the collaboration with the Critical ChangeLab project was seen as an opportunity to provide new learning experiences to the young people by encouraging them to engage with local and global issues related to democracy, social inclusion, and civic responsibility. For instance, Lab #8 helped to bring methodological

diversity and thus enrich the school curricula by inviting their students to envision and share the future(s) they wanted through an exhibition. Furthermore, the arrangement of collaborations through which young people could work together with international organisations such as research institutions and civic society organisations was another need expressed by the organisations hosting the laboratories (see for instance Lab #18).

Civic Society Actors

The civic society actors involved in PAR cycle 1 consisted of non-profit organizations and associations, community spaces, as well as public events such as festivals.

Joining forces towards a shared mission

It is worth to note that the civic society organisations collaborating in the Critical Change Labs shared many aspects in terms of values and practices with the Critical ChangeLab project. Thus, joining the Labs was a way to continue their existing work, joining forces with other actors. One example of this can be found in Lab #5 where the civic society organisation hosting the laboratory was youth-centered and had a close link with their families and community to develop creative interventions which lead to better outcomes.

Enhancing their visibility and outreach

Being part of the Critical Change Labs was an opportunity to expand their network collaborating with other actors in education and research. Also, in the case of those civic society organisations working with youth the laboratories offered them a good opportunity to expand their outreach among youth. For instance, the civic society actor involved in Lab #2 was a public and free digital fabrication space. The organisation of one of the laboratory's sessions at their premises allowed them to show the space to the youth and explain the services that they could access on their free time during and after the finalisation of the laboratory.

Educators

The educators involved in the Critical Change Labs included teachers and facilitators of learning activities targeting young people. Irrespective of the type of learning environment in which they worked (formal or non-formal), the most common motivation for joining the laboratories was to get acquainted with novel methods they could integrate in their

professional practice. Attention to inclusion and collaboration was another important aspect raised by the educators when sharing their expectations.

Expanding the methodological repertoire

By taking part in the Critical Change Labs, educators and facilitators sought opportunities to expand their own teaching practices by exploring new pedagogical methods. In particular, they were interested in gaining new skills and experiences that they could apply in future educational settings. CCLAB partners tried to fulfill these needs in different ways. For example, in Lab# 11 educators were given the opportunity to engage with novel practices which included participatory action research and creative facilitation techniques. Similarly, in Lab #3 educators wanted to learn about methods focusing on democracy education in human-nature relations. In this case, the laboratory helped them to benchmark new possible tools that they could utilize in their future practice. In the case of laboratories involving schoolteachers (see Labs #1, #3, #4, #8, #12, #20 and #23), the possibility to collaborate with civil society actors such as civic organisations, community spaces, as well as individuals such as artists, social workers and researchers was also regarded valuable to innovate and expand their methodological repertoire.

Alignment with the curriculum

In the case of Critical Changes Labs arranged as part of compulsory school courses, the topic of the laboratories had to follow the curriculum. For example, in Lab #1 each of the sessions included a small lecture on democracy as the laboratory was organised as part of a sociology course. This was important since the laboratory was expected to help the students prepare for their high school exam.

Fostering inclusion and collaboration

For the educators involved in the Critical Change Labs, it was also important that the laboratories would be inclusive. Thus, special attention was devoted to ensuring the facilitation strategies were culturally responsive and promoted collaboration and open communication, helping participants to bridge social and cultural gaps. This need was especially important in the case of Lab #6, #11 and #21 in which participants had very diverse cultural backgrounds, with some of them very recently arrived at the countries where the Critical Change Labs were organised. In cases like in Lab #11, this need was

considered from the very beginning of the laboratory design in which participants from different cultural, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds were intentionally grouped together to encourage cross-cultural exchange and social cohesion.

<u>Young people</u>

In many cases, young people did not express any particular expectation regarding their participation in the Critical Change Labs. However, in the cases in which participants voiced their motivations to join the laboratories, these were diverse. Next, we highlight the main motivations and expectations identified.

Increasing social connections and sense of belonging

When reporting their motivations to join the Critical Change Labs, participants recognised they were appealed by the chance to participate in social and educational activities offering a sense of belonging and community. Another significant expectation raised by the youth was that the laboratory would offer them alternative means to connect and engage with peers from different backgrounds, reducing their feelings of isolation (see for instance Lab #11).

Working independently on the topics of their choice

In the case of laboratories taking place in formal education environments, one of students' motivations was to be able to work independently on the projects of their choice as compared to a rather strict classroom environment. In some cases, such as in Lab #1, the laboratory also offered them the opportunity to get credits and get support to prepare for their high school exam.

Development of four C skills: Communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity

The young people taking part in the Critical Change Labs looked forward to acquiring social (communication, teamwork) and creative skills. The acquisition of skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration was regarded as valuable for their schoolwork and future careers, as they may increase their future educational and professional opportunities.

8.2.3 Identification of needs before running the Critical Change Labs

Before the start of the Critical Change Labs, CCLAB partners kickstarted conversations with the potential collaborators to identify their needs and motivations to join the laboratories. Once they had accepted to take part in the activities, their involvement was arranged in various ways. For example, initial meetings were held to identify specific expectations and requirements for the Critical Change Lab.

Co-design workshops on the Critical Change Labs

As part of the planning of the Critical Change Labs, co-design sessions were arranged with the education organisations involved in the organisation of the laboratories. For this purpose, specific support materials were provided to facilitate the sessions (see the Critical ChangeLab Co-design Toolkit included in Annex 1). Information about Critical ChangeLab co-design approach is provided in section 3.4.

Among the aspects discussed during the co-design workshop, specific attention was devoted to the definition of laboratories' thematic focus. Although in most cases the broader themes were defined with the educators, building on their knowledge of participants' needs and interests and the particularities of their specific context, at the laboratories participants were also encouraged to revise the themes, narrowing down based on their own interests. For instance, in case of Lab #1 the broader theme of *Democracy in everyday* was narrowed down by the youth to smaller themes like polarization of society and marginalization of youth. The selection of methods and facilitation strategies used at the Critical Change Labs was also discussed with the educators involved in the laboratories. This was important to ensure the activities were engaging and the facilitation strategies promoted inclusion and collaboration among participants. In the case of Lab #2, based on the feedback provided by the facilitators working at the non-formal education institution hosting the laboratory the initial selection of methods was revised to better accommodate to the group's needs and preferences.

Surveys and interviews with CCLAB External Labs organisers

In the case of the External Labs, Tactical Tech (the partner coordinating these Labs) opened a call for partnerships for organizations that were interested in testing the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy, and that would like to do so on the topic of

Digital Influence and Everyday Democracy. All the organisations that were selected responded to a brief survey and they went through an interview where the project outlines were collected. All the organisations selected were committed to provide spaces for young people to reflect on the impact of technology in democracy and explore methods that could support them in this quest.

Onboarding session with CCLAB External Lab organisers

After the selection of the organisations hosting the External Labs, Tactical Tech conducted an onboarding session, which consisted in a general introduction to the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy with all the External Labs hosts before the start of PAR Cycle 1. In this session the topics, the learning goals, and the proposed outlines for the External Labs were presented. During this session, the organisations hosting these Labs were prompted to share their concerns, challenges and needs. For the most part, the concerns raised related to methodological and logistical issues. Emphasis was made on the need to consider the External Labs workshop outlines and methods as guidelines, which may require adaptation to accommodate to the diverse needs of the youth and educators involved in these Labs. Two weeks after the onboarding session, two open house sessions where External Lab hosts could pop-in voluntarily to discuss their plans and concerns were arranged. In these sessions, Tactical tech provided guidance and openness, giving the External Labs hosts autonomy to conduct the laboratories according to their needs.

Pitch sessions to introduce the Critical ChangeLab to potential participants

CCLAB partners introduced the Critical ChangeLab project to young people and invited them to join the laboratories through pitch sessions. These sessions were also used as an opportunity to capture the topics and societal issues that youth were concerned about. For example, in Lab #2, although the overarching topic was decided with the help of facilitators, the researchers used an anonymous Padlet to collect potential participants' input about the topics they wanted to discuss. This anonymous feedback was used as a basis for selecting the laboratory's topic with the youth who accepted to take part in it.

Informal conversations with youth

In some cases, young people were engaged before the start of a Critical Change Lab through informal focus groups to gather their interests and aspirations for the laboratory.

For example, in Lab #11 the potential participants were engaged through informal focus groups to gather insights regarding their interests, needs and aspirations for the laboratory. As part of the efforts to capture youth's motivations and expectations, one-on-one conversations were also arranged with participants belonging to vulnerable groups to provide safe space for them to express their needs.

8.2.4 Identification of needs during the Critical Change Labs

The identification of needs was considered as an ongoing process, not limited to the work prior to the start of a Critical Change Lab. The main strategy used for this purpose consisted in creating an environment where youth would feel comfortable to express their wishes and needs, as well as to open communication channels that would enable continuous throughout the Critical Change Lab life cycle. Facilitators' observations after each session were also important to adapt the forthcoming sessions. Next, a description of how CCLAB partners identified needs during the implementation of Critical Change Labs during PAR cycle 1 is provided.

Onboarding sessions with Critical Change Labs participants

In the case of the young people taking part in the laboratories, since the first session they were encouraged to give feedback and express their preferences. For instance, as part of the Critical Change Labs onboarding session participants were invited to co-design a code of conduct for the laboratory. In this activity participants were encouraged to share their wishes, ranging from how they wanted to get feedback to practical aspects such as what language to use or the start time of the sessions. Based on this feedback, the facilitators negotiated with the youth to accommodate to their needs. For instance, in Lab #1 participants expressed that it was hard for them to actively participate at 08:00 in the morning and that they would like to be able to drink tea/coffee during the session. Facilitators agreed to start the session at 08:15 with the condition that everyone would be on time. Also, breakfast was offered since 08:00 and some refreshments were available during the session. While these adjustments might seem minor, they were important to communicate participants that they were heard and that they could influence what happened at the laboratory and to create an atmosphere where they felt comfortable to express themselves.

Continuous feedback as strategy to identify additional needs during implementation

All the labs maintained ongoing dialogue with stakeholders and ensured regular feedback loops during the laboratory's preparation and implementation, allowing for iterative adjustments based on the feedback provided. Main communication channels used with education institutions and educators consisted in follow-up meetings (online and face-to-face), with updates and clarifications managed mostly via email. These practices helped to maintain continuous dialogue and engagement in decision-making. During the implementation of the Critical Change Labs sessions, continuous feedback with educators was supported by practices such as sharing materials for each session beforehand. This enabled educators to give feedback and make suggestions before each session took place (see for instance Lab #1, Lab #3, Lab #4 and Lab #6). Young people taking part in the laboratories were also taken into the loop of continuous feedback. At the end of each of the session Critical Change Labs sessions, participants were asked about the practices and ways of doing they wanted to keep, avoid or modify regarding the laboratory. This helped the researchers to know the participants preferences and make the necessary adjustments for the following sessions.

Observations after each session

CCLAB partners facilitating the Critical Change Labs filled an observation diary after each session. These observations were part of the research data informing the analysis of PAR cycle 1 Critical Change Labs (this analysis is presented in D3.1 Critical ChangeLab process and recommendations for practice), and they were also used as internal debrief among the laboratories' facilitators. Following these observations, facilitators adjusted the activities, and the pedagogical strategies used in the following sessions. For instance, in Lab #6 the children had a great need for social contact with each other and sought a lot of confirmation from each other due to language differences. To adapt to this need, facilitators modified the initial program, making it less linguistic and providing more opportunities for non-linguistic communication.

8.3 PAR cycle 1 Laboratories

8.3.1 Overview

During Critical ChangeLab PAR cycle 1, a total of 23 laboratories are organized (see Table 12 for a summary of the Critical Change Labs 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 Change Labs 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 Scratch[36] and Ren'Py[37].

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 Festival[38], 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,[39] 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 Change Labs organized during PAR cycle 1.

Table 13. Summary of PAR cycle 1 Critical Change Labs themes, duration and methods

Lab # Country	Thematic focus	Duration	Examples of the methods selected
#1 ● Finland	Democracy in the everyday	Long version	● Brainstorming ● Mind mapping ● Actor Mapping ● Digital Fabrication and making Zines
#2 ● Finland	Self-love in the age of False Idols	Short version	● Arts and crafts ● Zine making

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[36] https://scratch.mit.edu/
[37] https://www.renpy.org/
[38] https://betafestival.ie/
[39] https://thedigitalhub.com/

	and Social pressures		● Digital fabrication
#3 ● Finland	Nature-Human relations	Long version	● Mind mapping ● Backcasting ● Circles of influence ● Futures scenarios
#4 ● Spain	Adultcentrism in youth's everyday life	Long version	● Performative Still Lifes ● Collaborative mapping ● Critical cartographies ● Speculative design ● Making
#5 ● Ireland	Identity & Community	Short version	● Rapid ideation ● Timeline ● Mind mapping ● Zines ● Sticky dot survey
#6 ● The Netherlands	Identity & Clothes	Short version	● Making ● Role-playing ● Games ● Magic machine
#7 ● Austria	Envisioning Futures	Short version	● Empathy mapping ● Future(s) exhibition ● Manifesto
#8 ● Austria	Envisioning Futures	Short version	● Empathy mapping ● Future(s) exhibition ● Manifesto
#9 ● Slovenia	Democratic education and new approaches to passing the knowledge	Long version	● DIY ● DIWO ● Art Thinking ● Peer-to-peer learning
#10 ● France	Alternative democratic spheres	Short version	● Mapping of personal experiences ● Discussion groups ● Finding other uses ● Collaborative ideation

#11 • Greece	Democratisation of Education	Short version	• Storytelling • Zines • Theatre of the oppressed • Rapid hackathons Peer-to-peer learning • Peer mentorship
#12 • Croatia	Cultural rights, cultural participation and barriers to cultural participation among youth	Short version	• Photovoice • 5 whys • Speculative design • Exhibition as enquiry
#13-23 • Czech Republic • North Macedonia • Bosnia-Herzegovina • Germany • Italy • UK • Portugal • UK • Hungary • Serbia	Digital influence	Short version	• Speculative design • Spectorgrams • Idea clustering • Map of Influence • Show and Tell • Advocacy Gallery • Collaborative object creation

8.3.2 PAR cycle 1 laboratories led by Critical ChangeLab partners

During PAR cycle 1, 12 Critical Change Labs were run by Critical ChangeLab partners. The contexts where the laboratories took place were diverse and included formal learning environments such as schools (n=6), non-formal education institutions (n=8) and Civic Society Actors (n=2). In all cases, the laboratories involved several organizations and in many cases they consisted in collaborations between formal and non-formal learning

environments (see Table 11). Thematically, the laboratories focused on issues such as democracy, participation, identity, community, society, learning and education, as well as activism. Next, a description of each Critical Change Lab is provided (see also section 8 for detailed description of selected Critical Change Labs cases).

Lab #1 (Finland) was organised in a formal education context (a high school in the Oulu area), as part of an elective course on sociology. Four participants aged 15-17 years agreed to take part in the laboratory, which was also organised in collaboration with FabLab Oulu. Lab #1 participants explored aspects they felt uncomfortable and concerned in their everyday life such societal polarization and marginalisation. During the five sessions that lasted the laboratory, participants looked at the past of a given issue, to envision their preferred futures. Based on these, participants generated messages aiming to trigger reflection on the societal issue. These messages were printed at the FabLab on everyday objects.

Lab #2 (Finland) was organised in collaboration with "Girls' House" (Tyttöjen Talo), an informal organisation that provides safe space for girls to indulge in hobbies and other leisure activities after school. Overall, the group consisted of three 15–16-year-olds girls, who attended two sessions focused on the theme "Self-Love in the age of False Idols and Social Pressures". The sessions were organised at the Girls' House and at the city FabLab. The fabLab session was open to all Girls' House members and focused on the challenges that girls face in terms of one's' looks and appearance and what they can do to make things better in the future. Based on these reflections, participants were encouraged to design activist jewellery in which they engraved messages to show appreciation towards important relations in their lives and foster self-love.

Lab #3 (Finland) was organised in collaboration with a public school (formal education) and a nature school (non-formal education) in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The group consisted of 15 participants (five girls and 10 boys) aged 14 to 15. The group studies in a weighted curriculum program, which means that they have two extra lessons of nature and science education weekly. During the labs the students worked on group projects on their chosen topics connected to the overall theme of the lab, which was democracy and human-nature relationship. One of the laboratory's sessions was organised at the nature

school and facilitated by its nature education experts and all the other sessions were held at the school during school days and were facilitated by the project researchers.

Lab #4 (Ireland) was organised with inSync Youth & Family Services, an organisation providing support and services for young people and families in the Kildare/West Wicklow area. TCD Critical ChangeLab researchers worked with their Junior Board (approximately ten participants, aged 17-24, and three educators) on the theme of 'Community and Identity'. The theme was chosen in collaboration with the educators and youth. The youth considered questions of identity, community, inclusion and belonging, and created zines that expressed their thoughts while the researchers provided the methods and materials.

Lab #5 (Spain) took place in a public secondary school on the outskirts of Barcelona. The group consisted of seven participants (five girls and two boys) aged 14. This group is coursing a Service-learning (SL) program. This SL program is a part of their academic training and consists of forming and establishing themselves as a mediation team within the school. The lab adopted a collaborative approach in which the participants decided the topic —the adultcentrism— and the goals, while researchers brought resources, and methodological and theoretical structure to materialise their ideas.

Lab #6 (The Netherlands) was organised with Weekendschool on tour, an organisation which educates children who are refugees and are living in temporary housing in the middle of the Netherlands. Participants worked on the theme 'Identity' through the design of a costume that represented the whole group. Participants needed to use democratic principles to work together and make decisions.

Lab #7 (Austria) was organised with a public secondary school in Linz with students aged 12. During the sessions at the school, facilitated by the researchers, the students were encouraged to analyse societal structures in relation to a variety of human and non-human agents. This was achieved through a series of narrative and artistic practices focusing on past and present imaginations of the future and which ultimately led to the articulation of the students' own demands and desires for future change. To achieve this, the laboratory's facilitator provided the methodological framework and resources, but the focus, themes of interest, etc. were determined by the participants.

Lab #8 (Austria) was organized with 17- to 18-year-old students from Vienna who had previously participated in the *Create your World* prize, the youth category of the Prix Ars Electronica. It took place in a cultural space providing resources to community groups engaged in participatory, educational, and cultural initiatives. The outcomes of the laboratory served as the foundation and guidance for a series of podcasts made by the youth and as a starting point for the discussion at the Critical Change Conference organized by the participants and other youths during the Ars Electronica Festival 2024.

Lab #9 (Slovenia) took place at three Kersnikova Labs for Artificial Life. Kernikova Labs combine intense artistic production at the intersection of art, science and technology, with extensive educational programme. Lab #9 participants were aged between 9 and 13. The five workshops planned for the Critical ChangeLab PAR cycle 1 focused on democratic learning, democratic pedagogy and imagining the perfect learning model through the eyes of children and youngsters. Kersnikova Critical Change Lab design also connected democratic learning to nature - the world of mycellium, drawing examples of biomimicry (based on the concept of cooperation and connectivity in nature) and to technology in the sense of sharing knowledge using Arduino[40] as an example of a technological tool that is open source and intended for the free sharing of knowledge and as an example of how technology can be used in a creative way and for good purposes in society and nature..

Lab #10 (France) engaged participants on questions of participatory democracy in alternative forms. The topic framing Lab #10 was defined beforehand to provide a clear subject to start the laboratory and was progressively led by the participants throughout the discussion-based activities. Participants were university students from various areas of France who had moved to Paris or were living in a Parisian suburb to complete a period of civil service or internship at Maison de l'Europe in line with their studies, all within the sphere of European politics and culture. In this laboratory, youth reflected on their lived experiences of democracy in action engaging in discussion and joint ideation of alternative spheres and spaces of democracy.

Lab #11 (Greece) participants were university students with ages between 19-25 years and consisted of 8 female students and 7 male students. The students read a diversity of

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[40] https://www.arduino.cc/

subjects ranging from sociology to marine sciences offered from the University of the Aegean both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Some students were familiar with each other through university or social life, and most of the students resided in the near-by city of Mytilene. The laboratory focused on the recent national law paving the way for the privatisation of universities, and the discussion was geared towards to what extent this process affected the democratisation of education. The students also focused on the long-term effects of this process for the local communities and society at large, as Lesvos holds a large university with the local economy dependent on the influx of students. The laboratory's outputs were discussed and explored with local civil society organisations such as THEORI, ILIAKTIDA and Creative Hub.

Lab #12 (Croatia) took place in a secondary art school in a rural area of Croatia. Most of the students participating in the laboratory (11 out of 13) had taken the civic education subject "School & Community". This Critical Change Lab aimed to dig deeper into possible causes and barriers for youth's cultural participation. Through various participatory, as well as creative and arts-based methods such as Photovoice, Discussion forum and Speculative design, participants questioned the concept of cultural rights, explored issues they face related to participation in cultural activities and envisioned a preferable future for their local community where barriers to cultural participation will no longer be present.

8.3.3 PAR cycle 1 CCLAB External Labs

Critical ChangeLab partner Tactical Tech designed a framework for commissioned CCLAB External Labs focusing on the topic of "Influence" as it relates to young people and their use of technology: what it is, where it appears, and how they might intervene in the digital space to create solutions. This framework was adapted and implemented by a mix of 11 formal and non-formal institutions and organisations in nine different countries.

Tactical Tech opened a call for partnerships for organisations that were interested in testing the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy in their countries on the topic of digital influence and everyday democracy. All selected organisations were committed to provide spaces for young people to reflect on the impact of technology in democracy and explore pathways to build a digital space that fosters participation in democracy and contributes for an overall better democratic environment. After selection, Tactical Tech conducted an onboarding session with all external collaborators to outline the goals of the

Critical ChangeLab project and introduce the plan for implementation, including the pedagogical model, the workshop outlines with activities and methods to be adjusted locally. At the onboarding session and the following two open-house sessions (1-hour online session where the external collaborators could join and discuss their plans for implementation and get feedback), the external collaborators were given the opportunity to present concerns, challenges, needs and propose alternative methods and activities to complement the template outline that was provided. Most of the concerns of the external collaborators were methodological and logistical, namely to what extent they could adapt the topic and goals to their specific context. The sessions resorted to energizes, brainstorming, group discussions, spectrograms, case studies analysis, video and text interpretation and project design activities to explore and deconstruct the topics to then creatively propose actions. The outputs of the external laboratories consisted of advocacy posters designed by participants using different materials and techniques to showcase their project design and advocate their project to their peers and the stakeholders present in the laboratory. Next, a description of each of the external Critical Change Labs is provided.

Lab #13 (Czech Republic) Trinec Public Library is a city library from Czech Republic who has been very active in fostering participatory and training spaces for youth of the city. They have collaborated with Tactical Tech in co-development workshops with youth on the topic of youth and tech. They implement the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy in collaboration with a local school with which they have ongoing citizenship education initiatives.

Lab #14 (North Macedonia) was a collaboration of Goethe Institut Skopje and "Koco Racin" School in Prilep with which Goethe Institut Skopje had already a relationship to promote citizenship education interventions. The laboratory engaged 13 young people, 8th grade students, average age 14 years old, as well as one facilitator and one teacher. They used the proposed outlines and additional tools such as Miro to harvest inputs from youth. One of the sessions occurred during a project by the Pestalozzi Foundation and the First Children Embassy. Together with these two institutions, the school works on a project which aims to reduce bullying at the school.

Lab #15 (Bosnia-Herzegovina) was a collaboration between Laboratorium, a youth association, Kalesja Youth Centre and Trik - Youth association and the local primary school. The lab engaged 12 young people, ages 14-15 years old, from the rural areas of Tuzla canton. The laboratory took place at Kalesja youth centre.

Lab #16 (Germany) 105viertel is a Hamburg based civil society organisation working to involve citizens in the policy and design of the city. They are implementing the laboratory in collaboration with a local school.

Lab #17 (Italy) was implemented by La Tata Robotica, a civil society organisation with previous experience working with schools on digital citizenship extra-curricular initiatives. They collaborated with the Giacomo Masi Middle School, in Cavezzo, a small town close to Modena. The Lab involved 15 young people, ages 11-12 years old and three educators. The session followed the workshop outlines proposed by Tactical Tech with modifications to fit the age and context of participants. In this laboratory, besides using Miro as a collaborative tool, they used a board game developed by the organisation to engage young people in critical conversations and support the process of deconstructing concepts and connect them with their own vision of democratic processes and digital influence.

Lab #18 (UK) in Scotland was conducted with NeON Digital Arts in partnership with Feeling Strong, a local organization promoting digital detox, positive digital action and well-being initiatives for teens. The laboratory involved six participants from the areas of Dundee, ages 12-17 years old, struggling with anxiety and attention disorders. The sessions of this laboratory were completely reformulated to include a variety of content formats (videos, games, etc.) and interactive activities to keep the motivation of participants high. Young people were challenged to design art pieces to showcase their relationship with technology and the way it impacts their participation online, engagement with information and societal action. These sessions also lasted an average of four hours each to better accommodate the rhythm and needs of participants

Lab #19 (Portugal) was coordinated by Ciencia Viva, a public institution fostering open science and STEM education that works with schools across Portugal. The laboratory was implemented in partnership with Patricio Prazeres school engaging 11 young people, several

with a migrant background. Three facilitators and a school therapist as an observer and consultant were also involved. The laboratory followed the main activities proposed through the outlines with adaptations to the local context.

Lab #20 and **Lab #21** (UK) were organised by the same external collaborator. Lab #20 was organised in a private, all-girls school in London, Eleanor Holles School, with a group of 8 young girls with background knowledge in the topic and from a stable socio-economic background. Lab #21 was implemented with a group of 12 young refugees and migrant teenagers. The participants were not English native speakers and were part of a social inclusion program by Big Leaf Foundation. The lab followed the sessions outlines but educators were involved as experts in the discussions to provide support and work with them to explore the topic and propose actions.

Lab #22 (Hungary) was coordinated by Televele, a civil society who develops media and digital citizenship education in schools. The sessions took place at Színyei Merse Pál Secondary School (Budapest, Hungary), a long-term partner of Televele. The sessions engaged ten young people, all female, ages 15-16 years old, coming from secure financial and family background. It also involved two facilitators and one member of Televele board engaged in educational programs. The outputs were the posters with their action proposals. Besides paper and colour pens, they used Canva app for poster creation and to better express their vision for their action proposals that they presented to their peers.

Lab #23 (Serbia) was implemented by the Centre for Teacher Education from the University of Belgrade in partnership with the Legal business School in Belgrade. The laboratory involved 15 young people, ages 16-17 years old, 14 of participants were female, and four educators ages 24 to 30 years old. The headmistress of the school as well as a well-known influencer in Serbia participated as stakeholders. The organization followed the proposed outlines, adding more energizers and localizing the case studies to facilitate discussions. They reported that it was noticeable the increase in engagement in makers activities as opposed to expositive, brainstorming and reflection activities.

9 PAR cycle 1 laboratories: Case examples

In this section, the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy is illustrated through a selection of four Critical Change Labs implemented in diverse contexts (north, center and south of Europe) and settings (formal and non-formal learning environments).

9.1 Lab #1: Democracy in the everyday

9.1.1 Context

CCLAB partner facilitating the critical change laboratory: UOULU

Geographic Location: Oulu, Finland

9.1.2 Stakeholders

Learning Environments involved:

- High school in Oulu (teacher training school that operates under the Faculty of Education and Psychology). The critical change laboratory was incorporated in an ongoing Sociology course in the school. The course was elective and the participation in the Critical Change Lab was voluntary.
- Fab Lab Oulu: a fabrication laboratory with versatile capability for digital manufacturing and design. Fab Lab equipment includes laser cutters, 3D printers, 3D scanners, vinyl cutters, a CNC milling machine, and electronic fabrication equipment. People of the University of Oulu community are their main customers. They also have open access times for customers outside the university community. For instance, they are in strong collaboration with companies and local schools and organize different courses, events, workshops, projects, and training activities related to digital fabrication.

Educators involved:

- Responsible teacher of the sociology course: He has been working in the school for twenty years and there is a history of collaboration with the school and with the teacher in charge of that course through prior projects.
- FabLab Oulu instructors (n=2)

Young people participating in the Critical Change Lab:

A pitch session introducing the Critical ChangeLab project, and its pedagogical approach was arranged at the school with eight ninth grade students. Four of them (three boys and one girl, 15-17 years old, multilinguals) agreed to join the critical change laboratory. The students participated in the lab to get study credits from the course and prepare for their Lukio (High School) exam.

CCLAB team members involved:

A doctoral researcher, two postdoctoral researchers and one associate professor were involved in the organisation and facilitation of the laboratory (Yusra Niaz, Eva Durall, Heidi Hartikainen, Marianne Kinnula). The researchers' backgrounds ranged from information systems, media, design, education, linguistics and literature.

9.1.3 Objectives

The Critical Change Lab was incorporated into a sociology course and thus, it was designed keeping in mind the sociology curriculum needs. The course topics included social theories, society and technology, social control, crimes and punishment, society and social classes, work and labour market, the subcultures of society, immigration, integration and racism.

During the planning and co-design sessions, the course teacher expressed the need to support students' understanding of social structures, promote critical thinking about societal issues and create awareness of diversity and inequality through the lab activities and discussions. Based on this, the Critical Change Lab sessions aimed to trigger participants' critical reflection on issues happening in their surroundings and encourage them to take an active part in finding ideas that they could implement to achieve the future(s) that they wanted. The laboratory provided a chance to explore overarching concepts like democracy from the everyday perspective where participants could focus on issues of their choice. By taking part at the Critical Change Lab, participants could:

- Critically explore a societal issue they care about and envision alternatives
- Express themselves through arts and making activities
- Make a change in their environment

9.1.4 Thematic focus

Keeping in mind the objectives of the sociology course, the starting point of the laboratory was "Democracy in the everyday" with a focus on students' everyday social life and the issues they experienced. During the laboratory's initial sessions, this broad theme was discussed with students, who narrowed it down and decided what issues to further explore based on their interests.

9.1.5 Process

The Critical Change Lab consisted of five main sessions. A separate session for pitching the lab, and an additional activity for reflection after the laboratory's last session were also arranged. The duration of the sessions varied from 60 to 120 minutes. All the sessions were face-to-face and were organised at the University of Oulu premises and the Oulu FabLab except for the pitching session that took place at the school.

Phase 0: OnBoard

The main objective of the Onboard phase was to set the stage for the following sessions. Thus, the focus was on providing relevant information about the project and the stakeholders involved during the process (University of Oulu researchers and Fab Lab Oulu), answering any questions the students might have regarding the laboratory, and creating a safe space for the participants to voice their opinions and influence the laboratory's work dynamics.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

In this phase, the focus lied on the *Understanding* dimension of Critical Literacies Framework as the participants are prompted to think about what they understand about the society, how they look at the things happening around them and to what extent they understand the idea of everyday democracy.

Description of the session

The onboarding phase was distributed between two sessions: i) a pitch session introducing the Critical ChangeLab project, the Critical Change Lab format as well as the research, and ii) an introductory session where participants started to investigate the laboratory's general theme, which focused on *Democracy in the everyday*.

During the pitch session, the students were invited to join the Critical Change Lab and take part in the research. Ethical aspects dealing with their rights as research participants and the handling of personal data were presented, together with research ethics documentation (data privacy notice and comic, and the consent forms to sign by participants). Given that research participants were 15 years and older, the decision to participate in the research relied on them and thus, only their signature was sought in the consent forms. This adhered to the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) guidelines. Permission to conduct research was also obtained from the school before conducting any research activity involving collecting personal data.

When presenting the Critical ChangeLab, students were asked to think about the topics that were important to them and that they were concerned about. A Padlet was used to collect the students' responses in an anonymous way. The prompt questions for this activity were *"What kind of things worry you when you think about your own future and that of other young people?"* and *"What kind of things are you hopeful or optimistic about?"* The responses pointed at issues connected to democracy in everyday life such as climate change, polarization of society, marginalization of youth, bullying and political decision making.

The Critical Change Lab introductory session started with a mood mapping activity where all participants (including the researchers and teacher) were asked to close their eyes and think about how they felt before starting the Critical Change Lab. Participants were encouraged to use all their senses and also talk about their emotions. They were asked to write down any sensations, associations, ideas or emotions that they are starting with, and choose the most important ones. These emotions were then shared and discussed in the group, which became the starting point for the next activity, that is, co-creating a code of conduct for the duration of the project – A set of rules that promote any positive emotions and reduce the negative ones discussed during the mood mapping. Here the aim was to move towards cultivating and activating positive emotions by creating rules to make the space comfortable for everyone. As a result of this activity, the facilitators and participants agreed about aspects such as the language to use during the sessions, how to give

feedback, as well as practical aspects such as the start time and the possibility to have refreshments during the sessions (see Fig. 5).
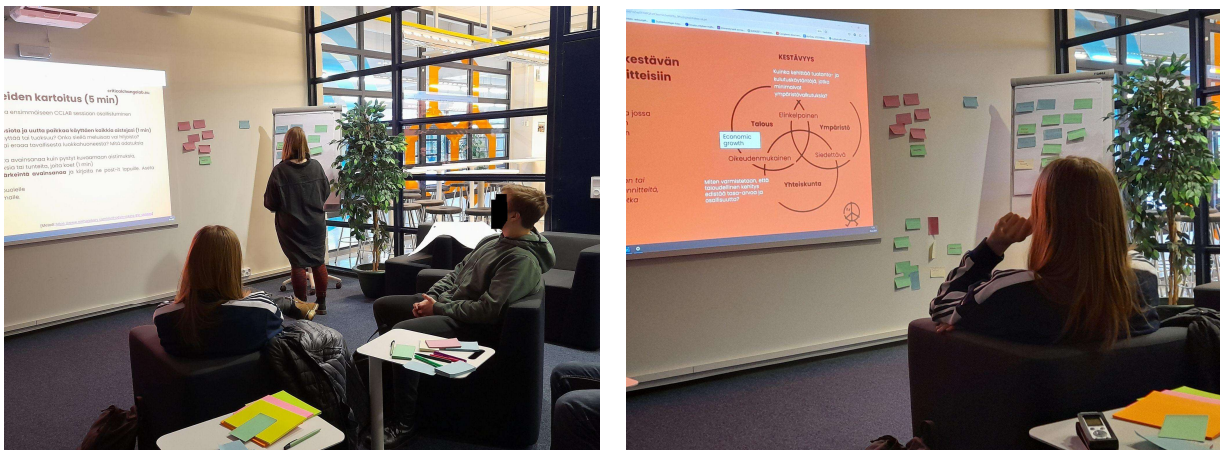

Figure 5. Images of the mood mapping activity leading to the creation of the code of conduct during Critical Change Lab onboarding.

At the end of the session, the facilitators provided instructions for giving regular feedback about the Critical Change Lab activities. Participants were encouraged to share their views regarding each session from three perspectives: i) the aspects that worked well and thus, they would like to keep, ii) the aspects they would modify and iii) the aspects that need to be modified. This feedback was anonymous, and participants wrote it in post-it notes that they deposit in small boxes placed in the space. This reflection activity was used to gain insights that would support the planning of the coming sessions.

Phase 1: Question

The main objective of the Question phase was to foster critical questioning and trigger discussion among the participants regarding issues in democracy in their everyday lives.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

In this phase, the focus lies on the *Identifying* dimension of the critical literacies framework and the participants are encouraged to think about conflicts and contradictions they see in democratic systems in their everyday lives.

Description of the session

At the start of the session, the participants were asked to brainstorm about democracy-related issues or tensions they would like to explore through the lab. The participants gave their ideas by writing on sticky notes and posting them on a big sheet of paper. They were asked to vote and select the final topics they would like to work on. Out of all the given topics, the participants selected *marginalization of youth* and *polarization of society* and divided themselves into two groups based on their interests.

Mind mapping was used as a method to identify the tensions that the participants see in their everyday lives related to their selected topic and thinking about the topics under discussion from different perspectives. It helped to open different dimensions of the issue that are visible in everyday life and to find examples based on participants' everyday experiences. For instance, they were prompted to think of examples from school, family, extracurricular activities, or the whole society, and think about the tensions around a particular issue from different angles.

Participants were in charge of self-organising and managing the initial inquiry around the topic of their choice. Within the groups, the students themselves agreed on the distribution of tasks, with one person taking the responsibility of documenting the ideas for their mind maps. The facilitators' role consisted in providing prompts and questions for the discussion to flow. The participants were also free to choose among digital or physical tools to make their mind maps. One of the pairs chose a digital version while the other opted for drafting their mind map using pen and paper (see Fig. 6).
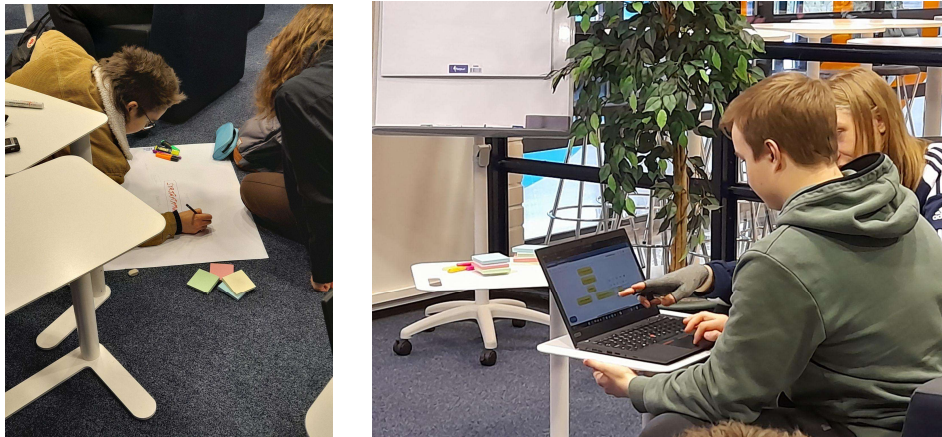
Figure 6. Participants working on their mind maps during the session

Phase 2: Analyse

The main objectives of this session included analysing the democratic relations of the current situation and their historic evolution, as well as gaining understanding of the issue at hand from multiple perspectives.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase focuses on the *Deconstructing* dimension of the critical literacies framework and the activities are designed to encourage the participants to *embrace multiple perspectives* by engaging with diverse voices and moving away from dualistic thinking. Moreover, they are prompted to critically examine power relations by looking for and identifying underlying biases, hierarchies and networks of privilege and discrimination.

Description of the session

At the beginning of the session, the facilitators recapped prior work and outlined the next activities. The students then continued working on their mind maps about the chosen topic. The mind maps were then presented and discussed with the whole group (see Fig. 7). In the mind maps, special attention was devoted to *embrace multiple perspectives* by considering multiple points of view and moving away from dualistic thinking.

After the mind mapping activity, the facilitators introduced actor mapping as a technique to visualise relations in systems, and provided examples on how the participants could

identify different actors. They were encouraged to expand their mind maps to include present, absent, or emerging actors, mapping their roles and relations.
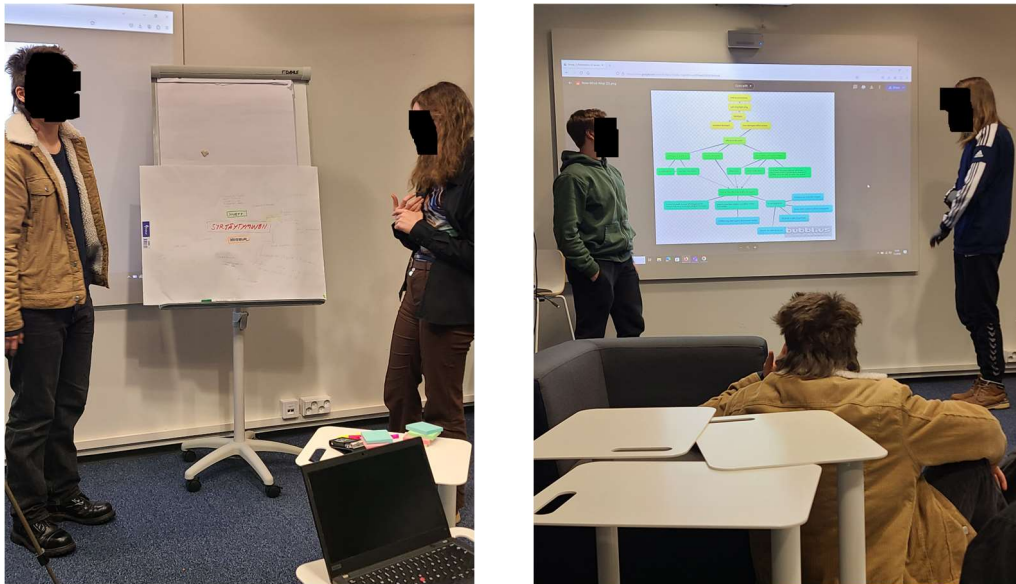

Figure 7. Participants presenting their mind maps to the whole group.

<u>Phase 3: Envision and examine</u>

The objectives of this phase involved thinking and co-creating ideas and ways to eliminate the tensions by finding possible solutions and critically examining those solutions.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase focuses on *Deconstructing* and *activating change* dimensions of the Critical Literacies Framework. In the *Deconstructing* dimension, the focus is on challenging assumptions and accepted norms and analysing their impact. The focus is on understanding the world as a complex system, in which entities have intrinsic value, questioning ideas of past-present-future and the associated discourses and opening questions about what participants want and why. In *Activating change* dimension, the focus is on imagining alternative futures and identifying potential pathways to change through critical practices and speculative design.

Description of the session

Keeping in mind the feedback received during the last sessions, this session started with coffee and snacks to make the participants comfortable. A short lecture on key aspects and types of democracy was included to respond to the needs expressed by the teacher based on the course objectives. This was followed by an energizer activity related to the concept of democracy. This energizer consisted in a game in which participants had to go through a set of apparently contradictory terms naming various types of democratic systems (such as liberal democracy or totalitarian democracy, among others) and identify which one did not exist. This was followed by a conversation during which the participants got a chance to dig deeper into the concepts, terms and ideas related to the broad concept of democracy and understand what they mean by discussion. After this, the key aspects of democracy were elaborated along with emerging changes in democratic systems.

After the analysis of various forms of democracy, participants were invited to envision alternative futures. For this, participants were introduced to a futures technique named the Futures Triangle. The Futures Triangle, created by futurist Sohail Inayatullah, is particularly effective for pinpointing the elements that shape the future of a specific issue. This analytical framework identifies three types of factors influencing the future of the chosen topic: the push of the present, the weight of the past, and the pull of the future. The push of the present and the weight of the past rely on existing information, while the pull of the future is visionary, encompassing various images and scenarios of what the future might hold. In this session, The Futures Triangle activity was adapted to prompt participants to think about periods and temporalities (past and present) in the context of the issue under discussion, and then focus on imagining plausible alternative and futures.

As part of the exploration of the present (push of the present), participants created a mirror of experiences, which consisted of a board where they collected various materials such as news, reports, and personal observations to document various signals evidencing a societal issue (see Fig. 8). When focusing on the present, participants paid attention to trends. For instance, in the case of the group focusing on *polarization of society* participants highlighted ongoing phenomena among youth such as the increase of right leaning positions and, racism, as well as broader trends such as the rise of neo nazis, ultraconservative movements and the popularity of leaders such as Trump or Putin. Looking

at ongoing trends forced participants to generate questions to understand what has led into a particular situation. In the case of the group focusing on *marginalization of youth participants in*quired on how social status had affected the risk of exclusion.
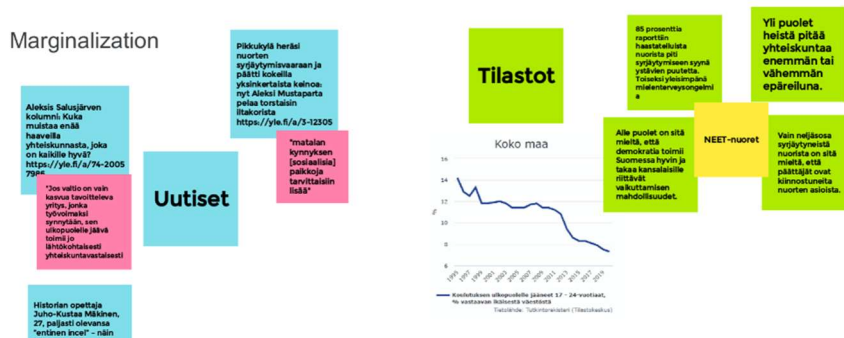

Figure 8. Mirror of experiences board created by one the groups on *marginalization of youth* collecting evidence from news (uutiset) and statistics (tilastot).

Once participants had elaborated on the past-present of a phenomenon, they moved into the futures. They started envisioning plausible futures, which refers to those futures that could happen within the limits of what is uncertain. Here, participants pointed at the power of education to safeguard freedoms and support non-violent culture in online communications, wondering on what possibilities of agency individuals might have for tackling these issues in their everyday contexts, such as workplace or school.

Futures ideation continued during the first part of the following session. The groups continued building on the Futures Triangle to generate alternative visions that responded to their preferred futures. For this activity, the following questions were used as prompts:

- What futures do we want? What is our image of the future?
- What should we change now to get the desired futures?

The documentation of the alternative futures was done through the Alternatives board (see Fig. 9).

Figure 9. The participants envision various desirable futures and document them on the Alternatives board.

Phase 4: Act

The main objective of this session was to take practical actions that would support the transformation towards the futures envisioned during the last session and activate the desired change. The emphasis was on small scale changes which might have a meaningful impact on young people's lives.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase focused on the *Activating change* dimension of the Critical Literacies Framework by working towards desirable/preferable futures through experimentation using diverse transformative tools e.g. creative interventions or political activism.

Description of the session

Building on participants' visions of their desirable futures, they started to think about how change might happen. The ideas about how to bring change were documented on the Ideas board (see Fig. 10). The boards functioned as brainstorming, allowing participants to document their ideas and decide which ones they might take further.

Figure 10. Screenshots of the Ideas boards produced by participants.

Based on the ideas generated, participants were asked to create a message or hashtag advocating for the futures they wanted. This message was used in the making activity, in which participants heat pressed their messages onto canvas bags with a related image they chose. The digital fabrication processes used were 2D design with Inkscape, vinyl cutting, and heat press. Figure 11 shows different phases of the designing, digital fabrication and making.
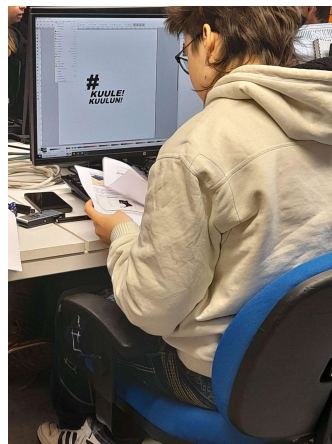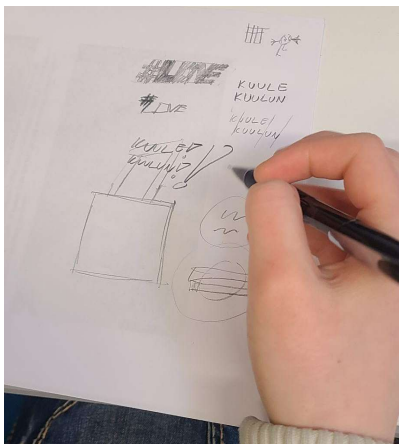

Figure 11. Different phases of designing and digitally fabricating the messages the participants wanted to convey.

The maker activity took place at the Oulu Fab Lab and the session was longer than the prior ones to ensure participants had time to design and produce the artifacts. During this session, the Fab Lab instructors joined as facilitators aiding participants to materialize their

designs. Participants were very engaged throughout the session and felt proud of their creations.

Phase 5: Reflect

The main objective of this session was to Reflect on and co-evaluate the Critical Change Lab process and outcomes with participants.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase focuses on reflecting on the whole process of becoming during the lab by exploring how the participants see their journey from onboard to the act phase.

Description of the session

Focus group was used as a tool to discuss young people's reflections about the Critical Change Lab sessions. During the session, a visual-textual summary of all the sessions was used which focused on places, methods and activities. The participants were asked to indicate how they experienced each session by mapping their learning journey. This helped in scaffolding the discussion regarding what they liked or did not like and what was the most or least favorite part of the whole process. Students used sticky notes on the most liked activities and discussed the reasons for their choice (see Fig. 11).
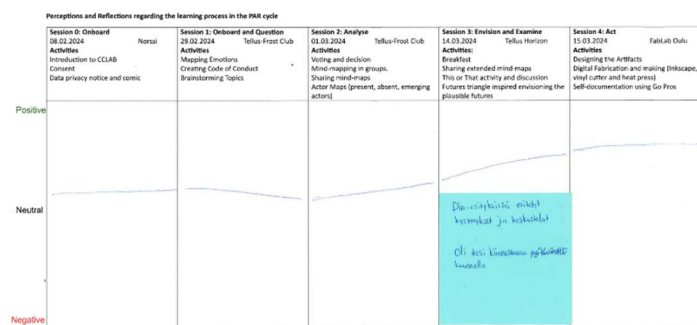

Figure 11. Participants reflecting on their experiences during the Critical Change Lab process. Image of one of the learning journey maps produced by one of the participants.

The participants were engaged in discussions and voiced their views related to each of the Critical Change Lab sessions. The atmosphere was relaxed (following students' requests

made during the onboard session, refreshments were provided throughout the sessions), and participants were comfortable to comment on content, but also aspects regarding practicalities and session dynamics. The visual journey maps were also filled by the researchers, and this allowed for having a joint reflection over a shared experience, rather than researchers inquiring about participants' experiences. Criticisms were encouraged, asking participants to keep a constructive tone in line with what was agreed in the code of conduct. From a facilitation perspective, special attention was devoted to ensuring everyone had the opportunity to speak and express themselves in the language of their preference (English or Finnish).

Some of the aspects discussed during the session related to participants' expectations regarding the Critical Change Lab. According to participants, what happened in the lab was better than what they expected. They enjoyed the discussions and working independently on their own projects. As suggestions for improvement, participants expressed their wish for more concrete guidelines, although they appreciated having independence and freedom to undertake their projects. Participants also valued the presentations on democracy and the activities used for discussion since these provided them a chance to explore the topics further and develop new ways of looking at issues. Having the sessions in the university space worked well on two levels: to break out school approach and to create a space where participants could develop more horizontal relations with adults and other ways of doing things than those associated with school practices.

When asked about how taking part in the lab had impacted them, participants pointed out that it was hard to assess change within such a short time. They acknowledged that even if the change might not feel big, they might have gained enough confidence to use the insights gained through the Critical Change Lab in their everyday conversations with their peers.

On a general level, it is worth to note that the idea that "politics" is what politicians do, which is far from teens and regular citizens' experiences is quite stablished and requires lots of discussion during the lab sessions. Based on the discussions, it seems the polarization of viewpoints is also present in youth's conversations. Throughout the laboratory sessions, a recurring theme was the lack of spaces where youth (and society in general) could

constructively deal with these differences. Thus, for the lab participants, having the opportunity to share their messages through daily objects was appealing. This connects to the feedback provided through the journey maps, where participants highlighted that making their messages tangible through the FabLab activity was the most engaging part of the Critical Change Lab.

9.2 Lab #4: Adultcentrism in youth's everyday life

9.2.1 Context

CCLAB partner facilitating the critical change laboratory: UB

Geographic Location: Barcelona, Spain

9.2.2 Stakeholders

Learning Environments involved:

- A Primary and secondary public school.

Educators involved:

- Two researchers from the UB team, a predoctoral researcher, a master's internship student and a pedagogical coordinator from the school.
- The school management team helped to recruit the group for the Critical Change Lab through an online meeting and email exchange.

Young people participating in the Critical Change Lab:

Six students (four female; two male) aged 14 years old. The group was taking part in a Service-Learning program to train as a future mediation team in the school. All of the participants had migrant backgrounds.

CCLAB team members involved:

Laura Malinverni and Marina Riera Retamero (both as researchers and facilitators).

9.2.3 Objectives

The key objectives of the Critical Change Lab are:

- To foster young people's agency by allowing them to take ownership of their learning experience and social interventions, particularly by having them choose the topic of focus and the co-design project.
- To enhance students' participation and engagement in everyday democracy in the school through participatory methods.
- To shift the traditional adult-centric educational model to a more youth-centered approach.

By taking part in the Critical Change Lab, it was expected that participants:

- Gain a sense of responsibility and appreciation by having control over the process and outcomes of their projects.
- Become engaged in critical thinking, gain insights into social issues (e.g., adultcentrism), and learn how to collaborate effectively in groups.
- Experience the value of personal agency and collective action through structured but flexible participation in the laboratory.

9.2.4 Thematic focus

The thematic focus of the Critical Change Lab was *Adultcentrism in youths' everyday life* and was chosen by the participants. The laboratory's process allowed researchers to explore how young people can actively contribute to the design and realization of a specific social intervention to produce changes in their everyday lives.

9.2.5 Process

The lab consisted of six sessions. The first and second sessions focused on building rapport, sharing personal experiences, and discussing eco-social problematics. In this phase of the Critical Change Lab, participants decided to focus on adultcentrism. Subsequently, from the third to the sixth session, the facilitators accompanied participants in the process of ideating alternatives to the identified issues and transforming their ideas into actions.

Each session lasts for 1.5 hours and took place after-lunch period. This timing created challenges related to participants' attention and fatigue. All the sessions were organized face-to-face.

Phase 1: OnBoard

The session aimed at introducing participants to the project and fostering an initial sense of community by encouraging self-expression and mutual understanding.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This session aimed at encouraging participants to critically engage with their own identities and those of their peers through object-based storytelling. This activity allowed students to reflect on personal and shared experiences, fostering critical thinking and dialogue. It built foundational skills for understanding different perspectives and cultivating empathy, aligning with the broader goals of critical literacy.

Description of the session

The session was conducted in the reception classroom of the secondary school. This classroom serves migrant students who arrive throughout the school year, helping them transition from their linguistic, educational, and cultural backgrounds to the new school environment. The session began with an introduction to the project, followed by students reading and signing the informed consent document.

The activity opened with a general introduction of the participants, during which they briefly shared their names, ages, and, in some cases, countries of origin. The facilitator then moved to a personal presentation exercise, where students were asked to select an object from their backpacks that held significance and represented them, as they had not been reminded to bring objects from home. The purpose of this exercise was to encourage self-expression through meaningful items.

One of the participants started by presenting a perfume, explaining their personal attachment to it and highlighting the importance of the brand. This participant, although sometimes dominant in the group, played a key role in encouraging others to participate. Another participant chose a mobile phone, briefly explaining its importance in maintaining

communication with friends, without elaborating further. Another student presented a silver necklace with an infinity symbol. They shared that the necklace reminded them of a meaningful metaphor shared by a family member, symbolizing an eternal bond. The group expressed interest, and the participant explained more about this personal connection. Another participant, who also chose a perfume, shared how the scent reminded them of a family member who had passed away, leading to an emotional moment during the session. One of the participants introduced an object symbolizing their personality, describing how it reflected both their calm and potentially aggressive nature. Another participant initially hesitated to participate, but with the help of the facilitator and peers, they eventually shared that they could be compared to an animal that is cautious with strangers but affectionate with those they trust. Some of the objects used by the participants to introduce themselves can be seen in Figure 12.

Towards the end of the session, the facilitator invited the group to reflect on the connections between the objects and their personal experiences. Although attention began to wane, the participants shared that the activity had allowed them to learn unexpected things about each other. Some noted how surprising it was that individuals who were usually reserved opened up through the objects they chose. Several participants described the experience as emotionally impactful and enlightening.

The pedagogical coordinator, who played a supportive role throughout the session, noted that using objects made it easier to connect with others beyond verbal communication. Before closing, each participant was invited to reflect on their involvement and share how they felt about the session. The session concluded with the introduction of the next week's activity, which would involve bringing reflections and images related to topics of personal interest.
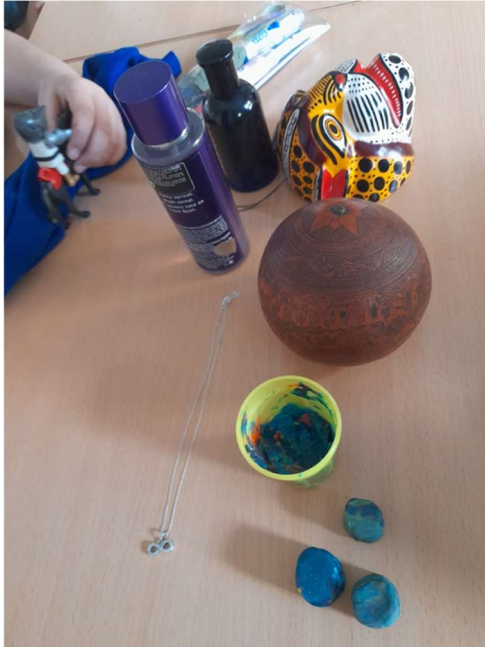
Figure 12. One of the participants introducing themself with regular objects.

Phase 2: Question and analyse

The objective of this phase was to explore participants' concerns regarding everyday democracy through a collaborative process, as well as to explore how young people experience adultcentrism (the topic they chose to focus on) in their everyday environments. The ultimate goal was to use these insights to critically analyze and conceptualize adultcentrism while fostering personal reflection.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase aligns with the Critical Literacies Framework by encouraging students to critically reflect on social issues of their choice and articulate their concerns in relation to power dynamics. Moreover, by sharing personal stories and mapping them geographically, participants were able to critically question the roles and actions of adults, revealing how power is distributed in society and the implications of that for youth.

Description of the sessions

Two sessions were conducted in this phase.

Session 1:

The session began with reflections on the questions posed: *What are you fed up with? What are you interested in?* Participants were asked to individually write or draw their reflections on post-it notes. They then shared their notes and placed them on a large kraft paper (see Fig. 13). The ideas they expressed included topics such as racism, islamophobia, injustice, animal care, adultcentrism, pollution, and the family educational system. Each participant briefly described their idea and explained its relevance. As others found particular topics interesting, they indicated their support by drawing arrows on the kraft paper. This process allowed connections and thematic groupings to form, such as linking islamophobia with racism. These ideas, along with additional contributions that arose during the discussion, served as triggers for collective reflection and helped the group work toward defining a shared problem to focus on.

By the end of the session, the group decided to focus on the theme of adultcentrism. The decision was made using both an assembly model and a voting process. Participants shared that they felt society treated young people unfairly, with adults often showing a lack of respect or willingness to listen to them. After the session, the pedagogical coordinator highlighted the potential sensitivity of this topic, as it could be related to conflicts with some teachers at the school.

Session 2:

The facilitators presented a map with various everyday spaces where young people often spend time, such as home, school, the street, the park, health centers, public transport, and leisure places. These places were named in a general way rather than being specific locations. Participants shared their personal experiences of adultcentrism, which were then placed on the map.

The experiences participants shared revolved around a lack of reciprocity, where adults demand respect but do not offer it in return; adults making decisions on behalf of young people; adults feeling entitled to have opinions on the lives of young people; adults believing they are always right and unwilling to be corrected by younger people; a lack of confidence from adults in the abilities of young people; teenagers being in a transitional space: too old for some things, yet too young for others; and feeling ignored by adults. These experiences

were placed on the map according to the locations where they occurred, with home and school emerging as the most common sites of perceived adultcentrism. The body was also suggested as a symbolic space where adultcentrism manifests, with participants sharing experiences of unwanted physical contact and unsolicited opinions on their appearance.

Once all participants had shared their stories, the group reflected on common themes. They were prompted to discuss questions such as *What do all the experiences have in common?* and *What does it mean to disrespect youth?* Participants noted that the common thread was that adults were often the instigators of the situations. Other reflections included how today's young people would eventually become tomorrow's adults, how young people sometimes reproduce adult-centric behaviors themselves, and the ambiguous position teenagers occupy between childhood and adulthood.

The session concluded with a discussion on how participants felt about these issues and whether they believed change was possible. However, engagement levels began to drop toward the end, with participants appearing tired. To close, participants were invited to reflect on their feelings and deposit personal wishes into a "wish bottle."

Figure 13. The kraft paper used during phase 2 to place and discuss ideas and define the PAR cycle topic.

Phase 3: Envision and act

The main objective of this phase was to speculate about a non-adultcentric society; to move from conceptual reflection on adultcentrism and its impact to a practical solution that benefits the participants devised by them; to involve students in collaborative problem-solving to define the space's characteristics, rules, and purpose; and, finally, begin to identify steps and concrete actions necessary for the implementation of this space.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase aligns with the Critical Literacies Framework by pushing participants to imagine transformative social changes and taking a participatory approach that encourages students to move beyond passive reflection into active decision-making and creation. Through this, students not only critiqued existing power structures (such as the adult-dominated classroom environment) but also envisioned tangible alternatives that address their needs for mental health, respect, and autonomy.

The phase also cultivated mutual understanding and coexistence, as participants discussed the code of conduct for the space, focusing on respect for materials and others, which echoes key elements of critical literacy, such as negotiation, participation, and shared responsibility.

Description of the sessions

Two sessions were conducted in this phase

Session 1:

A map created by the researchers was presented to the participants, summarizing the journey made throughout the previous sessions. The map, displayed on a digital board, highlighted key «desires» and «complaints» that emerged during the discussions about adultcentrism. The complaints included: lack of reciprocity —adults ask for respect but do not show it; adults making decisions on behalf of young people; adults feeling entitled to interfere in young people's lives; adults believing they know best and refusing correction from younger individuals; a lack of trust in young people's abilities; adolescents feeling caught in between —too old for some things, too young for others; and youths feel ignored

by adults. On the other hand, desires included: for adults to understand and respect young people equally; that adults develop more hope and understanding in their lives; and for adults to treat young people equally.

During this retrospective, participants listened attentively but did not actively contribute. In previous sessions, researchers had sensed participants might be tired or hungry, so snacks were provided during this session, contributing to a more relaxed coworking atmosphere. The participants had more autonomy to make their own decisions —like when to eat or take breaks— breaking away from usual school rules. Using mindfulness techniques, participants were guided through a visualization exercise where they imagined a society free from adultcentrism. This allowed them to relax and concentrate. However, after the visualization, the energy in the room became noticeably lower.

Next, participants were paired up, and each pair was randomly assigned a place (home, street, or school) from their daily lives to imagine how that place would function in a society without adultcentrism. Although materials like puppets and cardboard were provided to help construct their ideas, most pairs worked in two dimensions, using mostly text and occasionally drawings (see Fig. 14). Two pairs of students developed broad, utopian ideas (e.g., parents should listen more to their children; young people shouldn't face disrespect in the streets). However, these pairs struggled to come up with specific alternatives to the problems they identified. The other pair, tasked with imagining a non-adultcentric school, came up with a concrete proposal for a «calm room». This space would be reserved for students to use when feeling stressed or overwhelmed, allowing them to disconnect for a few minutes before re-engaging with the school routine. The idea involved minimal adult oversight, ensuring the space was mainly student-controlled.

At the end of the session, the various scenarios were shared, and participants reflected on how these ideas might become true. They discussed concepts such as mutual respect, the importance of listening to others, coexistence, empathy across generations, the need for safe spaces, and mutual understanding.

Session 2:

The session began by addressing the tension between staying in reflection or moving toward action. Facilitators presented these two options to the group, and they chose to take action by continuing to explore the idea of creating a dedicated space for relaxation. This space was described as a place where they could calm down and disconnect when feeling overwhelmed in class. Participants brainstormed its characteristics: a quiet atmosphere, relaxing music, comfortable seating, books, cushions, and anti-stress items like magic sand. They also began discussing who might monitor the space and the rules of coexistence necessary to make it work.

Small groups formed to work on specific design ideas for the space. Two groups of three people were created, while one participant worked independently. Each group came up with different ideas: one group proposed a Moroccan-style sofa (see Fig. 15), emphasizing that it should feel different from a classroom chair to create a more relaxed atmosphere. Another group suggested various objects, including a punching bag and materials for drawing and reading. They also focused on the rules for the space, ensuring respect for materials and others. Finally, the individual participant proposed having bubble wrap as a stress-relief option.

The session ended with everyone sitting in a circle, sharing and reflecting on their proposed ideas. Participants discussed how the space could serve various purposes: resting, relaxing, releasing frustration, doing something with their hands, and venting emotions. It was agreed that the next session would focus more on defining the rules for the space and the steps needed to make it a reality.

Figure 14. Creating speculative scenarios of a society where adultcentrism doesn't exist.

Figure 15. Model of a Moroccan-style sofa for the calm room.

Phase 4: Reflect

The key objectives of this phase were:

- Writing the rules for the quiet-room and create a mini-portfolio for presentation to the school management
- Encouraging participants to collaborate, allowing them to make their own choices about which group to join and to lead the process of organizing their ideas
- Finalizing the proposal in preparation for the next steps in making the project a reality, fostering a sense of ownership and agency over the project.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This session is rooted in the Critical Literacies Framework by empowering participants to engage in a collaborative decision-making process, where they transition from conceptual reflection on their needs to active participation in creating change. The process of drafting the rules and writing a mini portfolio for school management involved critical thinking, problem-solving, and negotiation, which are key components of the framework. Furthermore, the balanced participation and leadership within the groups fostered shared responsibility and collective learning, as participants navigated how to structure their ideas and communicate them effectively.

Description of the session

In previous sessions, participants had already agreed on producing a concrete outcome. The idea of designing a "restroom" or quiet room for the school, along with its main characteristics, was well understood by everyone. This shared understanding made it easy to stay focused and begin the work.

Participants were split into two groups. The task was explained: one group would design and write the rules for the quiet room, while the other group would create a mini portfolio of the proposal to send to the school management, outlining the necessary steps to make the project a reality. Participants chose their groups based on their preferences, and the distribution was balanced enough that facilitators didn't need to intervene.

Each group worked on their tasks, combining handwritten notes and digital tools. In one group, one participant took a leading role, suggesting most of the ideas that were included in the mini portfolio. The other two group members mostly agreed with their classmate's ideas, but by the end of the session, the lead participant seemed a bit tired of taking on the main responsibility. The mini portfolio contained the following ideas:

Project Description:
We propose a room where students can rest or unwind if they feel unwell. It could also be used for mediation sessions, for which we would need to organize a mediation calendar.

What would be in the room?
A sofa, a notebook to write things down, notepads, paper, and pencils for drawing.
A teacher or staff member would supervise the room.

What would students do in the room?
Stretch, sit down, relax. They could also talk about any problems they might have (optional) or just rest.

Motivation:
If a student is in a bad mood, instead of being sent to the coexistence room for disciplinary reasons, they could come to the "Fem Pausa" room to talk, vent, or relax before the situation escalates. Unlike the coexistence room, which feels more like a punishment, this room would focus on preventing conflicts and promoting mental health.

Objectives:
To be calm; to release frustration in order to return to class in a better state; to mediate problems or conflicts that arise at school.

Who is it for?
Secondary school students.

Team:
We are a group of future mediators from the third year of Compulsory Secondary Education.

In the other group, participation was more balanced, and ideas flowed smoothly. In addition to drafting the rules, this group proposed the name «Fem Pausa» (which means "let's pause" or "let's have a break"). The rules they created for the room were as follows:

1. No mobile phones. The teacher in charge will either collect the phones or they will be placed in a designated area before entering the room.
2. Maximum of two people per cycle (year level) allowed in the room at one time.
3. Maximum time allowed is 15 minutes, except in special cases.
4. Respect the room's materials. Any damage will be reported.
5. Students may use the room up to two times per month, with exceptions made if necessary.
6. An adult will supervise, but they must respect the privacy of those in the room.
7. Students must record their attendance each time they use the room.
8. The mediation group will be responsible for the well-being and management of the room.

After both groups completed their tasks, their ideas were shared and discussed with all the participants, using posters to share their work (see Fig. 16). At the end of the session, researchers suggested continuing collaboration with the participants to help bring the project to completion.
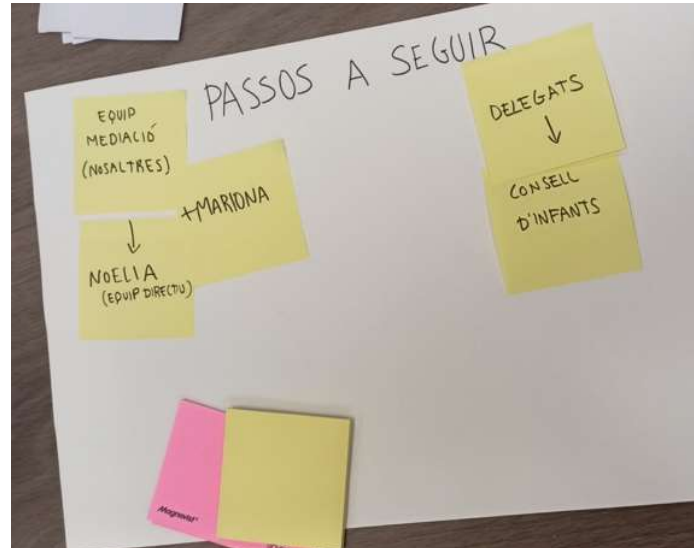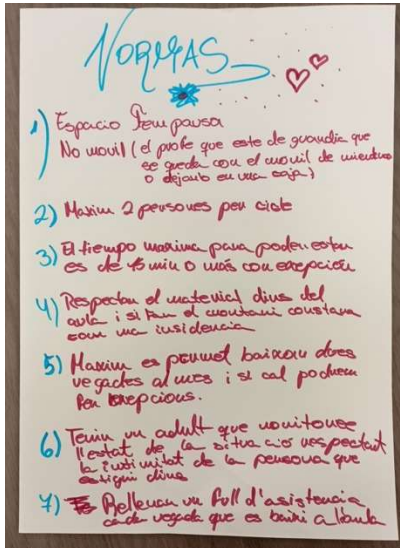
Figure 16. Rules for the calm room and planification for its implementation in the school.

9.3 Lab #5: Identity & community

9.3.1 Context

CCLAB partner facilitating the critical change laboratory: TCD

Geographic Location: Kildare, Ireland

9.3.2 Stakeholders

Learning Environments involved:

InSync Youth & Family Services – an organisation that aims to put young people at the centre and work with their families and community to develop creative interventions which lead to better outcomes.

Educators involved:

- Two Sync Youth Area Coordinators participated in the sessions. The coordinators helped to shape focus of the CCLAB through email exchanged and informal conversations.
- One academy of the Near Future Smart Cities Coordinator joined the TCD team in facilitating the sessions and designing the activities.

Young people participating in the critical change laboratory:

There were a total of ten participants (two male, eight female with ages ranging from 16-22), all members of InSync's Junior Board, who agreed to take part in the Critical ChangeLab. The Junior Board was established in 2018 to ensure that young people's voices are at the very heart of decision making.

CCLAB team members involved:

The Critical ChangeLab team from TCD included an assistant professor, research fellow, and postdoctoral researcher (Mairéad Hurley, Ellie Payne, and Caitlin White). The researcher's backgrounds are in education, media, history, democracy, and science.

9.3.3 Objectives

The program was conducted as a stand-alone initiative in collaboration with the Insync Junior Board, driven by the organisation's commitment to making creative interventions in young people's lives, particularly through the medium of zines. Youth Area Coordinators had raised concerns regarding an increase in anti-immigrant and far-right rhetoric among certain members of the youth group, which underscored the importance of addressing issues related to community and identity.

The program aimed to challenge participants' perceptions of these concepts within their local contexts, encouraging them to reflect on their experiences and produce zines that captured their evolving perspectives on identity, community, and their agency within those spheres. Though it is uncertain if participants initially had specific expectations, they expressed curiosity about the purpose of the Critical ChangeLab and the planned activities. Ultimately, participants reported that the program clarified their thoughts and opinions on these issues, enriched their knowledge, and empowered them to use their zines as tools for initiating conversations with family members.

9.3.4 Thematic focus

Researchers from TCD collaborated with stakeholders from InSync to establish the aims and objectives for the Critical Change Lab programme. Together, they developed themes aligned with the organisation's strategic goals, namely: 'Community & Identity', 'Access & Inclusion', and 'Trust & Doubt'. These themes were then presented to the Junior Board, who were invited to select their preferred topic via a vote conducted through their WhatsApp

group. Following their decision to focus on 'Community & Identity', the Secretary of the Junior Board communicated the selection to the TCD researchers via email.

Subsequently, TCD researchers designed the sessions based on this theme. 'Community & Identity' was chosen in part due to increasing anti-immigrant sentiment observed in Ireland at the time, as well as concerns among youth workers regarding how young people were responding to these trends. This thematic focus reflected the broader goal of addressing such pressing issues in a way that resonated with participants.

9.3.5 Process

The program consisted of three sessions, each lasting two hours, conducted on February 13, 15, and 26. The sessions on February 13 and 15 took place from 12:00 to 14:00, while the session on February 26 was held from 19:00 to 21:00. All sessions were held in-person.

The Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy was specifically adapted for this group and their availability, and the structure was as follows:

- Session 1: Phases OnBoard and Question
- Session 2: Phases Analyse and Envision
- Session 3: Phases Act and Reflect

Upon reflection, it was noted that this structure, while necessary due to time constraints, may not have been ideal for the objectives of the Critical Change Lab. For future Critical Change Labs, it was agreed that an independent "Onboarding" session held two to three weeks in advance would be preferable, as it would allow participants to contribute more meaningfully to the planning process.

Phase 0: OnBoard

The main objective for this session was to introduce participants to the aims of the Critical Change Lab, its structure and process, and to ensure that they were aware of how and where their data would be stored. The InSync Area Coordinators and the TCD researchers encouraged participants to ask questions about the programme.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase focused on the 'Understanding' dimension of the Critical Literacies Framework. Researchers explored participants' understandings of democracy, community, and identity with them, and ensured that the group had a good foundation of knowledge for the themes we intended to explore.

Description of the session

The session employed a series of structured methods and activities designed to foster engagement and facilitate exploration of key themes. It began with a name game, in which participants played a game called "Zap, Zap, Boom" as an icebreaker, introducing themselves in a relaxed and interactive manner.

Following this, a team-building exercise was conducted. The group was divided into two teams, each provided with markers and long pieces of string. Their task was to use the string to guide the marker in forming the letters "CCL," an activity that promoted collaboration and set a cooperative tone for the remainder of the session (see Fig. 17).

The next activity, a walking debate, involved creating a line across the room with tape, along which participants positioned themselves according to their stance on a series of statements (see Fig. 18). These statements ranged from light-hearted topics—"Summer is better than Winter," and "Dogs are better than cats"—to more challenging and complex issues, such as "Citizens should be fined if they don't vote" and "Democratic governments should be 50% men, 50% women." This activity sparked meaningful discussions and allowed participants to reflect on their values and opinions in a physical, interactive format. Due to their enthusiasm for this debate and eagerness to engage in deliberation, the walking debate took longer than anticipated, as participants were keen to voice their perspectives on each topic.

Following the walking debate, TCD researchers facilitated a structured discussion on the Critical ChangeLab project, addressing the project's aims, informed consent, and the concept of everyday democracy. This segment also included reflections on some of the opinions shared during the walking debate, linking participants' perspectives to the broader theme of everyday democracy. During this discussion, some participants expressed a sense

of disenfranchisement, voicing opinions that voting "doesn't really make a difference". This prompted an exploration of recent referenda in Ireland, including the marriage equality (2015) and abortion (2018) referenda, and the impact of voting in local and general elections. However, participant engagement appeared to wane somewhat during this segment, particularly when discussing project-specific details, informed consent, and everyday democracy, which were less interactive compared to the earlier activities.

Ultimately, this discussion provided a foundation for the timeline activity in the "Analyse" portion of the session, framing participants' understanding of the themes addressed. Overall, participants were actively engaged and demonstrated enthusiasm, particularly during activities that encouraged debate and deliberation, affirming the importance of interactive elements in sustaining engagement.
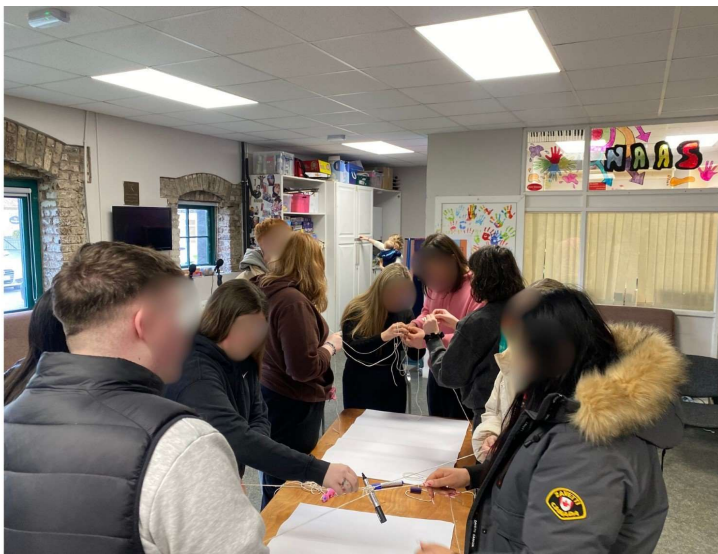

Figure 17. Participants engaging in the team building activity during the 'Onboarding' session.

Figure 18. Participants taking part in the walking debate activity during the 'Onboarding' session.

Phase 1: Question

The main objective of the Question phase was to foster critical questioning and trigger discussion among the participants regarding issues in democracy in their everyday lives.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase of the programme linked to the 'Identifying' dimension in the Critical Literacies Framework and focused on encouraging participants to identify and question examples of group identity in their own communities.

Description of the session

The primary activity for the "Question" phase of this session was Rapid Ideation, a high-energy brainstorming exercise. Participants were asked to quickly generate ideas in response to three prompts:

1. Identifying different groups in society,

2. Highlighting a range of issues faced by people within society, and

3. Exploring creative interventions (a set of options was pre-populated on a board to save time, but participants could contribute their own).

During the activity, participants worked in small groups, each selecting one societal group, one issue affecting that group, and one creative intervention. They then collaborated to imagine how they might engage with that group, address the identified issue, and use the chosen intervention to design a solution. The quick pace and interactive nature of 'Rapid Ideation' sustained high levels of engagement, as participants responded enthusiastically to the fast-paced and dynamic brainstorming environment (see Fig. 19).

As the session transitioned from the rapid ideation stage to the planning and design of creative interventions, however, some participants' engagement noticeably declined. This shift revealed a preference among certain participants for short bursts of high-energy activity over more extended periods of deep thinking and planning. Despite this variance in engagement, the Rapid Ideation activity proved valuable in exposing participants to diverse perspectives on the many groups within their community and the various challenges these groups face. In doing so, it offered participants a novel understanding of community dynamics and the potential for creative solutions to societal issues.
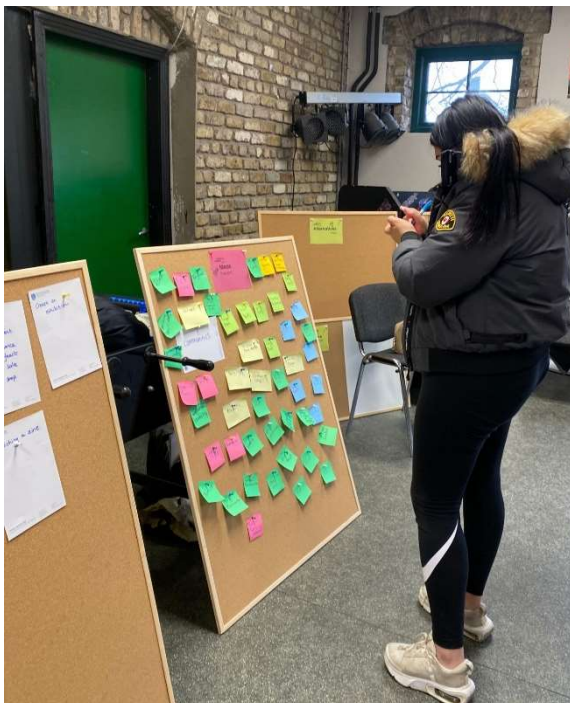

Figure 19. Participants engaging in the 'Rapid Ideation' activity.

Phase 2: Analyse

The main focus of this session was to gain understanding of structural issues and build perspective and systemic view on the issues that were being explored.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase focused on the 'Deconstructing' dimension of the Critical Literacies Framework, specifically the subdimensions 'Embracing Multiple Perspectives' and 'Investigating Power and Agency'. Participants were encouraged to explore the history of a group that faced systemic discrimination in Ireland in the past, the LGBTQ+ community.

Description of the session

This session began with the 'Values Tree' icebreaker activity. In this activity, participants were asked to brainstorm and share their personal values, the values of the organisation, and then collaboratively determine the values of the InSync Junior Board. This exercise served as a foundation for the subsequent collage-making activity, where participants would create zines incorporating these identified values.

The next segment involved a 'Timeline' activity focused on the progression of LGBTQ+ rights in Ireland. This activity featured a pre-populated timeline with general cultural milestones, such as the release of the first Playstation, the creation of the internet, and the launch of TikTok. Participants were divided into groups and tasked with guessing the years in which key LGBTQ+ legislative changes occurred. These included the Offences Against the Person Act (1861), which criminalized homosexuality, Ireland's first Pride parade in 1979, and milestones such as the decriminalization of homosexuality in England (1967), Northern Ireland (1982), and Ireland (1993), as well as the introduction of marriage equality and the Gender Recognition Act in 2015. When the groups reconvened to discuss their guesses, they were often surprised by how recently some changes had occurred, as well as the significant time gaps in decriminalisation across these regions. This prompted a discussion on the impact of these laws and the history of legal discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ communities in Ireland (see Fig. 20).

Following the timeline exercise, participants engaged with case studies from Irish history, specifically examining newspaper reports on the murder of Declan Flynn in 1982 and the significant public support his murderers received, as well as the David Norris v. Ireland case at the European Court of Human Rights in 1988. Working in groups, participants read and discussed these articles before presenting their reflections to the larger group. Major events from these case studies were added to the timeline, providing a broader historical context. This led to a group discussion on the role of grassroots movements in driving social change and the interconnectedness of societal events and legal advancements, and ultimately how these were connected to democratic systems (see Fig. 21).

Finally, participants discussed the concept of discrimination, its defining characteristics, and the groups most vulnerable to discrimination in contemporary society. This conversation allowed them to draw connections between the forms of discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals in recent Irish history and those faced by various groups today. Through this, participants developed a deeper understanding of the enduring impacts of discrimination and the ongoing relevance of social justice issues.

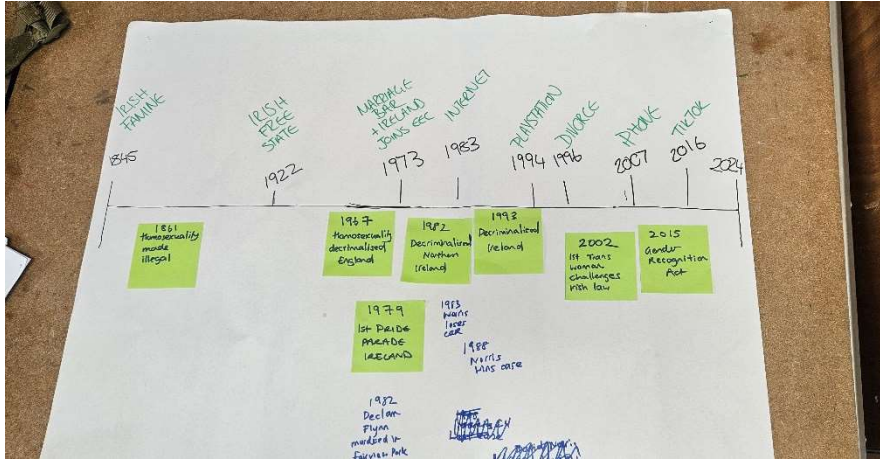Figure 20. Discussion of social identities and 'othering' within society.

Figure 21. Timeline of discrimination of LGBTQ+ groups in Ireland.

Phase 3: Envision and examine

This phase involved thinking of ways to eliminate the tensions the group had identified in previous phases, finding possible solutions, and critically examining them.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phased was focused on the 'Activating Change' dimension of the Critical Literacies Framework, in which alternative futures are imagined and pathways to change are identified.

Description of the session

In this phase of the session, participants engaged in creating mind maps as a collaborative exercise to document their thoughts and opinions. Guided by a series of prompts, such as "I feel included when…", "I don't feel included when…", and "We could be more inclusive if…", the group discussed their feelings about inclusion within their community (see Figs. 22 and 23). These prompts were specifically designed to encourage participants to reflect on the spaces and actions that foster a sense of belonging, as well as to envision an inclusive environment for others.

Due to time constraints during this session, the group spent less time on the final prompt regarding envisioning what a more inclusive space might look like and identifying actionable steps to achieve that vision. This aspect of the activity was recognised as

essential for fostering a deeper engagement with the concept of inclusion and the Critical ChangeLab Model for Democratic Pedagogy. Consequently, it was noted that ensuring adequate time for participants to fully explore the envisioning process would be crucial in future PAR cycles.
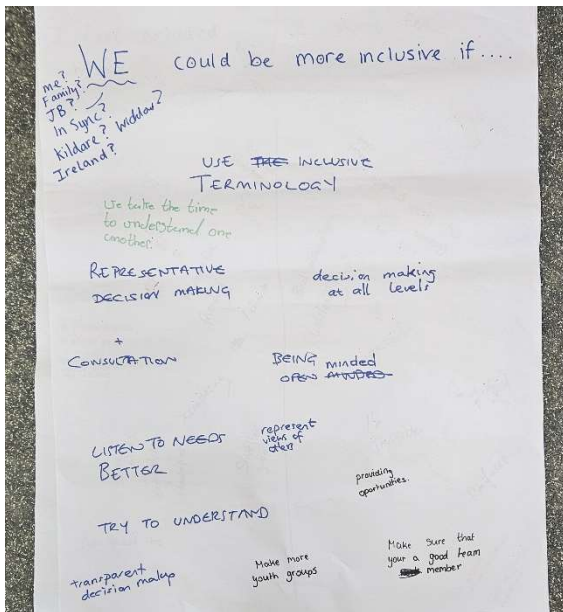

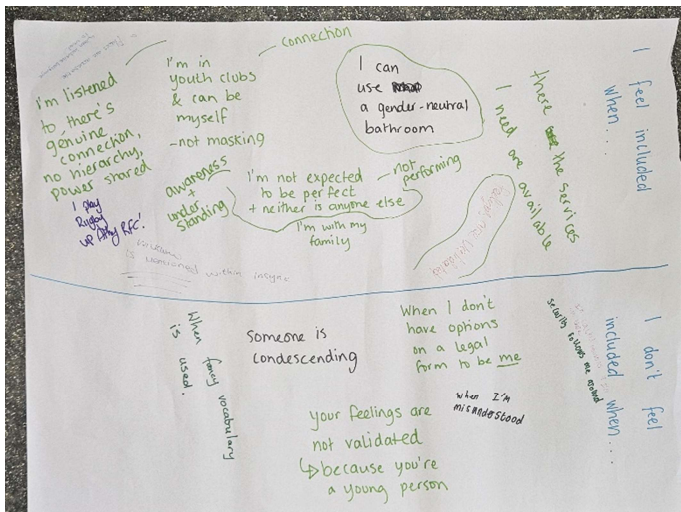Figure 22. Some responses from participants for the prompt "We could be more inclusive if…"

Figure 23. Some responses from participants for the prompts "I feel included when…" and "I don't feel included when…"

Phase 4: Envision and examine

The main focus of this phase was to take action in everyday life towards bringing the desired and meaningful changes envisioned futures from previous phases.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase was focused on the 'Activating Change' dimension of the Critical Literacies Framework in taking action in the participant's everyday lives to create zines that reflected their understandings of identity and inclusion in their community.

Description of the session

In this phase, participants were invited to make zines that reflected the work we had done in the previous phases. This creative intervention encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences and express their opinions visually through collage (see Fig. 24).

Participants were provided with prompts that reflected the discussion we had had in previous phases, such as "I feel included...../ I don't feel included ... ", "InSync can be a space for belonging because...", "I hope for a place to live that...", and "An action we could take is...". During the zine-making, participants also expressed their thoughts on the prompts verbally and a relaxed, informal discussion was had around the theme of 'Community and Identity'.

Participants expressed their ideas visually, through the creation of zines and collage, and verbally through dialogue and conversation. Participants were all engaged in the zine-making activity and responded well to creating a visual art piece.

Figure 24. Participants making zines.

<u>Phase 5: Reflect</u>

This phase of the programme focused on reflecting on and co-evaluating the Critical ChangeLab process and outcomes with participants to have a deeper understanding of what worked, and what did not, and why.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase is linked to the transversal 'Processes of Becoming' dimension of the Critical Literacies Framework, in which participants reflect on their own process of learning and critical questioning.

Description of the session

The main activity during this phase was the 'Inside/Outside Circle' activity, designed to foster deeper reflection and reflexivity in participants. Participants created two circles (one inner and one outer) and faced each other (see Fig. 25). They were then asked a question and instructed to answer it in with their partner they were facing. After 3-4 minutes, they then moved to a new partner and repeated the process, answering each question three

times. The questions were designed to move from acquiring information, to reflecting, and then moving deeper into meta-reflection. The questions were:

1) What is your zine about? (Information)

2) Why did you choose to focus on that aspect? (Reflection)

3) Why does it matter? (Meta-reflection)

While all participants had the opportunity to share their thoughts, some expressed discomfort with the activity, as noted by feedback from one participant, L*, who later communicated her reflections to her youth worker for the TCD team. This feedback highlighted the varying levels of comfort among participants, suggesting that while the activity was beneficial for many, considerations regarding individual engagement and support should be addressed in future sessions.

In order to capture and assess to what extent participants felt that the Critical ChangeLab programme had been successful in achieving the aims we set out from the outset we created simple feedback sheets which outlined what each phase was and what activity or method it was linked to. Participants were asked to use sticky dots to rate different phases based on how well it achieved its aim, how enjoyable the activity was, and whether it furthered their understanding of the topic (see Fig. 26). While only a small number of participants were able to engage, due to others needing to leave as time was up, it was a valuable exercise that we will likely repeat in future PAR Cycles.

Figure 25. Participants reflecting on their zines in the 'Inside/Outside Circle' activity.

Figure 26. An example of one of the feedback sheets provided to participants during the laboratory.

Approximately three weeks after the final Critical Change Lab session with the InSync Junior Board, the laboratory's participants were invited to Trinity College Dublin to get a tour, have a lunch, visit the Irish houses of parliament and participate in a focus group discussion. From that focus group, some more nuanced reflections on the Critical Change Lab process emerged.

During the focus group, participants developed a thoughtful examination of their sense of community and identity, highlighting the complex interplay between individual and collective identities. They articulated the notion that individuals could maintain their distinctiveness while actively participating in group activities, underscoring the dual nature of belonging. A youth worker contributed to this dialogue by addressing the broad scope of the community and its various subgroups, thereby illuminating the unique challenges, issues, and successes encountered by these smaller entities. The participants also acknowledged the importance of diverse backgrounds and perspectives in understanding

community dynamics, with one individual emphasised the value of expanding awareness to include issues previously overlooked due to personal experiences.

The focus group participants expressed satisfaction with the sessions but noted their limited comprehensiveness due to time constraints, advocating for longer or additional sessions to facilitate a deeper exploration of community issues and subgroups. They highlighted the significance of group discussions in fostering understanding of shared and individual experiences. Certain activities, such as the timeline exploration of social issues and case studies were particularly impactful, as they not only provided insights into historical changes but also empowered participants to envision solutions to contemporary problems. Participants recommended extending session durations and incorporating collective projects, like a group zine, to encapsulate diverse perspectives. They stressed the need for meaningful engagement of youth in community discussions and decision-making, advocating for effective communication strategies that resonate with young people. Overall, the discourse underscored the essence of active citizenship, characterized by proactive involvement in community initiatives, sustained efforts toward positive change, and a recognition of the complexities surrounding community engagement.

9.4 Lab #6: Identity & clothes

9.4.1 Context

CCLAB partner facilitating the critical change laboratory: WAAG

Geographic Location: Hilversum, The Netherlands

9.4.2 Stakeholders

Learning Environments involved:

- IMC Weekendschool, which is a non-formal education institute.
- Weekendschool on Tour, Hilverum which is a sister organisation of the IMC Weekendschool that coaches refugee children living in a refugee center with challenges for learning Dutch.
- Taalschool Hilversum, primary school in Hilversum
- Hilfertsheem College Hilversum, high school in Hilversum

Educators involved:

- Waag makereducators: Marielle Lens (maker educator Waag), Sanna Leupen (maker educator Waag), Eva Vesseur (lab lead Waag)
- Coaches Weekendschool: Patricia Ulrici (Weekendschool on Tour), three volunteers (IMC Weekendschool)
- Volunteers primary school: Two volunteers (Taalschool Hilversum)

Young people participating in the critical change laboratory:

A total of 15 young people aged 10-13 participated in the laboratory. The youngsters attended the Hilversum Language School and came from all over the world. They lived in an asylum seekers' centre near Hilversum and represented a total of 11 countries. They all speak a different language as mother tongue other than Dutch and were based in the Netherlands.

CCLAB team members involved:

Two maker educators, one researcher and a project manager were involved in the organisation and facilitation of the laboratory. Their backgrounds range from social design, education, filmmaking and illustrating.

9.4.3 Objectives

The Critical Change Lab took place in a non-formal education activity focused on language and education about society. The design considered the vocabulary and experiences of the students and was therefore designed with the needs of the language curriculum in mind. In the design of the laboratory, special attention was paid to vocabulary, explanation of concepts and the link between the laboratory activities with everyday life outside of school. The most important objective to achieve through this Critical Change Lab was to promote young participants' sense of agency by making them aware of the fact that they themselves are part of our democracy.

9.4.4 Thematic focus

The starting point of the laboratory was 'Identity" with a focus on language and social interaction with others. During the sessions the theme broadened to everyday democracy and collaboration.

9.4.5 Process

During the co-design sessions and the preparations for the lab, adjustments were made to the design to adapt it to the Dutch language comprehension level of the participants (it is worth to note that some participants had very recently arrived to the Netherlands). Due to these adaptations, the Critical Change Lab sessions were much more focused on the making process and especial attention was focused on linking the maker activities to reflection and everyday democracy.

The Critical Change Lab consisted of three sessions of one and a half hours during the period comprised between January and March 2024. Two preparation sessions took place before the first lab session and there was an additional activity afterwards to make sure all the developed products by the students were well documented.

Phase 0: OnBoard

This phase was aimed at getting to know each other and creating a safe and inspiring environment where it would be possible to talk to each other about themes concerning everyone. For the educators, who were very new to this group, it was also a good opportunity to test whether they were at the right language level to be able to guide the group well.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

The focus was on understanding and identifying. Participants were asked directly what understanding they had of democracy and whether they can identify with it. They begin to investigate their own identity in relation to the world outside of school.

Description of the session

The session was divided in two parts. Right after the start of the session, participants were invited to get into hands-on activities. This was to get the young people started right away and to let them experience what democracy is. During this part, special attention was devoted to ensuring peace and safety in the group, since this contributes to clear and transparent communication.

The second part of the session delved into the concept of identity. Students got creative by creating a mood board where they visually represented their identity and placed it next to other mood boards to have a conversation about identity. At the end of this session the facilitators asked the students about their understanding of democracy and what it had to do with their everyday lives.

Phase 1: Question and envision

The main goal of this session was to create a safe environment where participants could ask questions, express their concerns about democracy and identity, and begin to visualize their thoughts.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

In this phase, the focus was on the *Constructing* dimension of the Critical Literacies Framework. The participants challenged their assumptions and analysed their role in everyday democracy.

Description of the session

At the start of the session, participants were introduced to a fairly neutral uniform that was the basis for the design they were going to make at the laboratory. With a lot of visual material participants were prompted to imagine a costume that would represent their identity as a group. Once the design process had started and all the groups had produced a sketch drawing of their design (see Fig. 27), the participants were invited to reflect on the collaboration process. By talking about collaboration, links were made to democracy and the way people need to work as a society to ensure everyone has an equal voice. By learning through experience, participants gained a deeper understanding of democracy and felt they were part of it.

Figure 27. Sketches of participants' costume designs.

<u>Phase 3: Analyse, act and reflect</u>

During the third session, which comprised various phases, the participants worked on their own project, reflecting on the collaboration process by using cards with 'democratic principles' and applied all the material learned from the first sessions to create a final product. They linked their own work process to everyday democracy and saw themselves as part of it by means of a presentation.

Relation to the Critical Literacies Framework

This phase focuses on the *Activating Change* dimension of the critical literacies framework because they will actively see themselves as part of democracy and realize that they matter and are able to make change.

Description of the session

In this session, the participants fully engaged in the creative process (see Fig. 28). At the beginning of the lesson, they were introduced to two democratic principles to help them take decisions in the group, ensuring everyone was seen as an equal. Examples of these democratic principles are:

- Choose a representative who takes decisions
- Ask another group to take a decision for you.
- Vote with the entire group
- Think of good arguments and present them to convince your group members.
- Vote anonymously.

With the democratic principles, the facilitators had a good starting point to look for so-called 'democratic moments' where the facilitator could respond directly to the situation and thus open up a conversation about democracy based on participants' own practices.
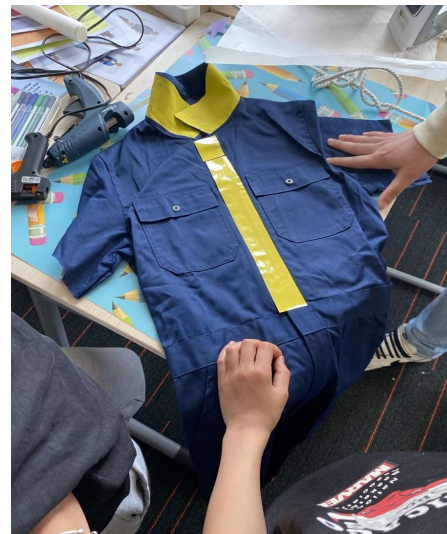

Figure 28. The classroom turned into a creative design studio where participants worked on their costumes.

When the designs were ready and all groups were satisfied with the work process and the end-result, the costumes were presented and photographed (see Fig. 29). Participants reflected on the way in which they had worked together.

Figure 29. Students posing with their costumes on.

10 Conclusions and next steps

This deliverable (D1.4 Critical ChangeLab Model: Framework and Toolkit) presents the first version of the Critical ChangeLab Model for 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 Change Labs organized during PAR cycle 1. It is worth highlighting that the reporting and evaluation of the Critical ChangeLab PAR cycles 1-2-3 is done as part of WP3 tasks and will be presented in its associated deliverables.

The insights gained through the process evaluation (T3.1) will inform further iterations of the Critical ChangeLab Model for 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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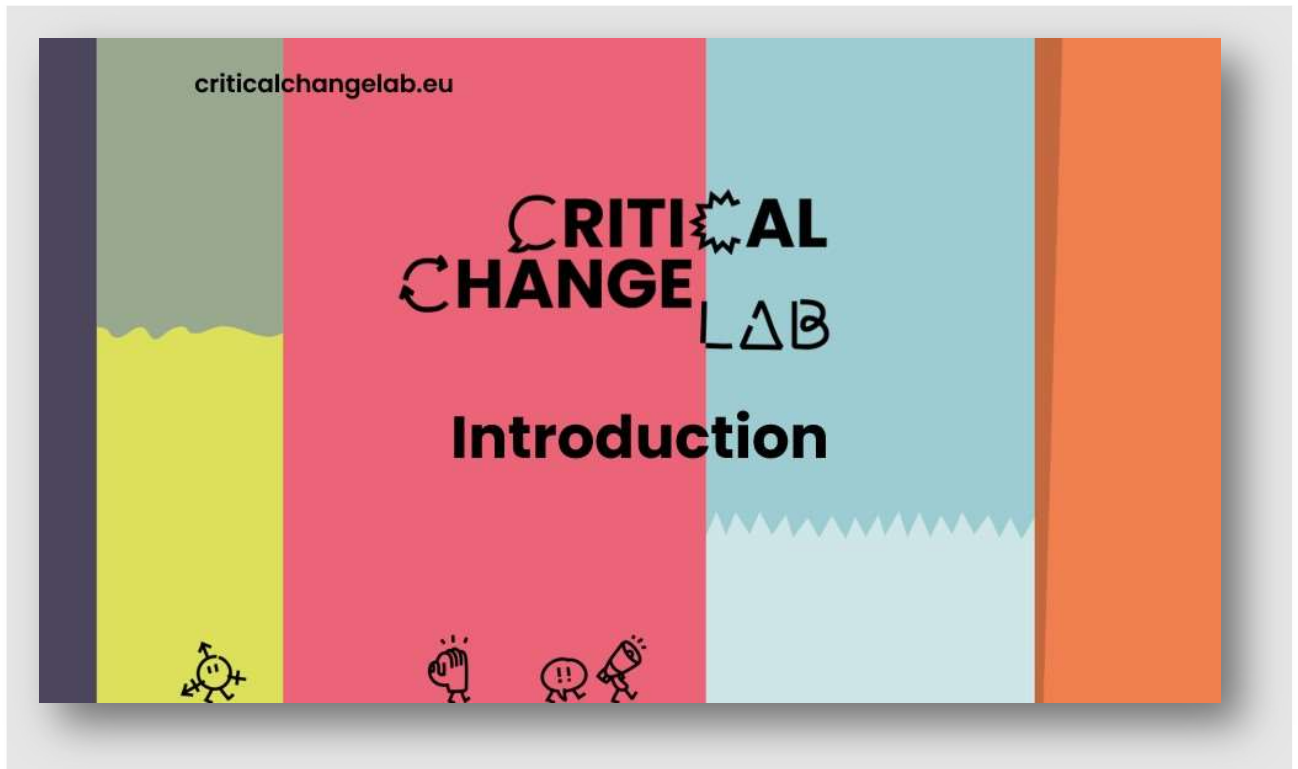
Annexes

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

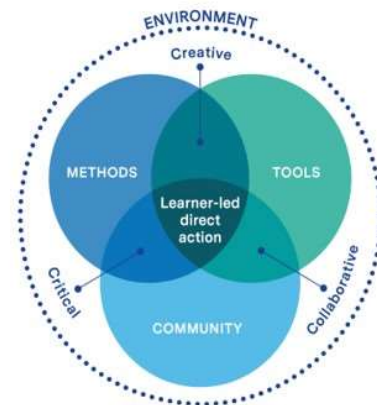## Critical ChangeLab Approach

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 it's 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.

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Frequently Asked Questions

1 About Critical Change Labs

What is a Critical Change Lab?

A Critical Change Lab 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 Change Lab young people engage in democratic explorations in collaboration with various stakeholders from education and civil society.

Who can organize a Critical Change Lab?

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

Where can a Critical Change Lab take place?

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

How long can a Critical Change Lab last?

There is no maximum time limit for a Critical Change Lab. As a minimum, a Critical Change Lab 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 Change Labs 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 Change Labs. 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 Change Labs and (b) support the selection of methods and activities at the different stages of the Change Labs. 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 Change Lab, 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 - OnBoard
- Phase 1 - Question
- Phase 2 - Analyse
- Phase 3 - Envision and Examine
- Phase 4 - Act
- Phase 5 - Reflect

Short Version:

- Phase 0 - OnBoard
- Phase 1 - Question and Analyse
- 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.

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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 Change Lab 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	• Mirror of Experiences - Present • Ideas - Present	IDENTIFYING	Triggering thinking about issues and tensions in democracy
2- ANALYSE		• Mirror of Experiences - Past • Ideas - Past • Alternatives - Past	DECONSTRUCTING	Building perspective and systemic view
3- ENVISION & EXAMINE	2- ENVISION & ACT	• Ideas – Present • Alternatives - Present • Alternatives - Future	DECONSTRUCTING ACTIVATING CHANGE	Imagining different futures and fostering collaboration
4- ACT		• Ideas - Future • Alternatives - Future	ACTIVATING CHANGE	Finding meaningful ways to create change
5- REFLECT	3- REFLECT	• 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 Change Lab:

- 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 Change Lab 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 Change Lab?

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

Critical ChangeLab Session Design Canvas

PHASE	METHODS FOCUS	SESSION GENERAL DESCRIPTION
QUESTION	☐ Futures thinking ☐ Embodiment and performance ☐ Narrative ☐ 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?	☐ 1. Understanding	
	☐ 2. Identifying	

	☐ 3. Deconstructing
	  o 3a. Disrupting the commonplace
	  o 3b. Embracing multiple perspectives
	  o 3c. Investigating power and agency	

	☐ 4. Activating change	
	☐ 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.