

Get Involved!

Active Citizenship for Young People

Active citizenship is all about getting involved in your community and working to make it better. As an active citizen, you participate politically and socially - whether it's joining a city council, voting in elections, or starting a club at school. Democracies depend on citizens taking part, but there are tons of other ways to create change too. Grab some friends and arrange a beach cleanup. Feeling extra motivated? Form an organisation to tackle issues in a bigger way, like through protests, lobbying, and raising awareness.

You don't have to wait to be an adult to make an impact. With the right knowledge, skills and attitude, young people have the power to make real improvements in their communities.

Active citizenship is conditioned by the opportunities and constraints of the social and political system in place, but citizenship competence helps to realise its full potential. It is the ability to act as a responsible citizen and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability. Citizenship competence includes essential knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Know the Issues (knowledge)

Citizenship knowledge involves an understanding of the functioning of the European Union, European common values, as expressed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Familiarity with European integration as well as an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe and the world is essential. This includes an understanding of the multi-cultural and socioeconomic dimensions of European societies.

Speak Up and Take Action (skills)

Skills for citizenship competence relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in common or public interest, including the sustainable development of society. This involves critical thinking, skills to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities, as well as in decision-making at all levels, from local and national to the European level. This also involves the ability to access, have a critical understanding of, and interact with both traditional and new forms of media and understand the role of media in society.

Stay Open-Minded (attitudes)

Respect for human rights as a basis for democracy lays the foundations for a responsible and constructive attitude. Constructive participation involves willingness to participate in democratic decision-making at all levels and in civic activities. It includes support for social and cultural diversity, gender equality and social cohesion, sustainable lifestyles, promotion of culture of peace and non-violence, a readiness to respect the privacy of others, and to take responsibility for the environment.

Tools to Get Started

Youth workers should promote citizenship competence in their professional practice and personal life. If you are a youth worker or a young person, consider using non-formal methods to foster active citizenship in your community. Toolkit made for this purpose is available for [download here](#).

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