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*Experiencing democracy:  
Holistic Approaches in Classroom and Nature  
Participatory Workshop Methodology for Civic Education*

**Project:** Experiencing Democracy – Holistic Approaches in Classroom and Nature

**Programme:** Erasmus+ KA122 Adult Education

**Type of Result:** Workshop methodology and educational practice

## Introduction

This document presents a participatory civic education methodology developed within the Erasmus+ project “*Experiencing Democracy: Holistic Approaches in Classroom and Nature.*” The approach combines democratic education, reflection on human rights and nature-based learning.

The workshop methodology aims to create learning environments where participants can explore democratic values such as equality, dignity, participation and social responsibility through dialogue and experiential learning.

A central element of the approach is the integration of reflection in natural environments. Nature-based dialogue activities create a calm and inclusive space that encourages participants to reflect more deeply on democratic principles and social relations.

The methodology is designed for use in adult education, civic education programmes and community learning contexts.

## Learning Objectives

The workshop supports participants in:

- understanding democratic values and fundamental rights
- recognising discrimination and inequality in everyday life
- reflecting on participation and social responsibility



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- developing critical thinking and dialogue skills
- connecting democratic principles with everyday experiences

## Target Groups

The methodology is suitable for:

- adult learners
- educators and trainers
- community educators
- participants in civic education programmes
- intercultural learning groups

## Workshop Duration

The workshop can be implemented as a **4-5 hour training session**, but the activities can also be adapted for longer learning formats.

## Workshop Agenda

### 1. Introduction and expectations (15 minutes)

Participants introduce themselves and share their expectations regarding democracy, participation and human rights.

### 2. Theoretical input (30 minutes)

The facilitator introduces key concepts such as democracy, equality, discrimination and fundamental rights. Selected articles of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights are presented.

### 3. Exercise: Understanding discrimination (30 - 60 minutes)

Participants explore how discrimination appears in everyday life and discuss different forms of discrimination.

### 4. Exercise: Fundamental rights in practice (40- 60 minutes)

Participants analyse selected articles from the Charter of Fundamental Rights and connect them to everyday experiences.

### 5. Break (15 minutes)

### 6. Nature dialogue walk (60-90 minutes)

Participants reflect



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democracy and participation while walking in a natural environment.

#### **7. Collective reflection ( 40-60 minutes)**

Participants share insights and connect their reflections with democratic principles.

#### **8. Closing round (30 minutes)**

Participants summarise key learning points and reflect on how democratic values can be applied in everyday life.

## **Methodology and Educational Approach**

The workshop is based on participatory and experiential learning principles. Participants are encouraged to actively contribute their experiences and perspectives.

Dialogue, collaborative interpretation and reflection are central elements of the learning process. The methodology emphasises inclusive dialogue and mutual learning.

An innovative aspect of the approach is the integration of nature-based learning into civic education. Natural environments support reflective thinking and encourage open communication. The dialogue walk allows participants to discuss complex social issues in a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere.

## **Exercise 1 – Understanding Discrimination**

### **Objective:**

To explore how discrimination appears in everyday life and how it affects individuals and communities.

### **Procedure:**

The facilitator introduces the concept of discrimination and explains that discrimination can occur at structural, social and linguistic levels.

Participants work in small groups and discuss examples of discrimination they have observed or experienced. The groups identify different forms of discrimination and reflect on their impact on individuals and social cohesion.

Each group presents its reflections to the larger group. The facilitator supports the discussion and connects participants' observations with democratic values such as equality and dignity.



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## Exercise 2 – Fundamental Rights in Practice

### Objective:

To connect human rights principles with everyday experiences.

### Procedure:

Participants work in small groups of three to five people. Each group receives a selected article from the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Participants discuss guiding questions such as:

- What does this right mean in everyday life?
- Where do we encounter this right in society?
- When can this right be violated?
- Why is this right important for democratic societies?

The groups document their reflections and present their results to the larger group.

## Exercise 3 – Nature Dialogue Walk

### Objective:

To deepen reflection on democracy and human rights through dialogue in a natural environment.

### Procedure:

Participants move to an outdoor learning environment such as a park or natural landscape. Working in pairs or small groups, participants take part in a dialogue walk.

During the walk, participants discuss guiding questions related to democracy, participation and social responsibility.

Examples of reflection questions include:

- What does democracy mean in everyday life?
- Where do people experience participation or exclusion?
- Why are human rights important for democratic societies?
- What responsibilities do citizens have in a democracy?

Participants may take short notes during the walk and share their reflections afterwards.



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## Exercise 4 – Collective Reflection

### Objective:

To connect personal reflections with democratic participation.

### Procedure:

After returning from the outdoor activity, participants gather for a collective reflection session.

Each group shares insights from their discussions. The facilitator moderates the conversation and connects participants' reflections with broader democratic principles such as equality, dignity, participation and social responsibility.

Participants reflect on how democratic values can be strengthened in everyday life and educational contexts.

## Materials

The workshop requires only simple materials:

- flipcharts or paper sheets
- markers
- printed articles from the Charter of Fundamental Rights
- reflection questions for the dialogue walk

For the outdoor activity, access to a natural environment such as a park or garden is recommended.

## Expected Learning Outcomes

After the workshop participants:

- gain a deeper understanding of democratic values and human rights
- develop greater awareness of discrimination and inequality
- strengthen dialogue and critical thinking skills
- experience how nature-based reflection can support civic learning processes

The methodology encourages participants to see democracy not only as a political system but also as a social practice that requires dialogue, participation and mutual respect.