

# CRITERIA CATALOGUE AND EVALUATION GRID

## FOR GOOD PRACTICES IN TRAINING AND TEACHING ON ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP



# CASE

Civically Active for Social Engagement



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Swide

IntercVmbia

euro-net



Website

[thecaseproject.eu](http://thecaseproject.eu)

## SUMMARY

Civically Active for Social Engagement (CASE) is a project that follows a cross-sectoral approach interpreted in order to collect, review and publish new and innovative approaches in the training on active citizenship. It aims to tear down borders between the education sectors and to facilitate a more open, innovative training and teaching.

From the perspective of employability, the knowledge on how to participate includes management and leadership skills but as well openness for new ideas and concepts. Transferring participation into education means to educate self-aware citizens and gear their capacities to be Active Citizens, whom are open to new ideas, cultures and concepts and are willing to form and influence their society.

## INTRODUCTION

The criteria catalogue for good practices offers the possibility to analyse best practices, in a broader socio-economic context and set of values and principles. These values and principles can help to determine the potential impact and influence of a best practice in the area of active citizenship. All over Europe, active citizenship participation is often hindered by a lack of information, communication and cooperation between affected stakeholders as well as limited access to knowledge of the options available for voicing local interests. Citizens and stakeholders, therefore, require an overview of existing training tools and methods that can help overcome those barriers to participation.

However, in the past years, a vast number of tools and methods had been developed in the different educational sectors and national systems. Instead of reinventing methods, it is more efficient to evaluate existing tools in all sectors, identify good practices, collect and review them and share them in a specific format. Central to this project is capacity-building for professionals (e.g. social workers), training for civil society organizations and more general educational objectives that are aimed at increasing citizen awareness of their possible roles in urban development situations.

Therefore, the catalogue of criteria will enable better interpretation and evaluation of existing practices to which extent they are relevant, inclusive and impactful and to what extent they up-skilled and empowered their participants on active citizenship.

## RELEVANCE

Relevance measures the importance, urgency or need for a particular topic or issue to be addressed, explored or improved. Relevance also explains the degree to which or to whom something is related. It is multidimensional, can be a general and known topic/ issue (i.e. climate change), or a topic/ issue for a particular societal group (access to education for people with disabilities).

In the terms of active citizenship, relevance can be determined as a justification, reason or motivation to undertaking actions to address, explore or improve a socio-economic topic or an issue. Relevance answers the question about the reasoning behind the actions that are undertaken, and how appropriate is something at a given time. Training and teaching activities on active citizenship should emphasise its relevance, in order to achieve their goals and increase their attractiveness.

## CRITICAL THINKING

From a philosophical point of view, critical thinking is primarily approached as the norm of good thinking, the rational aspect of human thought, and as the intellectual virtues needed to approach the world in a reasonable, fair-minded way (Gibson, 1995). Psychologists conceptualize critical thinking first and foremost as higher-order thinking skills and focus attention on the appropriate learning and instruction processes (e.g. Halpern, 1998; Kuhn, 1999). Lastly, the concept of critical thinking functions in ‘critical pedagogy’. Critical thinking refers here to the capacity to recognize and overcome social injustice (see e.g. McLaren, 1994)<sup>1</sup>.

Although most authors agree that critical thinking involves both skills and dispositions, in empirical, often psychological research attention is primarily paid to the thinking skills. For example, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, p. 118) note that critical thinking has been defined and measured in a number of ways ‘but typically involves the individual’s ability to do some or all of the following: identify central issues and assumptions in an argument, recognize important relationships, make correct inferences from data, deduce conclusions from information or data provided, interpret whether conclusions are warranted on the basis of the data given, and evaluate evidence or authority’ (see also Furedy & Furedy, 1985).

In terms of analysing best practices in training participation and active citizenship, it is relevant to evaluate to which level of the extent they incorporate methodologies and execute activities that improve participant’s abilities and skills for critical thinking.

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<sup>1</sup> G. ten Dam, M. Volman / Learning and Instruction 14 (2004) 359–379 361

## EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment enables people to increase their autonomy and self-determination. It is a process that enables them to become confident, stronger to pursue their interests or claim their rights.

Empowerment helps people overcome their sense of lack of influence and power. It also includes encouraging and developing the skills for self-sufficiency. Empowerment is probably the totality of the following or similar capabilities, and the activities and methodologies for training on active citizenship, should incorporate the following elements:

- Possessing decision-making power of their own
- Having access to information and resources for taking proper decision
- Having a range of options from which you can make choices (not just yes/no, either/or)
- Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making
- Positive thinking on the ability to make change
- Ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power.
- Ability to change others' perceptions by democratic means.
- Involving in the growth process and changes that are never-ending and self-initiated
- Increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma<sup>2</sup>

Training and teaching activities on participation and active citizenship need to promote citizens' empowerment.

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2 <https://psychology.wikia.org/wiki/Empowerment#Empowerment>

## PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

Participation and inclusions should be taken and analyzed together, since they present two dimensions of public engagement. Participation is aimed to increase the input of citizens towards the content of the processes and policies, whereas inclusion presents the involvement of citizens in processes for identifying and addressing issues of public concern.

Participation is aimed to increase the input over an issue of public concern, and inclusion is aimed to build capacities of communities and social groups to address particular issues, and creates links and connections between citizens on an issue, over time. Therefore, it is highly important for the planned activities and methodologies to convey both forms of public engagement. Through participation and inclusion, people become more aware of their own identity (situation) which incites a transformation process in their consciousness.

In short, when people participate in society and projects, they can learn from each other, they can meet fellow citizens with the same goals to stand together<sup>3</sup>. Best practices on training active citizenship should contribute to enhancing participation and inclusion.

## IMPACT

Impact in a societal sense refers to the effect on people or communities that occurs as a result of some planned action, activity, project, program or policy. The impact can have intended, and not intended outcomes, both positive and negative. The impact can be individual, on a particular group of people that took part in some activity or project, or general, and involve people that have not been directly connected to the activity, project or program.

The impact can also not be linked with the objective of a planned action or activity, but provoked and triggered by a particular intervention. The assessment of the impact can be sometimes visible and evident, however, when organizing a teaching and training activity on active citizenship the following questions can be used, in order to obtain information:

Who benefits?

How many people benefit?

How do they benefit?<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.eukn.eu/policy-labs/policy-lab-for-be-solidarity-and-diversity-new-recipes-for-urban-social-policy/empowerment-and-active-citizenship/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.goodfinance.org.uk/latest/post/blog/social-impact-what-it-how-do-i-measure-it>

## SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability refers to the ability of an activity, project or program of continuing to generate benefits for an extended period of time. The term sustainability has gained significant popularity in policy-oriented research, business development and the social sector over the last few decades. It is the most sorted feature to ensure success to a venture. The origin of the word Sustain dates back several centuries, from two Latin words *sus* which means up, and *tenere* meaning to hold. The current use of the word implies something that continues for a long time.

Looking at sustainability from an NGO point of view means continuing to perform and deliver project benefits to the primary target group after the funding from a donor terminates. In other words, sustainability is to maintain and continue your efforts after the funding is over. sustainability requires long term planning to ensure the success of the activity, project or program over time. There are three types of sustainability that can be considered when talking about training participation and active citizenship:

1. **Financial sustainability:** It refers to ensuring a steady flow of funds and generating revenue for maintaining and continuing the organizations work.
2. **Institutional Sustainability/Organisational:** It refers to ensuring the proper working of the organizations and institutions that were developed as part of the project.
3. **Programmatic Sustainability:** It means to continue the organizations' projects and programs in the absence of donor support<sup>5</sup>.

## TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability refers to the level of the extent to which a practice can be applied to other contexts, situations, times and populations. In order to re-apply good practices, it is important to be able to transfer the expected outcomes to a new context, achieving (similar) objectives and results that the ones attained when the practice was originally implemented. The transferability of a practice can also be successful when it is possible to easily re-adapt the practice to the new situation, even if its application or methodology slightly changes. Therefore, it is true that when transferring a practice to a new situation, the results might vary due to the new circumstances and unexpected inputs, but the essence of the practice and its aims should remain the same. Hence, when evaluating good practices on training participation and active citizenship, one can ask the following question:

- Will it be possible to transfer this practice to other contexts?
- To which extent?
- What might change when transferring the practice?

<sup>5</sup> <https://www2.fundsforngos.org/featured/how-to-ensure-sustainability/>

## EVALUATION GRID FOR GOOD PRACTICES IN TRAINING PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP

<b>Title of the Best Practice</b>	
<b>Organisation / Institution</b>	
<b>Contact Details or Link</b>	

CRITERIA	RATING*
<b>Relevance</b>	
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	
<b>Empowerment</b>	
<b>Participation and Inclusion</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	
<b>Sustainability</b>	
<b>Transferability</b>	

<b>TOTAL</b>	
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*\* on a scale of 1 to 9, with one being the lowest and 9 being the highest score attributed towards achievement of the criteria*