



PROMOTING AUTHENTIC STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS



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TOOLKIT FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

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AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE**

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Introduction

Welcome to the tool “Promoting authentic student participation in schools”. This tool is designed to equip teachers, school leaders, administrators and other school staff with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively engage students in activities that affect their learning experiences and the functioning of their educational institutions. The tool builds on previous work of the Council of Europe developed in different countries and within various projects.

Participation in school is a critical aspect of school culture that encompasses the active involvement of students, teachers and other school staff, parents and the community in the school environment. While participation of all stakeholders in the school environment is important, this tool will focus on engagement and participation of students.

The tool can be used by individual teachers, teams of school staff or school leadership, while in the final section there are also guidelines for students and parents. In this manual, you will find valuable information on understanding participation as well as helpful tools for self-evaluation, questions for reflection and recommendations for planning and implementing genuine student participation.

The final section of the tool offers detailed guidelines for teachers, students and parents that can be used as a stand-alone document, allowing schools to evaluate, plan and implement participation activities for students and offering inspirational practice examples. The section is based on the Council of Europe publication “Guidelines on the participation of students in democratic school governance” (Council of Europe 2023a).

We encourage you to use this tool as a resource to promote student engagement and participation and to strengthen an inclusive and democratic school culture.

Understanding participation

What is student participation?

Student participation refers to a process in which students’ viewpoints are considered and valued, encompassing all aspects of school life which can benefit from students’ input, taking into account their age and perspective. Participation can take various forms, including informally, such as the sharing of views with members of the school community or peers, and formally within democratic school structures and mechanisms, such as student representation bodies. Crucially, participation does not occur in siloed incidences but constitutes a continuous practice, reinforcing participation structures, rendering student participation increasingly effective and thereby enabling the democratising of schools.

What do students learn through the participation process?

Just as it is impossible to envisage a democratic state without the active involvement of citizens in decision-making processes, it is equally impossible to conceive of a democratic school without the active engagement of students. The willingness and capacity to participate are not innate qualities, nor can they be acquired solely through passive instruction. Instead, these skills are honed and developed gradually through various participation processes, be it at individual level, in small groups, in whole-class settings or through collaboration between parallel classes.

Student participation and student voice are key elements of the Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) (Council of Europe 2018), a competence-based approach to education for democratic citizenship, which promotes a holistic view of education for democracy, including knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and provides guidelines for developing a democratic school culture and integrating young people’s civic experiences into the wider community.

Why should a culture of participation be taught in schools?

Aside from the duty to impart subject matter, schools have a responsibility to integrate young people into society and to promote democratic citizenry. Schools should promote the importance of collaboration, shared responsibilities and accountability for one's actions. Schools play a pivotal role in shaping students' ability to contribute to the future of society through civic engagement.

Student participation is not just a matter of future relevance; it holds significant importance for the present. Every school represents a community of its members, including teachers, administrators, staff, parents and students. Within this community, students assume a range of distinct social roles: they establish connections, interact with peers and adults, gain self-awareness and expand their knowledge of the world. They explore and discover personal interests and grow aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Students learn how to make choices, express agreement or disagreement, promote their beliefs and develop informed views on issues that concern them, their communities and the wider world. Schools should enable students to critically consider concepts such as freedom, equality, justice, respect and the rule of law, also within the school environment. The skills that students acquire through their active participation in school life, including informed decision making, collaboration and the awareness of the consequences of their actions, is profoundly influenced by school policies and practices. Policies and practices seep into the behaviours of all school stakeholders, particularly of teachers and school leaders who act as direct role models. The experiences gained through school participation have a lasting impact on students' personal, professional and social lives.

What does the right of students to participate entail?

Student participation encompasses the right of students to engage in decision-making processes regarding various aspects of school life that directly impact them. This includes:

- ▶ the right to receive information about the curriculum, including its content, purpose and requirements;
- ▶ the right to influence the selection of teaching and learning methods;
- ▶ the right to request transparent evaluations and to understand the reasons behind them;
- ▶ the right to organise cultural, educational, sports, entertainment and volunteering activities;
- ▶ the right to influence the norms and principles that govern school life;
- ▶ the right to elect representatives and be elected as members of decision-making bodies.

More broadly, student participation touches on the right to freedom of expression and the right to develop and adopt their own perspectives while learning to remain open to different views and discover new insights through deliberation.

The right to participation by young people, including students, has been internationally recognised for several decades. For instance, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) upholds participation as a fundamental human right. Consequently, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which all of Council of Europe member states are signatory, emphasises children's right to participate and underscores its importance. The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life regards youth participation as a universal right within the entire Council of Europe region.

Two types of student participation in schools

Student participation in schools can be categorised into two distinct types: genuine participation and token participation. Genuine participation actively engages students, motivating them to take an active role and fostering a sense that they can influence situations and effect real change. This type of participation empowers students to make a meaningful impact and builds their agency. Conversely, token participation is characterised by a lack of genuine engagement, with adults taking the lead and only including students' voices in a tokenistic way, minimising opportunities for effective student contributions. Students experiencing token participation may feel restricted, believing that they are unable to think or act differently and that their active involvement is fruitless. This type of participation can leave young people feeling uninformed and powerless, with the negative consequences extending not only to the individuals involved but also to others. One prominent framework for understanding these different forms of participation is Roger Hart's "participation ladder", which delineates five degrees of genuine participation and three degrees of non-

participation. In this model, token participation falls under “non-participation”, failing to meet young people’s right to be included in policy development and decision making on matters that concern them.

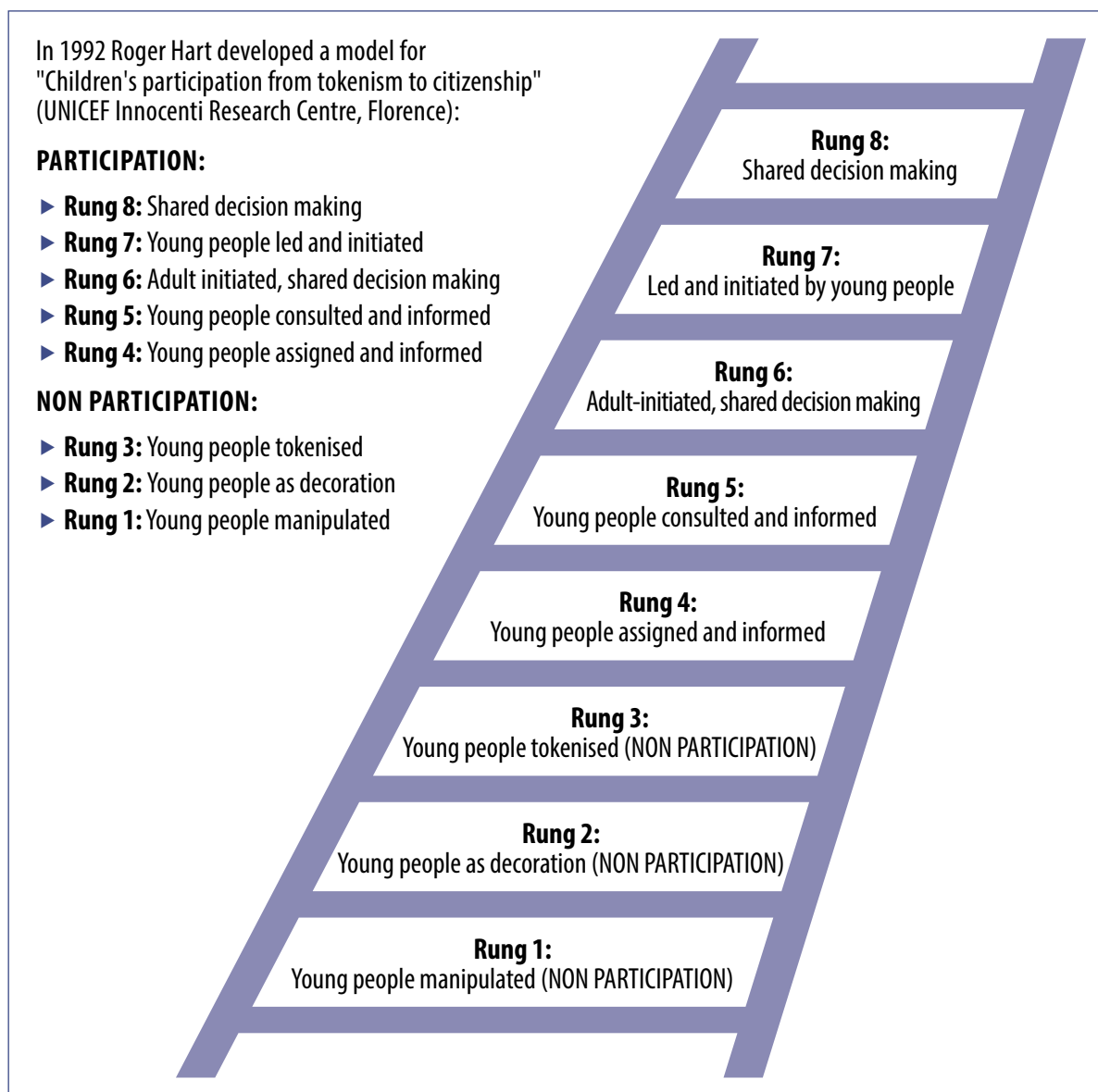


Figure 1. Roger Hart’s Ladder of Participation (Council of Europe 2023b).

What are the genuine levels of student participation?

There are five levels of real/genuine participation, beginning from the simplest, which would constitute the starting point for those students and staff with no or little experience of genuine participation. With each level, the complexity of participation increases, encouraging students to show greater initiative and take responsibility. By climbing these levels of participation, teachers can move safely to ever more student-centred formats of work: at first, students will be implementers and followers of other people’s ideas but, eventually, they will become project initiators, authors and leaders.

Basic levels of genuine student participation

Task assignment and information sharing. At this initial level of participation, teachers take the lead in planning, assigning tasks to students and explaining how and why they are involved in a project. Students understand the goals of the activities and participate with a clear sense of purpose. Importantly, this level ensures that all students, not just those who are responsible, capable or with leadership traits, have the opportunity to participate.

Consultation and information exchange. At this level, teachers and students engage in a collaborative approach. Teachers continue to plan and inform students about the project's purpose and steps, but they also invite students to share their opinions and ideas. While the final decisions and choices still rest with the adults, this level encourages teachers and students to engage in meaningful dialogue, fostering a sense of listening and mutual understanding.

Intermediate level of genuine student participation

Teachers or other school staff **start initiatives, but decisions are taken with students.** On this level of participation (co-participation) students' opinions start to exert real influence on the decisions taken in the classroom, at school or in a particular project. At the same time, students begin to share responsibilities for the outcomes of those decisions. There are structures and mechanisms that provide the possibility for students to participate in discussions, needs assessments, planning and the implementation and evaluation of tasks. Teachers and school leaders take the roles of mentors and guides.

High level of genuine student participation

Students start initiatives and implement them. This level of participation is reached when students already know how to start initiatives, disseminate information, make decisions, share responsibilities and make plans and implement them. Their projects are possible, because they function in previously created structures and use their experience from the previous levels of participation. Adults pay attention to students' activism, but their roles are limited to observers or supporters.

Students start initiatives, but decisions are taken in co-operation with adults. This is the most advanced level of participation, because it is marked by mutual respect and trust, developed in the process of shared decision making. Students fully exercise their right to participate and power to make decisions, but they invite teachers to co-operate as equal partners, because they appreciate their knowledge, experience and supportive attitude.

What are token levels of student participation?

There are three forms of non-participation, feeding students' obedience, lack of student initiative and hierarchical decision making. Non-participation risks students losing interest and becoming disengaged. Sometimes, from an external observation, it is difficult to distinguish between real/genuine and token forms of participation, but if a person is engaged in an activity, the difference will be clear to them. The following definitions of non-participation will help distinguish "pretence" participation from genuine participation.

Manipulation. This is an illusory form of participation, in which students, parents, teachers and other members of staff are involved in actions without having agency over the purpose of those actions. School stakeholders only follow top-down instructions. There is no space for individual opinions or ideas that distract from the goals and priorities of the stakeholders at the top.

Decoration. This form of participation is characterised by superficial representations and decision-making bodies without mechanisms for the implementation of their contributions. Participation structures exist on paper but do not effectuate change.

Tokenism. This form of participation only enables selected individuals to express their views and opinions, favouring those individuals, be they students, parents or teachers, who reinforce the school's reputable image. Meanwhile, no space is given to critical voices.

Why is genuine student participation important?

Student participation is important because it allows everyone to be important. It helps create an environment where one can learn, make mistakes without fear of being shamed, strengthen one's self-esteem, develop a sense of belonging and reach self-realisation. In such a participatory environment, teachers and school leaders improve their relationships with students while fostering co-operation within the school community.

Assessing participation

Assessing participation in schools provides valuable insights that can inform plans for creating a democratic school culture. By understanding levels of engagement among students, teachers, parents, educators and administrators, targeted strategies can be developed that enhance involvement and improve the overall educational environment. Here is how assessment can be used to plan for change effectively.

Identify strengths and weaknesses. Assessment helps identify areas of strength in student participation and areas that require improvement. For instance, if assessments reveal high levels of engagement in extracurricular activities but low involvement in decision-making processes, schools can focus on fostering more inclusive governance structures.

Set goals and objectives. Once strengths and weaknesses are identified, schools can set specific, measurable goals for improving participation. These goals should be aligned with the overall educational and democratic mission of the school and can include increasing student representation in leadership roles or enhancing parent engagement in school activities.

Involve stakeholders in the process and ensure inclusion. Utilising assessment data can facilitate discussions with various stakeholders, including students, teachers and parents in an inclusive manner. By actively involving these groups in the planning process, schools can gather a range of perspectives, ensuring that proposed changes are relevant and reflect the community's needs and aspirations.

Develop targeted strategies. Assessments can guide the development of targeted strategies for enhancing participation. For instance, if certain groups of students exhibit lower participation rates because of socio-economic barriers, schools can implement programmes that specifically address these challenges, such as mentorship initiatives or extra support services.

Create action plans. Based on the insights gained from assessments, schools can create comprehensive action plans detailing the steps needed to improve participation. These plans should specify timelines, responsible parties and the resources needed, ensuring accountability and clarity in implementation.

Monitor progress. By establishing benchmarks and indicators based on initial assessments, schools can continuously monitor the effectiveness of their participation strategies. Regular evaluations will allow educators to adapt their approaches based on what works, creating a responsive system that evolves with student and community needs.

Foster a culture of open communication. Assessing participation promotes a culture of transparency and open dialogue within the school community. By sharing assessment findings and involving stakeholders in the change process, schools can build trust and strengthen relationships, which are crucial for sustained engagement.

Celebrate achievements. As participation levels improve, schools should celebrate successes with the community. Recognising the contributions of students, teachers and parents reinforces the value of their involvement and encourages ongoing participation.

Evaluate changes. After implementing new strategies, schools should assess their impact on participation levels. This evaluation phase is crucial for determining whether the desired changes have occurred and for making necessary adjustments to strategies or action plans.

In summary, assessing participation provides a foundation for effective, inclusive and informed planning for change in schools. By identifying current levels of engagement, setting clear goals, involving stakeholders and continually monitoring progress, schools can create an environment that fosters meaningful participation and enhances the overall educational experience for all members of the school community.

Situation analysis instruments

This section lists three situation analysis instruments by which the levels of school participation can be assessed. You may select and adapt the instruments to fit the needs of the school and the needs of different stakeholders. To best assess your school's situation, you should involve as many stakeholders as possible, including teachers, school staff, students and parents.

Instrument 1 – Participation on a scale of 1 to 5

The purpose of participating in a self-assessment process is to help you identify the needs and opportunities for improvement. There are no right or wrong answers, but, rather, participation levels should be assessed on a scale from 1 to 5, as follows.

1. Does not happen/does not exist/we have no experience.
2. To a limited extent/we tried but failed/resources are insufficient.
3. Enough/we already have something to implement, but improvements are possible/we have some experience and resources but require more.
4. Good/we have considerable resources and experience in this regard.
5. Excellent/we have various experiences/implemented sustainable projects/access to sufficient resources.

To what extent are students involved in the following processes/decision-making bodies?

Areas		Levels					Action goal
		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	
Student participation in the activities of collegial bodies	Board of trustees						
	Student self-government						
	Disciplinary committee						
Participation of students in drafting of plans	School strategic development plan						
	School action plan						
	Internal regulations						
	Budget						
	Teaching plan						
	Non-formal educational activities plan						
Participation of students in community activities	Participation of students in community activities						
Teacher	Activities supporting students' participation in school activities by teachers						
Parent	Activities supporting students' participation in school activities by parents						

Instrument 2 – Identifying opportunities to participate

To what extent do we offer leadership opportunities to students?

For example, students are encouraged to take the initiative and have the opportunity to choose what tasks are to be performed, their role in teamwork, methods of implementation, ways to demonstrate learning, etc.

Which of the following statements are true about your school? More than one could be true in different situations. Provide a detailed description and ask your students and colleagues to do the same. Together, discuss the responses and make a plan for moving forward.

Statement	Description
We offer students some opportunities and options, but we did not achieve the expected impact, because they are not used to taking the initiative.	
We offer students the opportunity to assume leadership roles occasionally, but do not provide sufficient support for all students to build leadership skills, which is why only a few students show initiative.	
We are working to institutionalise a framework for student leadership, currently limited to extracurricular activities.	
We are piloting the institutionalisation of a coherent framework of student leadership, especially within the optional subjects and extracurricular activities.	
We have a well-established framework for student leadership. Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate initiative/play an important role in project implementation/choose and develop tasks/decide on implementation processes / choose how they demonstrate learning in most school subjects.	

Instrument 3: SWOT analysis – Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

The **strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT)** tool should be used for situation analysis and planning. Responses should be discussed in a school staff meeting.

According to the SWOT scheme, you should determine the current levels of the following.

- ▶ **Strengths** – What can be used to achieve success? How can tangible and intangible resources, such as students' knowledge, values, attitudes, a positive learning environment and school culture and students' readiness to engage be promoted? Think about what opportunities could be offered in order to build strengths (holding an event, making changes, introducing new rules, etc.).
- ▶ **Weaknesses** – What do you want to improve? Think not only about students' behaviours and attitudes but also about the overall school culture at a structural, organisational, social and civic level.
- ▶ **Opportunities** – Identify the internal and external social connections of the school, including the capabilities and resources offered by members of the school community, partners and wider civil society.
- ▶ **Threats** – Any event is accompanied by certain threats and their correct identification is the most important task. Understand what types of obstacles you might encounter in solving a particular task which might adversely affect students and develop backup measures to mitigate risks.

SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Consequences

Benefits of student participation

Student participation is the subject of academic research in many countries, informing stakeholders about the impacts of the democratic governance model. Participation requires changes in behaviour and habits and additional efforts from members of the school community. Therefore, the following fundamental question must be addressed: Are the results worth the effort? Based on the experience of different countries, student participation can have the following results.

- ▶ Integration of the school community.
- ▶ Improving information sharing.
- ▶ Making an active contribution to school life.
- ▶ Effective implementation of school rules.
- ▶ Increasing sense of security.
- ▶ Integration of the school community within the local community.
- ▶ Feeling of importance (that your voice is heard and that you are important).
- ▶ Development of talents/abilities.
- ▶ Strengthening trust in the school and adults.
- ▶ Learning independence and responsibility.
- ▶ Competence development.

These steps towards improvement are accompanied by the improvement of academic achievements, discipline and the school's reputation in the eyes of the local community. That is why ensuring real student participation is worth the time and effort that teachers, school leaders and students themselves have to invest.

Risks of token participation

As described above, token (non-) participation in schools, encompassing practices such as tokenism, manipulation and decoration, poses significant risks that undermine the very purpose of engaging students in educational processes. Tokenism occurs when individuals are invited to participate merely to provide an illusion of inclusiveness. Their opinions are often sought only to fulfil a superficial requirement, leading to disillusionment when participants realise that their contributions have little to no impact on decisions. This dilution of genuine engagement can lead to a culture of apathy among students, as they begin to recognise that their voices are not valued, resulting in decreased motivation to participate in future initiatives.

Manipulation occurs when stakeholders are used as mere pawns to support the agendas of those in power. In this scenario, students might be asked to perform tasks or provide feedback that serves the interests of adults rather than addressing their needs or concerns. This breeds disenfranchisement, as students might feel exploited rather than empowered. They might feel a sense of betrayal when they understand that their involvement was not intended to facilitate meaningful dialogue or change, but rather to lend credibility to top-down decisions. As a consequence, the intended collaborative spirit of educational settings is eroded, replaced by distrust and a sense of futility regarding engagement efforts.

Decoration involves inviting individuals to participate in activities that appear participatory but lack substance. For instance, schools may hold meetings or forums where students are present, but discussions are predetermined and outcomes are not genuinely open for input. This approach indicates a lack of true commitment to involving participants in the decision-making process. Such superficial forms of engagement not only waste the time of those involved but also risk alienating them when they perceive the process as disingenuous. When communities sense that their input is merely for show, they might withdraw from future opportunities to engage, reinforcing a cycle of disconnection between students, educators and school leaders and administrators.

The collective impact of these forms of participation can lead to a climate of scepticism and disengagement in the educational landscape. When students, teachers and parents feel that their roles in participation processes are undermined, the essential components of collaboration, trust and respect begin to deteriorate. As a consequence, educational institutions risk failing to identify and address the needs, desires and opinions of the members of the school community, resulting in policies and practices that are misaligned with the community they serve.

Ultimately, the risks of such pretend participation highlight the necessity for schools to prioritise authentic engagement strategies that genuinely empower stakeholders. For participation to be meaningful, there must be a concerted effort to ensure that all voices are heard and that their contributions are valued and acted upon. Without this commitment to authentic participation, schools risk creating environments where individuals feel overlooked and disregarded, weakening the foundations of community and the mutual support that is essential for a thriving educational experience and for developing competences for a democratic culture.

Guidelines for increasing student participation

Student participation: guidelines for teachers

The role of teachers is paramount in achieving the full integration and active participation of students in school life. It is the teacher's responsibility to establish a motivating classroom environment rooted in democratic values. Working in collaboration with students, teachers should cultivate a school culture that instils a sense of belonging and a desire to contribute to this shared culture.

Often, motivating teenagers is one of the most challenging tasks that educators encounter. Teachers significantly contribute to the formation of adolescents' personalities, helping them enhance their self-regulation and autonomy, foster independent work habits and encourage shared responsibility. Practical work assumes a crucial role in the overall educational process, deepening both knowledge and habits while nurturing personal and civic competences among adolescents, particularly in the realm of participation.

How does student participation benefit teachers?

Student participation improves relationships

It is widely acknowledged that working within a positive environment significantly contributes to life satisfaction. When students are heard, supported and empowered to take the initiative, share their ideas and pursue meaningful goals, they are likely to feel more content within the school setting. This, in turn, fosters relationships built on co-operation, mutual trust and respect. It is a widely shared experience, backed by research on the relational dimension of learning, that students learn best from teachers they genuinely connect with. Moreover, relationships based on co-operation, mutual trust and respect are established between students.

One of the most important aspects of community involvement is the impact of participation on students' academic performance. Alberto Dávila and Marie T. Mora's research report on the correlation between community involvement and academic achievement presents the results of a panel study conducted between 1988 and 2000 (Dávila and Mora 2007). A total of 15 340 students from the United States participated in the study. It was found that the academic performance of students who were voluntarily involved in school self-government and community activities improved in the areas of reading, maths, the natural sciences and history. This finding confirms the assumption that participation helps students develop a sense of self-efficacy, self-confidence, autonomy, initiative and motivation to learn.

Furthermore, the role of the teacher in a democratic school environment has the potential to change teachers' attitudes to the subjects taught.

This list of positive changes is by no means exhaustive, but it clearly demonstrates the potential of a democratic learning environment to establish relationships based on recognition and respect, to help adolescents develop their strengths and, finally, to take an active role in the communities and contribute to democratic society.

Student participation improves teachers' professional competences

While not trained in curriculum studies, theory of knowledge and pedagogies, students convey feedback for teachers through the way they respond to instructions and teaching approaches. Students become an integral part of teachers' professional development when their feedback is actively taken into account.

Student participation improves student discipline and rule compliance

School rules serve to create a safe and supportive environment. When they are involved in the making of school rules and see their needs reflected in those rules, students consent to their enforcement. Consequently, rules cease to be top-down measures against which students might be inclined to rebel. Rather, students are encouraged to defend the rules that they have themselves established. While, traditionally, responsibility for rule compliance rested with school staff, this form of participation bestows students with direct responsibility for ensuring the well-being of the school community. Additionally, students might be more naturally inclined to respect behavioural codes, supporting teachers to maintain a disciplined learning environment. However, adults need to ensure that rules and decisions are grounded in democratic principles and should intervene if fundamental values are at risk of being undermined. Yet, any interventions should be discussed together with students and any stakeholders of the school community affected.

Communication with parents improves the quality of student participation

Co-operation between schools and families is crucial for maximising student support. The active engagement of parents helps to create a suitable learning environment, tailored to individual student needs, both at school and at home. Further, close relationships between schools and families allow teachers to better monitor students' academic performance and civic development.

What is our role in encouraging student participation?

Within the scope of their authority, teachers:

- ▶ use strategies focused on the development of competences for democratic culture among students, promote the sharing of principles/values based on the participation and responsibility of students in the school democratic governance/decision-making processes in the school community;
- ▶ provide inclusive and egalitarian learning practices for students grounded in democratic values;
- ▶ promote the participation of students in the process of formal and non-formal activities, development/revision;
- ▶ promote the involvement of students' parents in school matters and support the integration of student participation into school policy.

How to determine our current stage – An instrument for self-reflection, SWOT analysis

In order for the steps taken to promote student participation to be relevant, teachers should start by analysing the situation of the class/group and assessing their levels of participation in four main areas.

1. Participation in the activities of decision-making collegial bodies, in the development of the school strategy and school curriculum.
2. Participation in the classroom.
3. Participation in activities not foreseen by the curriculum.
4. Participation in community activities.

A SWOT analysis, as outlined above, can be used for assessing the situation.

Based on the given scheme, teachers can determine action priorities and strategies from which a specific action plan can be derived.

<p>Strengths <i>(with respect to)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 1. Student participation in the activities of the school collegial bodies and the development of school policy documents. ▶ 2. Participation of students in formal and non-formal activities. ▶ 3. Participation of students in community activities. 	<p>Weaknesses <i>(with respect to)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 1. Student participation in the activities of the school collegial bodies and the development of school policy documents. ▶ 2. Participation of students in formal and non-formal activities. ▶ 3. Participation of students in community activities.
<p>SWOT</p>	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 1. Student participation in the activities of the school collegial bodies and the development of school policy documents. ▶ 2. Participation of students in formal and non-formal activities. ▶ 3. Participation of students in community activities. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 1. Student participation in the activities of the school collegial bodies and the development of school policy documents. ▶ 2. Participation of students in formal and non-formal activities. ▶ 3. Participation of students in community activities.

How to determine priorities

Planning tool

Developing an effective action plan starts with defining the purpose of the action.

- ▶ **What is my goal?** Which space for participation do I want to strengthen – the school, classroom, extracurricular or community? What knowledge should students acquire, what should they understand and what skills should they develop?
- ▶ **What steps should I take?** Determining the purpose of action will help identify what actions, activities and steps need to be implemented to achieve the set goals.
- ▶ **What resources do I have?** Specific actions need to correspond with available human and material resources.
- ▶ **How should I act?** What role do I assume as a teacher in implementing the set goals? What are the roles and my expectations of students, school staff, parents and external partners? What measures are in place if action fails?
- ▶ **How is the process implemented?** At the implementation stage, a process analysis is needed, including systematic monitoring and scope for modification, as appropriate: a review of roles and time frames, development of additional actions or finding resources, identifying irrelevant or inefficient steps.
- ▶ **What are the results?** The end of each specific activity marks the beginning of a new one. After one activity is completed, it should be assumed that the picture has somewhat changed in terms of student participation. A SWOT analysis (or some other reflection tool) can help evaluate changes. Clearly, such evaluation is necessary at the final stage for effective planning of future actions.

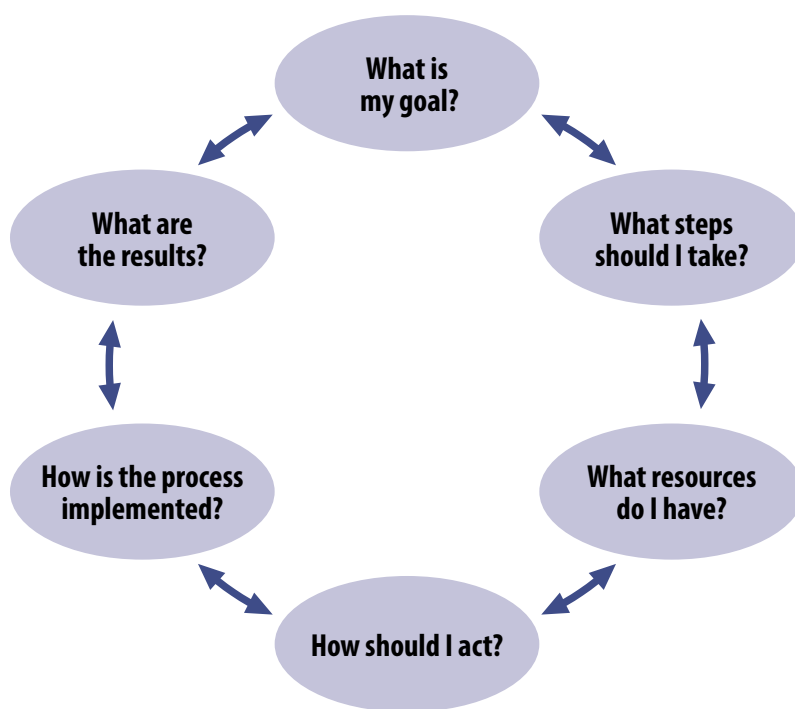


Figure 2. Planning tool to determine priorities (Council of Europe 2023a).

Actions that promote student participation

Participation of students in activities of the school's collegial bodies and development of school policy documents

- ▶ Holding informational meetings and workshops with students to introduce the concept of participation and help students understand its importance.
- ▶ Allocating time during lessons for helping students understand the importance of their participation in self-government – encouraging participation in the school decision-making processes.
- ▶ Encouraging identification and supporting student initiatives within the school.
- ▶ Supporting students' participation in the drawing up of school documents.
- ▶ Supporting student initiatives within representative bodies.
- ▶ Allocating a budget for student participation initiatives.

Student participation in formal and non-formal activities and considering diversity of student needs and representation

- ▶ Consider the diverse educational needs of students in the selection of learning and participation activities.
- ▶ Integrate appropriate additional learning resources into the curriculum to increase students' awareness about the needs of vulnerable groups.
- ▶ Ensure the principles of gender equality in the educational process.
- ▶ Provide an interculturally sensitive environment in a culturally diverse environment (Council of Europe 2025a).
- ▶ Introduce a mutual learning approach within the school.
- ▶ Ensure the involvement of students in the process of developing student evaluation components/tools for different subjects.
- ▶ Active involvement of students in the process of finding and selecting additional reading or learning resources in different subjects.

- ▶ Consulting student representation bodies and initiative groups on issues and ideas, including the managing of clubs and implementation of school projects.
- ▶ To promote student participation practices, organising subject-based or educational/cognitive activities with the participation of different classes (quizzes, sports activities, intellectual competitions, etc.).
- ▶ Compiling a list of external specialists from different fields and ensuring participation of students in identifying these specialists and their contributions to school projects and events.

Participation of students in community activities

- ▶ Ensuring students' involvement in the process of identifying problems within the community.
- ▶ Planning learning activities, in which students play an active part together with their parents.
- ▶ Support during the preparation of informative electronic booklets/press releases to keep parents informed about developments in the school.
- ▶ Encouraging student–parent initiatives and involvement in the school – “Parent initiatives/ideas”.
- ▶ Supporting students to communicate with local authorities about student initiatives.

Student participation in activities of school collegiate bodies and in the development of school policy documents – Case studies, examples and instruments

Objective: Using strategies focused on the development of competences for democratic culture among students, promote the sharing of principles/values based on the participation and responsibility of students in the democratic governance of the school/decision-making processes in the school community.

Action: Holding information meetings in classes to raise awareness about the importance of student participation.

CASE STUDY – Class meeting

Several teachers of one school introduced their students to a schedule of activities for the term and explained the importance of their participation in these activities. They listened to students' feedback about the information received and asked them to present their views and questions in written form for the next meeting. After analysing the written feedback, students and teachers held another working meeting.

Action: Allocate adequate time for understanding the importance of student participation in activities related to student representation.

CASE STUDY – Informing about activities related to student representation

Step 1 – Ask a student representative to prepare a presentation for their peers on the functions of the representative body and participation mechanisms.

Step 2 – Give time to discussion and questions following the presentation.

Step 3 – Encourage involvement in initiatives and activities related to student representation.

Step 4 – Support student representatives in preparing a pack of students' proposals/opinions to be submitted to the representative body.

Step 5 – Facilitate a meeting with student representatives to discuss feedback on the effectiveness of the intervention.

Action: Facilitate the process of organising and implementing student initiatives within the school.

CASE STUDY – Suggestions box

- Step 1** – At the beginning of the academic year, introduce students to different components of the academic process and how it serves their education and growth, including school disciplines and programmes, competitions, conferences, exchanges or field trips, celebrations, theatre visits, engagement in the arts, sports, school clubs, food service facilities, school venues, playground, material resources, etc. Spend 10 to 15 minutes of the lesson introducing these components.
- Step 2** – List these components of the academic process on a large piece of paper and place it somewhere visible in the classroom.
- Step 3** – Tell students that they are welcome to change, improve or delete any of these components or introduce new ones. Students should understand that changes require taking appropriate regulations into account and mobilising resources.
- Step 4** – Place a large suggestion box in the classroom and tell students that they can leave their anonymous comments in the box on a periodic basis; these suggestions should concern the improvement, arrangement, use or development of different components of the academic process. The suggestion box will be opened at regular intervals.
- Step 5** – If several suggestions from the box concern the same issue or conflict with each other, facilitate discussions to allow students to come to an agreement.
- Step 6** – Ask them to do research and prepare information about the issue at hand, justifying their suggestions (Resource A).
- Step 7** – At the next meeting, help students finalise their proposals and prepare justifications in writing, describing the benefits that the proposed changes would bring as well as potential risks and challenges to implementation.
- Step 8** – Encourage students to submit their proposals to the student representation body, school administration or other relevant stakeholders. Provide support as an intermediary if necessary.

RESOURCE A – JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSED CHANGES

	Reason for the proposed change, in my opinion	Goal of the proposed change, in my opinion	How can I justify my opinion?	How the proposed change will affect each student, in my opinion	What can be an obstacle to implementing the proposed change?
1.					
2.					

RESOURCE B – APPLICATION

Addressee: School Director Mr/Ms.....

Applicant: [name and class]

Briefly describe the activities that you have implemented

- We used a suggestion box to prepare a proposal about things that can be improved in the school....

State what support you require

- For example, new sporting equipment/schoolyard improvement/regrouping of subjects in the schedule of classes, etc.

Action: Ensure student participation in drafting school policies.

CASE STUDY – Classroom rules

- Step 1** – Set aside time to develop classroom rules. It is recommended dedicating an entire lesson to this task to increase the opportunity for all students to be heard.
- Step 2** – Use guiding questions to help students identify priority values (friendship, mutual respect, freedom, equality, honesty, etc.). Focus on values included in the RFCDC.
- Step 3** – Encourage students to connect selected values to behaviours, focusing on behaviours relevant to school settings (for example, we may adopt the following behaviours based on friendship: helping each other with homework; we do not interfere while working on assignments in class). Similarly, we may adopt the following behaviours based on equality, such as the inclusion of girls and boys equally in the process of tidying up the classroom.
- Step 4** – Decide on behavioural rules; they should be specific, realistic and feasible.
- Step 5** – When formulating rules, try to use positive wording. For example: we are never late; we are always on time/we don't make noise; we listen carefully to each other.
- Step 6** – Write down the rules on a large piece of paper and place it somewhere visible in the classroom or the school building.
- Step 7** – Praise students for following the rules. Remind them of the positive effect that comes with the introduction of school rules.
- Step 8** – The identified rules of conduct may be changed, revised and updated, based on an evaluation of results.

RESOURCE A – MAP OF ASSOCIATIONS

- ▶ Ask students to name values that are important to them.
- ▶ Write the named values on the board to make it is possible to connect them and for the students to understand these connections.
- ▶ Ask students to identify behaviours that are associated with each value.

Action: Support student initiatives and collegial decision-making bodies.

CASE STUDY – Advocating student initiatives on the board of trustees

Before a school board of trustees had to make a decision about a package of initiatives submitted by the student self-government, a board member who was a teacher asked the student self-government to organise a meeting with the student initiative group. At the meeting, the teacher went through each proposal with the students and discussed their feasibility, agreeing on initiatives that the teacher would advocate before the board of trustees.

CASE STUDY – Students' initiative – School regulations

In the process of drafting school regulations (Council of Europe 2025b), members of the school disciplinary committee undertook the following steps.

- Step 1** – Within the framework of active co-operation with the student representation body, the disciplinary committee met the students and provided information about disciplinary procedures and related school policies.
- Step 2** – The disciplinary committee, with the active involvement of student representatives, conducted an anonymous survey of students about what the changes needed to address disciplinary issues in the school.
- Step 3** – Based on an analysis of the proposals received, the committee developed a set of amendments together with student representatives that were introduced to the student representative body and then disseminated among students.

Step 4 – After receiving recommendations from students on the final document, a set of amendments were introduced to the school's formal disciplinary procedures and submitted to relevant authorities for approval.

Participation of students in formal and non-formal education activities – Case studies, examples and instruments

Objective: Ensure inclusive practice based on equal values for students in the teaching and learning process.

Action: Taking into account the different learning needs of students in the selection of learning activities.

CASE STUDY – Revising learning goals based on student initiatives

At the beginning of the term, a chemistry teacher introduced a group of ninth-grade students to the complex assignments and projects that they would have to complete during the term. He then divided the class into groups and asked them to present their opinions and critical suggestions about a specific assignment or project. Subsequently, the entire class worked together to analyse the feedback, allowing the teacher to edit projects and assignments accordingly.

INSTRUMENT – FEEDBACK FORM ON LEARNING MATERIAL

Assignment/ project	Aspects to be improved	Justification of changes proposed	Alternatives proposed	Comments

Action: Integrate appropriate additional learning resources into the curriculum to increase students' awareness about the needs of vulnerable groups.

CASE STUDY – Diversity in our classroom

During a meeting of the teachers' council at one of the schools, a civic education teacher proposed to organise a diversity week in the school and to include it in the school plan and schedule it. For the diversity week, each subject group (department) prepared a proposal for teaching methods and learning resources that address the needs of different vulnerable groups. For example, a physics teacher had his students work on a ramp mock-up for a lesson about mechanics, acceleration and tilt angle.

CASE STUDY – Class project for equality

A group of ninth-grade students implemented a class project and created a ramp with the help of the school principal. During an art lesson, students obtained and analysed information about equality, created wall newspapers and organised awareness-raising campaigns. Further, they held presentations and facilitated discussions for primary school students on the topic of human rights, tolerance and persons with disabilities. After implementing the project, they requested instalment of ramps across the school building to make it fully accessible. The principal supported this students' initiative and ensured the instalment of ramps with the active participation of the children themselves.

Later, plans were made to introduce Braille to the school environment for persons with visual impairment. A specialist was invited to provide recommendations and guidelines.

CASE STUDY – Intercultural dialogue (Council of Europe 2025c)

School teachers undertook a study on the cultural diversity of the school community and have taken the following steps based on the results.

Step 1 – At all levels of the school, they introduced working meetings with students to present a school project called “Dialogue of cultures in our school”. The aim of the project was to introduce students to diversity in the school and its cultural dimensions.

Step 2 – Class mentors conducted information meetings with parents to introduce them to these initiatives and highlight their importance in understanding of cultural diversity by students and the formation of democratic attitudes.

Step 3 – Working meetings with students and parents were held to clearly determine all aspects of the presentation. Students received maximum support from their teachers.

Step 4 – School events for parents and members of the school community were held, featuring the prepared presentations.

Action: Based on the principles of inclusivity and equality, distribute gender-sensitive roles among students to strengthen their ownership of and involvement in the classroom process.

CASE STUDY – Equal roles

A physics teacher noticed that students often left the classroom messy. When he asked them to tidy up, only the girls seemed to pay attention. One day, he decided to engage the class students in an activity to promote tidiness and shared responsibility. He wrote down different roles on sheets of paper, such as adjusting chairs and tables, clearing pens and papers from the tables, picking up items from the floor, watering plants and so on. He folded these papers and placed them in a box. Then, he asked an equal number of boys and girls to step forward and take turns drawing papers from the box. He explained that classroom maintenance is everyone’s responsibility and the assignments stated on the paper would be their roles for the week, with a different group taking on the responsibility each week.

Objective: Promote the participation of students in the development/revision of the curriculum, including non-formal activities.

Action: Introducing mutual learning for students in the school.

CASE STUDY – Peer-to-peer learning

During a teachers’ council meeting at one school, a physics teacher proposed that all departments consider allocating a minimum of three lessons per term for peer-to-peer learning, with older students teaching younger students. The physics teacher believed that this approach would boost student motivation by enabling them to share knowledge, experiences and teaching methods and become more familiar with the role of a teacher. Ultimately, this initiative aimed to increase student engagement in teaching and learning. Other subject-based groups embraced the idea and each department selected at least three topics for peer-to-peer learning.

Teachers introduced this new initiative to students and used criteria suggested by the students themselves to select those who would take on the role of the teacher. Teachers and students collaborated to prepare the necessary materials, identified the target classes and implemented the activities that they had jointly planned.

Action: Ensure the participation of students in the development of student evaluation components/tools by departments.

CASE STUDY – Evaluation – Student engagement

At the beginning of every academic year, departments create subject-based programmes, evaluation schemes and instruments and project-based teaching plans or integrated lessons. Student participation was promoted in drafting these documents, increasing their motivation and responsible attitude to learning goals.

Step 1 – During the first week of the school year, introduce middle/high-school students to types of assignments/activities prepared for achieving the national curriculum goals for each subject and their evaluation criteria.

Step 2 – Also during that first week, dedicate a lesson to an analysis of these assignments and evaluation schemes, so that your goals and actions required from students are clearly understood by them.

Step 3 – Next, ask students to work in groups to analyse the assignments and assessment schemes and to come up with arguments to justify their position about any flaws that they have found in these documents as well as proposed solutions.

Step 4 – Review the list of recommendations and opinions prepared by the students and make appropriate changes in the materials you have.

Step 5 – Introduce to students the revised assignments and assessment schemes, explain how you integrated the proposed changes and why some of their proposals were not followed.

Step 6 – Make electronic versions of assessment schemes available to students and disseminate them via an appropriate platform.

Action: Active involvement of students in the process of finding and selecting additional reading or teaching/educational resources in different subjects.

CASE STUDY – We create teaching materials

A biology teacher collaborated with 10th-grade students to select additional educational materials. The teacher presented an annual calendar/plan that included a list of topics and divided major themes among different groups of students. Each group of students was tasked with finding supplementary materials in both Georgian and foreign languages, such as documentaries, videos, academic reading materials and more. The teacher emphasised the importance of student participation and teamwork in this process. Through active collaboration with the teacher, the students compiled a collection of additional resources for the 10th-grade biology curriculum, including multimedia materials. This endeavour not only increased their motivation for learning but also instilled a greater sense of responsibility for the subject. To make these resources accessible, the students created a dedicated platform (a blog) with the assistance of their ICT teacher. They also planned to share the resources with other schools.

Activity – Consulting student representation bodies and initiative groups on issues and ideas, including the managing of clubs and implementation of school projects.

CASE STUDY – School clubs

A state school submitted a school club project called “Book club” in a competition for promoting intellectual, educational and cognitive projects organised by the Education, Sports and Youth Affairs Department of the City Hall. It aimed to identify student interests, conduct school research based on relevant literature, become acquainted with works of modern authors and discuss these works with the authors, to examine the school library and restore damaged books together with art, history and language teachers. It also entailed involving parents in the discussions.

The project was selected as the winner of the competition and it was able to host four contemporary authors in one term.

INSTRUMENT – GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING VOLUNTEERING

There are many opportunities for volunteering, both physical and intellectual, including work in digital spaces and with digital resources.

To offer age-appropriate volunteering activities for students and motivate them to become engaged, the following suggestions might prove effective.

- ▶ Contact relevant government and non-governmental organisations to receive information about volunteering opportunities. Aim to formalise partnerships with the support of the school's board of trustees.

- ▶ Choose different types of age-appropriate and needs-oriented volunteering activities.
- ▶ Introduce these opportunities to students (for example, activities could be related to battling homelessness or socio-economic disadvantage, supporting orphans and orphanages or promoting inclusion measures for persons with disabilities).
- ▶ Through discussion, identify students' interests, priorities, wishes (for example, if students are interested in day care centres and social enterprises, they will be employed in these two areas. Make sure to allocate resources appropriately – and consider both material and non-material resources, including students' time and effort).
- ▶ Set up a volunteering scheme adapted to the school (it is recommended to have regular volunteering activities, two hours per week for eight weeks, for example). Prepare the scheme in collaboration with the organisers of selected volunteering opportunities.
- ▶ Help students understand their roles and activities in advance, using the SWOT analysis method, filling out the SWOT chart together with the students and placing it somewhere visible for the students.
- ▶ Connect students to volunteer organisations according to their interest. Negotiate with these organisations to provide students with preparatory training, seeking advice from a co-ordinator or an on-site consultant and maintain systematic communication.
- ▶ Ask students to keep a diary.
- ▶ Talk to students about their experiences in groups and individually, as appropriate (be prepared that issues may arise that fall outside the scope of your competence, so consult relevant specialists).
- ▶ To sum up the activity and share experiences at the end of the volunteering scheme, have students read out excerpts from their diaries and talk about their experiences, prepare presentations and present them in front of the class or at a specially organised event at school.
- ▶ Once again, do the SWOT analysis with the students; compare it to the previous results.
- ▶ To discuss experiences, use the following questions: What did I learn? What did I understand? What did this experience teach me about broader issues? What do I want to do now? Encourage students to generalise their experiences; (Resource A, Resource B).
- ▶ Encourage students to plan future activities.

RESOURCE A – TOOL FOR REFLECTION. THE FOUR FS: FACTS, FEELINGS, FINDINGS, FUTURE

After completing the activity, ask students to fill out the following table.

▶ What did I know before the volunteering scheme? ▶ What did I learn?	
▶ What was I feeling? ▶ What do I feel now?	
▶ What did I learn to do? What am I able I do now that I was not able to do before?	
▶ What do I need to do next? ▶ What can I do?	

Of course, this table can be simpler or more complex, depending on the students' age and needs. Allow students to fill out the table anonymously, if it helps them feel more comfortable to express their opinion. Completing the chart will only be the first step in building students' understanding of their experiences. How they will be able to generalise their findings and apply them in the future depends on the resources of the teacher and support for follow-up activities provided by the school.

RESOURCE B – 6+1 SCHEME



Figure 3. 6+1 scheme for reflection (Council of Europe 2023a).

Action: To promote student participation practices by organising subject-based or learning activities in collaboration with different classes.

CASE STUDY – Creating a common school project on a priority issue: films on competences for democratic culture

The promotion of non-formal and formal activities for students, as studies confirm, significantly increases students' academic achievements, involvement in the learning process, discipline and motivation. Therefore, developing common school projects and offering successful examples should be a priority of any school.

Step 1 – At the initial stage, the teacher initiating a knowledge competition consults with teachers of different subjects to come up with 10 questions related to their subjects; five questions should be based on knowledge about the subject, while the remaining five should be focused on problem-solving skills and analytical competences. Ensure anonymity.

Step 2 – At this stage, a database of the questions will be created. Teachers should also provide correct answers and references.

Step 3 – Teachers will evaluate the questions and divide them into three categories according to the level of complexity: easy/average/difficult. Questions should be ranked by teachers who are not specialists in the particular subject.

Step 4 – From the database of questions ranked and analysed by teachers, a set of questions is prepared and used for the knowledge competition/quiz.

Step 5 – The rules and etiquette of the competition should be agreed upon together with the participating teams. The final document should be given to students ahead of the competition.

Step 6 – A methodology for assessing competition results and distributing scores should be agreed upon together with the participating teams. The final assessment form should be given to the students ahead of the competition.

Step 7 – The school should prepare certificates to be awarded to participants and special certificates for the winning team. If the school budget allows, it is recommended to provide bookstore vouchers to winners of the competition.

Action: Compiling a list of external specialists from different fields and ensuring the participation of students in identifying these specialists and their contributions to school projects and events.

CASE STUDY – Choosing speakers, Resource A

For a school project “Speakers at our school”, a list of potential speakers was prepared for subject-specific departments (three speakers for each subject) to conduct lectures/working meetings with students and introduce them to educational information related to a particular subject. Participating students were asked to study the speakers presented by teachers, including their speeches and interviews, and to choose one speaker for each subject that the school would then invite.

RESOURCE A

Speaker	The reason for choosing	Materials reviewed	Small reflection	Comments
1.				
2.				
3.				

Student participation in community activities – Case studies, examples and instruments

Objective: To support student participation in community-based activities.

Action: Ensure the participation of students in the process of identifying problems within the community.

CASE STUDY – Forum theatre

A public school organised a forum theatre. This method served to promote the involvement of students in social transformation processes, in changes benefiting society and in solving local problems. Forum theatre differs from ordinary performances in that it connects the stage and the audience. The students invited the school community and locals to the school to think about the problem of domestic violence in the community. The students, according to the rules of the forum theatre, performed twice. The spectators had an opportunity to engage with the performance as actors and change the performance. Students were divided into groups and were assigned roles to stage a short performance about the issue in question.

The forum theatre took place according to the following rules: one group went on stage while members of another group played the role of spectators. After the first act, the facilitator (student, teacher, administration member, parent or other representative of the community) asked spectators the following questions: What problem did you see? How can this problem be solved? Is it possible to solve the problem by replacing any of the characters? The audience started thinking about a solution. The same group performed another scenario. According to the rules, anyone could interrupt the performance by clapping and replace any of the actors. The performance was interrupted a few times by clapping and participants were replaced. In the end, there was a discussion about the issue at hand (domestic violence) with the active participation of the invited guests.

Objective: To promote the involvement of parents in school life and support a school policy that encourages student participation in community activities.

Action: Planning learning activities in which students play an active part together with their parents.

CASE STUDY – Learning to play chess

A chess club, “Caissa” (a goddess of chess), was established in Public School 62 in Tbilisi, Georgia, named after a five-time world champion Nona Gaprindashvili, who is a graduate of this school. The chess teacher organised school chess championships for students from grades 3 to 12. In the first stage, the three best players were identified, who, at the end of the project, together with the adult members of their families, participated in the final round. The competition was held within the framework of the chess tournament for students and their parents.

To promote the teacher’s initiative, the school administration engaged representatives from the local private sector in the activities of the chess club, leading to local business organisations providing prizes for winning teams.

CASE STUDY – Remembering historical events

Step 1 – First, the teacher will introduce the project “Historical memory of our city/district/village” to middle- and high-school students. Within this project, students and parents will try to create a historical guide by interviewing people and collecting photo and video material. The teacher will listen to students’ suggestions and feedback and try to take them into account during the project’s implementation.

Step 2 – The teacher will distribute activities among student groups. They will visit the city archives and review the archived material with the teacher’s help to then digitise them and create an electronic catalogue.

Step 3 – Student groups, with the active participation of parents, will collect stories from oral history about the city/district/village. During the interviews, they will focus on educational and cultural aspects of history.

Step 4 – Working groups will introduce project goals to locals and ask permission to digitise important photos that exist in family photo archives.

Step 5 – With the participation of parents and students, a final project event will be held to present the information gathered by the team. The final event will be attended by representatives of the community and local authorities.

RESOURCE A

Possible issues/questions for respondents

- ▶ Please tell us about a story about our city/district/village which has been passed on orally.
- ▶ Please share the stories behind the photos that you have provided.
- ▶ Can you recall how and where young people spent their free time back then?
- ▶ Which place was considered a gathering place and why?
- ▶ What traditions existed in your youth that you would like to bring back and why?

CASE STUDY – Discussions about issues in the community

A geography teacher introduced monthly discussions with students about issues that affect both the community and students (for example, students may have critical attitudes about forms of relationships within the community, social norms and traditions, traffic issues, exploitation of natural resources or tourism) (Resource A). As a joint initiative between teachers and students, it was decided that members of the local government and NGOs represented in the community would participate in the discussions.

RESOURCE A

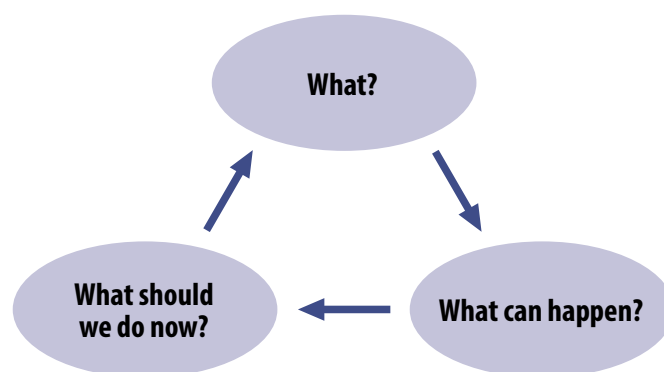


Figure 4. Scheme for reflection (Council of Europe 2023a).

- ▶ **What?** What do I know? What information do I have? Students go through all the facts they have learned about.
- ▶ **What can happen?** What does this information suggest? What is good/bad about it? What do I find favourable or unacceptable? By discussing and analysing facts, students should identify things that provoke criticism as well as a positive evaluation.
- ▶ **What should we do now?** For the last stage, students should identify goals and next steps.
- ▶ However, this is not the end of the reflection process. The scheme should be used at every implementation stage.

CASE STUDY – Research with the participation of students

Shindisi public school, together with Javakhishvili State University in Tbilisi, participated in and won the contest “Research with the participation of students”, announced by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation.

The aim of the project was to research the level of the radioactive gas Radon in the drinking water of Shindisi and nearby villages. Students took samples of both drinking water and surface water and analysed the samples in the laboratory of Javakhishvili State University.

Action: Support for the preparation of informative electronic booklets/press releases to keep parents up to date about developments in the school.

Action: Encouraging parent initiatives and involvement in the school – “Parent’s initiative/idea”.

CASE STUDY – The practice of gathering initiatives from parents

A civic education teacher proposed the project “Parental initiatives for the school” for secondary-school students. Within this initiative, students conducted interviews with their parents, asking them to propose initiatives/best practices that would contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning or school administration issues. At the end of the interview, parents were asked to state what kind of voluntary assistance they could offer for the school’s development.

Interview questions: interview with a parent

- ▶ What cases of parent participation within the school can you remember from your days? What was the role of the parents? What was your role? The role of the teachers?
- ▶ In your opinion, what are the opportunities for parent–school co-operation today?
- ▶ What could you do for our school? What resources could you provide?
- ▶ Three pieces of advice that you would give to our school.

Action: Supporting students to communicate with local authorities about student initiatives.

CASE STUDY – Initiative for the municipality

School teachers found that following the completion of roadworks in front of the school, students were often late. Teachers surveyed students that arrived late and found that they had to stand by the traffic light for a long time, waiting for the green light for pedestrians. Teachers and students prepared a joint petition requesting instalment of a metal bridge outside the school.

INSTRUMENT FOR REFLECTION

This reflection instrument will help you reflect on the implementation and results of the actions identified and selected using the original planning tool. You can also link this reflection tool to SWOT analysis results and the entire planning process.

The teaching process requires much effort on teachers' part. It is therefore natural for teachers to divert from the overarching goal as a result of the daily routine and to focus on daily processes. A structured reflection tool that teachers can use on a periodic basis can help them assess the overall effectiveness of their efforts.

We must remember that we should not turn to reflection only when we are dissatisfied with something. Rather, reflection should be an integral part of the learning process, increasing the quality of pedagogical interventions.

Teachers can create certain tools for reflection such as questionnaires, diagrams and tables.

Below is an example of a reflection tool, in the form of a questionnaire.

- ▶ To what extent was I able to implement the steps defined in the planning?
- ▶ To what extent did I achieve the desired results?
- ▶ To what extent has student participation increased?
- ▶ To what extent did I monitor the progress of planned activities?
- ▶ How could I get the students interested in the classroom/school/extracurricular/community issues?
- ▶ How can I encourage students to participate?
- ▶ Did I ask all the necessary questions?
- ▶ To what extent did I gain the trust of the students?
- ▶ Did I listen carefully to the students?
- ▶ To what extent was I able to consider the students' interests in the planning of actions?
- ▶ How was I able to involve students in the distribution of roles and functions?
- ▶ Did I make the assigned tasks and individual functions clear to all students?
- ▶ How did I deal with organisational issues?
- ▶ What issues could be addressed for other members of the school community and for young adults? Where did I not show enough confidence?
- ▶ Did I find enough emotional and organisational support for students who made some mistakes?
- ▶ How did I react to the opinions expressed by the students? How did I react to opinions I disagreed with?
- ▶ How did I react to the successes and failures of each student? Of all students? How did I divide my attention?
- ▶ Did the students follow the agreed rules and existing regulations?
- ▶ Was I able to motivate all students?
- ▶ To what extent was I able to avoid conflict or embarrassing situations?
- ▶ To what extent did I resolve these situations?
- ▶ What did we succeed in? What did we fail at? What were my mistakes?
- ▶ To what extent did I manage to help students understand the experience?

Student participation: guidelines for students

How does engagement help students?

Student participation in democratic school governance implies having an active role, the opportunity to be involved and a sharing of roles and responsibilities. For genuine participation, there need to be spaces and opportunities for students to engage in school matters. Participation has to do with talking as well as listening, expressing opinions and understanding the opinions of others. Participation means working with your peers, teachers, parents and other stakeholders to tackle issues and further the democratisation of schools. Participation is not just about being proactive, it means taking advantage of opportunities that allow students to make their voices, needs and interests heard more clearly.

By participating in democratic school governance, students will be able to:

- ▶ perceive themselves as members of the school community with equal rights as adults;
- ▶ develop a stronger sense of belonging to the school;
- ▶ perceive the school as a space for realisation of their abilities, ideas and initiatives;
- ▶ understand their importance and role as stakeholders in school development processes and the formation of the school's democratic culture;
- ▶ listen to the opinions of others (including different opinions);
- ▶ express their opinions constructively and participate in discussions;
- ▶ respect the rights and dignity of others;
- ▶ participate in the process of making democratic decisions;
- ▶ implement democratic principles in practice;
- ▶ take their share of responsibility in overcoming difficulties/problems within the school or the wider community.

Further, participation will allow students to:

- ▶ promote positive changes in their lives as well as in the lives of their peers and the wider school community;
- ▶ develop skills and become more self-reliant – as a result of participating in various initiatives, students have the opportunity to acquire skills that are key for professional development.

What is your role in promoting student participation?

- ▶ To promote the sharing of principles/values based on students' participation and responsibility in the democratic governance/decision-making processes of the school in the school community.
- ▶ To promote the participation of students in formal and non-formal education activities.
- ▶ To promote the participation of students in community activities.

Students have different needs and interests. For various reasons, not all students will be motivated to participate in the school community. Common obstacles limiting student participation include:

- ▶ lack of information – when students do not know what participation opportunities exist;
- ▶ lack of confidence and motivation – when students do not believe that their involvement will affect decisions and change;
- ▶ lack of self-confidence and self-belief – when students feel that they lack the practice, knowledge and skills to participate and make meaningful contributions.

Meanwhile, students who are already actively involved in the school community can become ambassadors for participation, helping motivate and increase engagement of peers. This is possible if we transform existing barriers into opportunities and plan such steps that make the essence and idea of participation more attractive and interesting for student groups.

For example, students can:

- ▶ promote the dissemination of information about opportunities for participation among their peers – raise awareness about school clubs, student representation bodies and other structures and events;
- ▶ convince less active peers that their involvement is useful and important;
- ▶ create spaces and opportunities that allow all students to participate. This can be done through peer-support groups and individual support.

SWOT analysis for reflection: identifying gaps and opportunities

In the introduction to this tool, it was established that not all forms of participation are genuine participation. The tools offered in the following sections will help teachers and other stakeholders think critically about the meaning of genuine participation and offer inspiration for practice.

INSTRUMENT 1 – OPPORTUNITIES, SPACE, RIGHTS, CONDITIONS AND SUPPORT

The first instrument is based on the Council of Europe Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (Council of Europe 2003). This tool upholds the vital role of young people’s participation in democratic life, including school settings. The tool focuses on five prerequisites for participation: opportunities, space, rights, conditions and support.

Model for assessing levels of opportunity, space, rights, conditions and support for participation

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ What opportunities (projects, initiatives) exist for students to participate in school life, according to their interests?▶ How do students obtain information about school activities?
Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Are there virtual or physical spaces where your views can be heard by other members of the school community? (For example, meetings of the board of trustees, meetings with students, etc.)
Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Do you have the right to participate in school life? How can you justify this?▶ Do you have other rights that are necessary for quality participation? (For example, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, etc.) What are these rights?▶ Do you have other rights that are necessary for quality participation? (For example, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, etc.) What are these rights?
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Do you have access to conditions for participation? (For example, a meeting room, accessible internet, permission from parents to stay in school after classes, etc.)▶ How can you secure the conditions that you do not yet have, but wish to receive?▶ Is everyone allowed to participate regardless of their ethnicity or disability? For example, is there an adapted environment?
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ What types of support do relatively passive students have to make their voices heard through participation in school life?▶ Who are the people in the school who can be seen as supporters of student participation and how can we use their resources for a good cause?

INSTRUMENT 2: UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The second tool is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to Article 12 of the convention, students (children) should be able to express their opinions, to have their voices heard and have their views be integrated into matters that affect them. Therefore, children must be consulted on how they should be listened to, so that their opinions can be shared and understood. Children’s opinions should have an influence over decisions in their school.

Answer the guiding questions below and try to understand what resources you have for quality participation in school and what needs to be improved.

Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How? Provide a safe and inclusive space for students to express their opinions. ▶ Are they interested in your opinion at school? ▶ Do you have a safe space to express your opinions? ▶ Are steps being taken to ensure that all students can participate?
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How? Provide information to students and facilitate/co-ordinate the process of expression of their opinion. ▶ Are you aware of how you can express your opinion/feedback in school? ▶ Do you know that participation is voluntary and you are not required to become involved? ▶ Do you have a variety of opportunities for participation?
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How? We must ensure that students' opinions reach those responsible for listening. ▶ Is there a process for students to communicate their ideas to others? ▶ Do you know who is informed about your opinions? ▶ Do you or the structure you are involved in (student government or club) have the power to make certain decisions?
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How? Ensure that students' views are taken seriously and their views are followed by concrete positive actions, where possible. ▶ Are your views taken into account by those who have decision-making power in the school? ▶ Are there any procedures in place to ensure that students' views are taken seriously? ▶ Do they give you feedback on the decisions they have made about your areas of interest?

Planning instrument: how to determine priorities

Following this initial reflection, the next step in your review may be to identify specific actions and priorities to improve the quality of participation in your school. For example, if you have found that there is a lack of space for student engagement, this section focuses on possible responses to this challenge.

INSTRUMENT 1 – ACHIEVING GOALS

Our goals and how to achieve them	
Name: _____ Goal-setting date: _____	
My goal is to: _____ (E.g., become a student representative, etc.)	
My goal should be realised by: _____ (Date)	
I will need the following steps to realise my goal: Step 1 – Identifying the interests of my classmates Step 2 – Assembling a team Step 3 – ... (you can add additional steps)	Two things that will help me realise my goal: 1. _____ 2. _____
I will know that I have realised my goal when: _____ _____	

Actions promoting student participation

Student participation in the activities of school collegial bodies and in the drawing up of school policies

- ▶ Student collegial bodies to hold meetings with students in order to identify their interests and needs (co-operation skills, listening and observation skills).
- ▶ Student collegial bodies to review the rights and obligations defined by school policy or internal regulations.
- ▶ Within the format of the student collegial bodies, launch calls for proposals for action and on distributing a students' school budget (proposals will be submitted by student initiative groups).
- ▶ Preparing and voicing students' opinions in the disciplinary committee.
- ▶ Awareness-raising activities about the role and functions of the student representation (distributing brochures, publishing posts on social media, etc.).
- ▶ Providing information about the importance of student participation to other members of collegial decision-making bodies.

Student participation in formal and non-formal education activities

- ▶ Students taking care of their classroom, for example nurturing classroom plants, putting up educational posters on the classroom walls, etc.
- ▶ Planning and implementing monthly classroom activities. Each month, a group of students (three or four) will be responsible for organising activities with their class teacher.
- ▶ Organising different types of competitions and challenges between classes. For example, on anti-violence, inclusion, etc.
- ▶ Planning field trips tailored to student interests in partnership with other classes, such as an excursion or a visit to a museum.
- ▶ Establishing thematic clubs based on students' interests.
- ▶ Organising thematic meetings for students on topical issues (prevention of bullying, professional orientation, reproductive health, etc.).
- ▶ Organising engaging challenges and events, using popular and innovative platforms (TikTok, Instagram) to pique the interest and involvement of all students.
- ▶ Organising activities for a healthy life (sporting events, marathons, healthy eating, etc.), ensuring that activities are inclusive for all students.
- ▶ Organising student-initiated activities aimed at co-operation between schools.

Student participation in community activities

- ▶ Establishing co-operation between student representative bodies of different schools.
- ▶ Conducting events in partnership with other student representative bodies.
- ▶ Planning and implementing a joint project in partnership with the school community and local government.
- ▶ Co-operating with local NGOs according to students' interests and needs.
- ▶ Co-operating with local self-government bodies, such as the local assembly or the city hall to advocate students' ideas and needs.
- ▶ Promoting student participation in community events and their involvement in creating and implementing programmes for these events.
- ▶ Student participation in local youth decision-making bodies or advisory structures, such as youth councils or youth advisory committees.

Student participation in the activities of school collegial bodies and in the creation of school policy documents – Case studies, examples and tools

Objective: Students promote the participation of peers, enhancing the democratic governance of their school/their school's decision-making processes and sharing of principles/values based on responsibility.

Action: Student collegial bodies to hold meetings with peers in order to identify their interests and needs (co-operation skills, listening and observation skills).

Action: Student collegial bodies to review the rights and obligations defined by school policy or internal regulations.

Action: Within the format of the student collegial bodies, launch calls for proposals for action and on distributing the school budget (proposals will be submitted by student initiative groups).

CASE STUDY – Raising an issue at meetings of the board of trustees

One school had a large courtyard that was closed. During a long break, students were not allowed to go out and play in the yard. The student self-government raised this problem at the board of trustees' meeting. The school then allocated a budget to pave the inner courtyard, install benches and set up recreational areas. The following academic year, the yard became available for students during long breaks.

CASE STUDY – A mini action plan of the student representative bodies

In order for the student representative bodies to present a concrete budgeting plan to the school board, it is important to have a mini action plan based on students' needs. Using the action plan, the student self-government can describe specific priorities arising from these students' needs and provide justifications to convince members of decision-making bodies of the importance of the activities proposed by the student representatives.

We offer the following steps for preparing and submitting an action plan.

Step 1 – Familiarise yourself with the action plan format (Resource A). We offer a simplified version of the student self-government action plan, which you can fill out based on students' needs. It will help you present your priorities to the board of trustees.

Step 2 – Distribute functions and duties among yourselves and agree on a certain time frame for filling out the form.

Step 3 – Based on the information obtained during the process of filling out the form, prepare a short presentation on the main findings that you would like to present to the board of trustees.

Step 4 – Present your action plan to the board of trustees.

RESOURCE A – ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN FOR STUDENT SELF-GOVERNMENT

► **What are the needs of students in our school?** (You can name several needs, for example fixing the school toilets, addressing the lack of classroom resources, etc.)

► **How do we justify the existence of these needs?** (Give examples)

<p>► What are the objectives of the self-government for a one-year period?</p> <p>• Objective 1: _____</p> <p>• Objective 2: _____</p> <p>• Objective 3: _____</p> <p>• Objective 4: _____</p> <p>• Objective 5: _____</p> <p><i>(You can list a maximum of five objectives that are focused on solving the needs described above, for example creating spaces for school club activities after classes, promoting a healthy lifestyle among students, etc.)</i></p>
<p>► What activities does the student self-government plan to implement in one year?</p> <p>• Activity 1: _____</p> <p>• Activity 2: _____</p> <p>• Activity 3: _____</p> <p>• Activity ...</p> <p><i>(You can describe activities that correspond to the objectives presented above. For example, organising a sports championship, furnishing a school club, purchasing resources for classes, etc.)</i></p>
<p>► What specific results will you achieve with activities that you have planned?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>► What is the approximate budget needed for each activity?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>► How will you evaluate the results and impact of the activities on student well-being?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Action: Organising activities for a healthy life (sporting events, marathons, healthy eating, etc.), ensuring that the activities are inclusive.

CASE STUDY – Student initiatives

In a school in Tbilisi, Georgia, student representatives conducted a students’ survey about the selection of foods available at the canteen and the food prices. The survey found that menus mostly included repetitive and unhealthy food options. In many cases, food prices were not affordable or reasonable. The self-government presented the survey results at a meeting of the board of trustees and proposed to instruct the school initiative group to create a programme with the involvement of teachers to advocate healthy eating. Teachers, mentors, parents and students from all grades were involved in the process. Activities were planned for raising awareness and preventing diseases. With the help of invited specialists (such as doctors and nutritionists), students and teachers learned how to create a healthy eating plan based on their needs.

Action: Scheduling school meetings in partnership with resource officers, based on the initiative of students.

CASE STUDY – Conversations with resource officers

Based on the initiative of students and in partnership with resource officers, a series of meetings with resource officers were held to discuss cases of disciplinary misconduct, school incidents and psychological rehabilitation activities offered by special school services. The topics were selected in agreement with the school leadership. Priority issues included the use of someone else's property, verbal insults and post-traumatic rehabilitation.

Action: Awareness-raising activities about the role and functions of the student self-government (distributing brochures, publishing posts on social media, etc.).

Action: Providing information about the importance of student participation to other members of collegial decision-making bodies.

CASE STUDY – Stakeholder mapping

In the collegial bodies of the school, such as the board of trustees and the disciplinary committee, decisions are made by representatives of the school community, including teachers and parents. The school leadership influences the justification of needs and the setting of priorities. Therefore, members of student governments and other student associations should carefully identify potential allies as well as those stakeholders who may resist when advocating various issues. For instance, they should consider who might be in favour of changing the menu and who might oppose it, or, who might be supportive of making the courtyard accessible to students and who might not. Analysing the arguments of each stakeholder, regardless of their opinion, is crucial for preparing a well-reasoned position and counterarguments.

It can be useful to create a stakeholder map, which is a visual representation of potential allies and those who may not be in favour of the plans and their positions, and to plan communication accordingly.

The following steps will help you use the stakeholder map in practice.

Step 1 – Identify the topic that you aim to advocate or the interventions that you seek to undertake. It can be organising a school event or allocating funds for a sports championship.

Step 2 – Place each stakeholder in the appropriate section of the map and make sure to discuss the reasons for their positions. For example, if the school principal is deemed not to be aware of the role of student representation, think about what might be causing this.

Step 3 – Analyse the results of the map and plan steps for how you will approach the stakeholders in each section of the map.

INSTRUMENT – STAKEHOLDER MAP

Your partners (<i>stakeholders that recognise the importance of student participation and potentially support the ideas you initiate</i>).	Parties who do not have information about our role (<i>those parties who know less about student self-governance activities and have less information about the need for self-governance</i>).
Parties with resources useful to us (<i>those parties who are not yet partners but have resources that would be useful or helpful to your business</i>).	Our opponents (<i>those who do not take student participation seriously and believe that decisions should be made only by adults</i>).

INSTRUMENT FOR REFLECTION

- ▶ To what extent is the students' representative body engaged in identifying the interests and needs of all students of the school?
- ▶ To what extent are the collegial bodies of the school interested in the activities and opinions of the students' representative body?
- ▶ Do student representatives have information about and access to the meetings of the board of trustees, the disciplinary committee or other stakeholder bodies?

Student participation in formal and non-formal education activities – Actions, examples and tools

Objective: Students promote the participation of peers in formal and non-formal education activities.

Action: Students taking care of their classroom, for example, nurturing classroom plants or putting up a variety of educational posters on the classroom walls.

CASE STUDY – A campaign for decorating a classroom

At the initiative of a group of students, a campaign to decorate classrooms was launched. Students from various classes brainstormed ideas and concepts for the arrangement of specific classrooms, ideas which they then shared with their teachers. After reaching an agreement with the teachers, they reorganised the classrooms based on the students' interests and began the process of classroom decoration. The students decorated the classroom walls with educational posters according to their interests, along with pictures and other personal touches.

Action: Plan and execute monthly classroom activities, with three to four students taking responsibility for organising each month's activities in collaboration with the class teacher.

CASE STUDY – Anti-bullying campaign

In one of Georgia's schools, the "I say no to bullying" initiative was put into action. As part of this initiative, classes participated in a challenge, prompting them to educate their peers about the harmful effects of bullying. To illustrate their point, they created creative TikTok videos, distributed anti-violence posters, hosted a topical film screening and much more.

Action: Organising different types of competitions and challenges between classes. For example, on the subjects of anti-violence or inclusion.

CASE STUDY – Competitive Initiatives

The "Best coloured wall" competition aimed to motivate classes to paint different sections of the school's corridor walls. Each class took charge of a specific wall section and created graffiti or displayed a message collectively chosen by the students. As a result, teamwork and collaboration flourished among peers and the classes contributed to enhancing the school's ambience, making it a more joyful and creative environment.

Action: Planning field trips tailored to students' interests.

INSTRUMENT – DECISION-MAKING TABLE

Ideas to promote student engagement require students to make decisions together. Accordingly, the proposed tool – the decision-making table – will help you make democratic group decisions.

Tips – Here is your classroom decision-making guide. Follow these steps.

- ▶ Define your decision: clearly state what you are deciding on.
- ▶ Set your goal: determine what you want to achieve.
- ▶ List your options.
- ▶ Analyse each option: note their pros and cons.
- ▶ Choose the option with the most advantages that aligns with your goal.
- ▶ Consider its short, medium and long-term impact on those affected by the decision.
- ▶ Make a final choice and consult friends or experienced individuals if needed.
- ▶ Develop and implement an action plan.
- ▶ Evaluate your decision.

This table will make your decision easier! You can adapt it as needed, by either adding or removing options. Discuss and identify the most appropriate option.

Decision to be made by me: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/>
--

Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:

RESOURCE A – REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ▶ Have we taken into account the needs and interests of all our classmates when making decisions for our class?
- ▶ How can we help each other ensure that classroom activities are inclusive and accessible to everyone?
- ▶ Are there opportunities and support for students to step into leadership roles and take responsibility for planning and organising classroom activities?
- ▶ Who can assist us as we work on bringing our classroom ideas to life?

Action: Establishing thematic clubs based on students’ interests.

CASE STUDY – The art enthusiasts’ initiative

In one school, students with a deep passion for the arts, particularly classical music and poetry, came together with the vision to establish a thematic club. This club was designed to provide a platform for students’ gatherings, performances and various events centred around poetry and classical music. They named their club the “Rain lovers club”. This club successfully ran several engaging events.

Action: Organising thematic meetings for students on topical issues (prevention of bullying, professional orientation, reproductive health, etc.).

Action: Organising engaging challenges and events, using popular and innovative platforms (TikTok, Instagram) to pique the interest and involvement of all students.

EXAMPLE: ONLINE CHALLENGE

The objective of online challenges is to bring attention to various issues and encourage student participation while also increasing awareness of these matters among young people. To effectively plan and execute a challenge, you may follow these steps.

Step 1 – Identify a current issue that warrants attention and awareness among young people.

Step 2 – Engage in discussion to devise innovative methods for planning and conducting a challenge related to your chosen issue.

Step 3 – Note that online challenges must ensure the safety of participants and prevent the dissemination of hate speech or any negative content in the digital sphere.

RESOURCE A – ONLINE CHALLENGE PLANNING FORM

▶ What topical issue does this challenge focus on?	<i>For example, it could be climate change, early marriage or action against online hate speech.</i>
▶ Which online platforms are we considering for launching this challenge?	
▶ What is the central storyline of the challenge?	<i>For example, spread the narrative that climate change is real or that early marriage is the opposite of a successful career.</i>
▶ How will the challenge be designed?	<i>Describe the challenge step by step.</i>
▶ What sets this challenge apart from similar initiatives?	
▶ Who are the primary recipients of this challenge?	<i>For example, students, young people.</i>
▶ Who will take the lead in planning and executing this challenge?	
▶ What is the time frame for implementing the challenge?	

Comment: the platform www.canvas.com will help you to prepare the visual material for the challenge.

Action: Organising activities for a healthy life (sporting events, marathons, etc.), ensuring that activities are inclusive.

Action: Organising student-initiated activities aimed at co-operation between schools.

CASE STUDY – God has given the world, infinite in variety

In one school, a student club dedicated to diversity issues aimed to connect with their peers from the Kist community who live in the Pankisi Valley in Georgia. They conceived an exchange programme in which students from their school would visit a local school in the Pankisi Valley. The co-operation between the schools continues to this day.

Promoting student participation in community activities – Case studies, examples and tools

Objective: Students as advocates for student participation.

Action: Establishing co-operation between the student representative bodies of different schools.

CASE STUDY – Memorandum of co-operation

Step 1 – Begin by raising the idea of collaborating with student representative bodies from other schools during a meeting of the student representative body and identify potential areas of co-operation.

Step 2 – Draft a formal letter with the support of the school administration, outlining the potential for collaboration and send it to the identified schools.

Step 3 – After receiving responses from the schools, plan a joint meeting to discuss potential areas of co-operation.

Step 4 – With the support of the school administration and the active participation of students, develop the text of the memorandum of co-operation.

Step 5 – Define the specific areas of co-operation and officially sign the memorandum during a general meeting.

Step 6 – Collaboratively plan and organise events with the student representative bodies of partner schools to implement the memorandum's objectives.

Action: Conducting events in partnership with other student representation bodies.

CASE STUDY – Competences for democratic culture

Student representative bodies from partner schools in Georgia decided to host a joint event to promote competences for democratic culture within their community. The students, guided by teachers of different subjects, designed a questionnaire and conducted research on democratic culture in their local community. The questionnaire results indicated that the local community had limited knowledge on this topic and that certain stereotypes existed. For example, some community members believed that competences for democratic culture were not compatible with Georgian traditional culture.

Based on the research findings, the student representatives from partner schools decided to implement specific activities. During a general meeting, they selected certain competences for democratic culture that were considered to be particularly crucial (such as appreciation for human rights, civic thinking, respect, responsibility, empathy, etc.). Each school took responsibility for creating a brief presentation and an informative brochure about their chosen competence. To accomplish this, they gathered additional information and created illustrations. During their information search, the students utilised various sources, including the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture.

After gathering the necessary information, a meeting was organised in the school's assembly hall, involving parents and other members of the local community. A prepared presentation was delivered during the meeting, followed by a questions-and-answers session. At the end of the meeting, the students distributed the brochures that they had prepared to the local community.

CASE STUDY – Festival

Students from one school decided to organise a collaborative festival with the goal of fostering unity among various schools. Their idea was to bring student-created products to the festival and host an exhibition and sale, using the proceeds to benefit their schools.

To discuss the organisation of the festival, self-government representatives from different schools convened a meeting at one school. During this meeting, they outlined the final concept of the festival and established a working group comprising five members from each school's self-government. The meeting was attended by teachers and school administrators and, together with the invited guests, they discussed

the necessary budget for the festival and potential partners. Subsequently, they drafted an official letter and sent it to various non-governmental organisations and relevant local government bodies. One private organisation and representatives from the municipality expressed their interest in collaborating. They shared the financial expenses and provided the schools with the required resources for the festival. Local community representatives were invited to attend as guests and the students used the proceeds from the exhibition and sale to support their schools. The festival was documented through photos and videos for further distribution.

Action: Planning and implementing a joint project in partnership with the school community and local authorities.

CASE STUDY – Project to care for homeless animals

In response to the frequent encounters with homeless dogs in the vicinity of the school, students initiated a project to provide care for these animals. The project garnered support from the school community and local government. The students' initiative group reached out to the student representative body to address the issue. During a meeting, the self-government deliberated on the problem and explored the school's potential involvement in finding a solution. They also considered potential partners for the project. The self-government's chairperson presented the initiative at a meeting of the board of trustees, expressing their readiness to take action and even secure financial resources if necessary.

With the backing of the school administration and teachers, students created a questionnaire to determine how best to support homeless dogs. They organised a discussion in the school's debate club entitled "How to help our four-legged friends". The discussion was open to students, teachers, parents and school administrators. Local government representatives were also invited to participate. Throughout the discussion, the moderator highlighted the proposed initiatives.

After evaluating the various initiatives based on their humanitarian aspects, ethics and the availability of necessary resources, the most feasible idea was selected. The students then submitted an application to the local municipality to proceed with the chosen initiative.

RESOURCE A – QUESTIONNAIRE

<p>▶ 1. How important is the issue of homeless dogs to you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. It's not a big concern</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. It's somewhat important</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. It's an important concern</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> d. It's extremely important</p>
<p>▶ 2. What do you think should be done to address the problem of homeless animals?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Take them to shelters</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Sterilise and vaccinate them</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Provide them with shelter and food</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> d. Other (please specify)</p>
<p>▶ 3. How compassionate do you think your proposed solution is?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. It's a humane approach</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. It's not the most humane, but the greater concern is the danger they pose</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. This issue should be evaluated by experts and a decision should be made based on their recommendations</p>
<p>▶ 4. What do you believe is essential to support homeless animals?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a. Raising awareness about their safety</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> b. Organising discussions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> c. Running advocacy campaigns for their well-being</p>

► **5. If you have any additional comments, please share them below:**

Action: Co-operating with local NGOs according to students' interests and needs.

CASE STUDY – Reproductive health

In a state school, a student club developed an interest in addressing reproductive health issues, with a particular focus on children's development and adolescent characteristics. The club members, driven by their curiosity, acknowledged their lack of in-depth knowledge and experience in this area. To bridge this gap, they decided to reach out to a local reproductive health organisation for professional guidance.

CASE STUDY – An initiative to collaborate with an organisation

When seeking collaboration with an organisation on a specific topic, it can be useful to follow the following steps.

- Step 1** – Clearly define your request: specify your needs and intentions when approaching the chosen organisation. The more precise your request, the more effective your collaboration will be.
- Step 2** – Prepare a letter: use a letter template (Resource A) to craft a concise and well-structured message. Send this letter from the organisation's official e-mail address and, if possible, post it on social media platforms such as Facebook.
- Step 3** – Follow-up: if you do not receive a response within two to three working days, consider reaching out to the organisation by phone to remind them of your letter.

Using the provided letter template will help you compose a brief yet effective message for potential collaboration.

RESOURCE A – PARTNERSHIP LETTER TEMPLATE

Title of the letter:

Date:

To:

From:

Greetings,

We are *[your names]*, representing the *[full name of your club or student self-government]*.

[Interest – Describe how you heard about the organisation and why you are interested in its work].

We are writing to express our sincere interest in your esteemed organisation and the valuable work you do.

[Request – Describe your specific request. For example, you can ask the organisation for their visibility or information materials that you would like to distribute at one of your events or to your students. If you do, then you can specify the number of materials and by when you would like to receive them].

[Closing part – Express your respect to the organisation and sign off politely].

Sincerely,

[Your full name]

[Full name of your student union]

[Contact information]

Action: Co-operating with local self-government bodies, such as the local assembly or the city hall, to advocate students' ideas and needs.

CASE STUDY – Students against bullying

A youth ideas competition was announced by the youth department of a city hall, which allowed schools to participate. The student representative body of a public school in the city entered the competition with a project application entitled “Let’s create a bully-free school together”. This project not only won the city hall competition but was also fully funded. As a result, within the framework of the project, 20 school staff members received training on how to identify methods for preventing and addressing bullying. Additionally, an “anonymous trust box” was installed in the school, enabling students to confidentially report instances of bullying at any time.

Action: Promoting student participation in community events and their involvement in creating and implementing programmes for these events.

Action: Student participation in local youth decision-making bodies or advisory structures, such as youth councils, youth advisory committees, etc.

INSTRUMENT FOR REFLECTION

A reflection tool with open-ended questions can be helpful for planning, implementing and evaluating actions. Here are some suggestions.

Planning stage:

- ▶ What is my objective and what do I want to achieve?
- ▶ What resources are available for me to use (e.g., a quiet room, the internet, previous experiences)?
- ▶ What is expected of me and do I have any prior knowledge about this topic?
- ▶ How long do I anticipate it will take to complete this task?
- ▶ Am I confident and motivated to pursue this goal?
- ▶ Are there any feelings of nervousness or anxiety and, if so, how can I manage them?
- ▶ What strategies can I employ to support myself (e.g., positive self-talk)?

Implementation stage:

- ▶ How is the progress going? Am I making good progress?
- ▶ Do I fully understand what I’m doing or are there areas where I need to improve my understanding?
- ▶ Is my time management realistic or do I need to adjust my approach?
- ▶ Am I staying focused on my goal or do I need to realign my efforts?
- ▶ Are the strategies I’ve chosen proving effective?

Evaluation/verification stage:

- ▶ To what extent was the goal achieved in the manner I intended?
- ▶ How well did I perform overall?
- ▶ What could I have done differently to achieve better results?
- ▶ Is it necessary to start again to obtain improved outcomes?

Student participation: guidelines for parents

Active participation of parents in school life is a vital support mechanism for enhancing both school development and student engagement. One of the main ways to foster civic engagement skills is through the active involvement of parents. Much like students, parents' voices are equally important on both the board of trustees and the disciplinary committee. A significant practice involves establishing a parent initiative group or committee within the school, which can serve as a model for developing a culture of participation within the school student community.

What are the advantages of student participation for parents?

Parents can act as ambassadors for a safe and democratic school culture. As an English proverb states, it takes a village to raise a child. Student participation is the modern equivalent of such a village, promoting the upbringing of children in line with humanistic and democratic values. Collaboration with teachers and the school principal is key, as the outcomes can have significant impacts.

- ▶ Your children are safer. At school, children spend time in a secure environment, where they engage in meaningful activities with their peers under adult supervision. Schools work to prevent children from harmful activities and experiences, such as drug consumption or gang involvement.
- ▶ Your children become more confident. Self-confidence is one of the most influential factors in a person's life, encouraging them to explore various opportunities and overcome challenges. While parents should show attention to their children and help build their self-esteem, schools are also in charge of developing children's attitudes towards others and themselves. This socialisation process is best achieved through active participation in school life and community service projects.
- ▶ Your children will acquire skills that are required in the job market. Today, the demand for new skills is evolving at an ever-accelerating rate. Hence, as children begin to develop specific interests and consider their careers, many crucial skills will not be acquired solely within the confines of the classroom. These essential skills include communication, critical thinking, collaboration, empathy, problem-solving, creativity, conflict resolution and the ability to learn. Hence the importance of participation in student representation and extracurricular activities.
- ▶ Your children will become more responsible and conscientious. Children tend to make demands based on peer pressure, leading them to desire the latest gadgets, fashionable clothes and various other things, often without fully comprehending the effort and resources required to afford them. However, when they participate in school decision-making processes, they must shoulder responsibility for the tasks at hand. Through this, they gain first-hand experiences of the hard work needed to achieve their goals. Consequently, children might develop a greater appreciation for what they receive.
- ▶ Your children's full potential will be realised. Every individual possesses unique talents that should be discovered and nurtured. However, not all abilities and opportunities are uncovered within the confines of the school curriculum. Active involvement in all aspects of school life provides children with broader opportunities to explore and cultivate their strengths, interests and aptitudes. Moreover, this environment is more open and creative, permitting experimentation and learning from mistakes and welcoming contributions from every student.

How can parents encourage student participation?

Parents can wield significant influence on students' participation, either by facilitating or hindering the process. In most cases, the decision to promote student participation is made by teachers and school principals. Nevertheless, once this decision is made, parents can play an immeasurable role in fostering and ensuring the reality and sustainability of student participation. Teachers are educational specialists, but parents hold the most critical position in education and possess a profound impact on their children's motivation and attitudes, as they traditionally act as decision makers in the domestic sphere.

To promote student participation, demonstrate a keen interest in school matters. Take the time to inquire about school news, including both minor and major events, not just information related to exams and parent–teacher conferences. Ask about peer relationships, ongoing activities, plans, decisions, controversial issues and the needs of your children. Boost your children’s motivation to participate, encourage them to express their opinions on various matters, initiate their ideas, engage in processes and express their desire to volunteer.

Show that you are an integral part of the school community. Voice your opinions on school matters, participate in formal school decision-making processes and express your willingness to engage in school decision-making structures, such as class parent councils, school parent councils or school councils. If you are not a member of these structures, you can collaborate informally with other parents and participate as often as possible.

Engage in discussions about school issues, decisions and activities at home. Be a role model by demonstrating how to voice dissent while respecting others’ perspectives. When expressing criticism, remember to call out unacceptable behaviour while upholding the dignity of the individual.

Collaborate with teachers to help children in a co-ordinated manner. Communicate your needs and expectations while also listening to the teacher. You are not adversaries, you are partners. Both parties need to learn to work together.

To assess your children’s involvement in decisions regarding their own lives and family issues, it is crucial to foster a culture of open communication, regularly encouraging them to share their thoughts with you.

What is parents’ role in encouraging student participation?

Parents, within the scope of their authority:

- ▶ promote the sharing of principles and values based on students’ participation and responsibility in the democratic school governance and decision-making processes of the school community;
- ▶ foster student participation in formal and non-formal education activities;
- ▶ promote students’ participation in community activities.

How to determine what stage we are at: self-assessment instrument.

Question	Answer	Comment
▶ Are you, as a parent, prepared to actively listen to your children?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
▶ Are you, as a parent, willing to provide support for your children to express their thoughts and opinions?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
▶ Do you, as a parent, understand how to assist your children in articulating their viewpoints effectively?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
▶ Do you, as a parent, take into account your children’s opinions when making decisions?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
▶ Are you, as a parent, willing to involve your children in your family’s decision-making processes?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
▶ Are you, as a parent, ready to share some of your authority and influence with your children?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
▶ As a parent, do you encourage your children to partake in decision making and share responsibilities within school activities?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

Note: The questionnaire was adapted from Harry Shier’s participation pathway diagram (Shier 2025).

How to determine priorities – Planning instrument

Goal 1						
	Person in charge	Implementation period	Participant/partner	Budget	Outcome/indicator	Revision
Objective 1						
Measure 1.1.						
Measure 1.2.						
Goal 2						
Objective 2						
Measure 2.1.						
Measure 2.2.						

Activities that enhance student participation

Parents encouraging children to actively participate in school collegial bodies and to contribute to the creation of school policy documents

- ▶ Collaborating with students to request public information regarding the school's budget allocation for student activities and its expenditure.
- ▶ Monitoring the process of fund allocation by parents who are board of trustees' members in the process of school budget development.
- ▶ Establishing a parent advisory/consultative council to assist students to transform their ideas into projects, budget preparation, external communication and more.
- ▶ Developing a parent consultation schedule within collegial management bodies (e.g., board of trustees, disciplinary committee) to support student participation when necessary.
- ▶ Participating in surveys to gauge parental needs and interests for shaping the school's strategic development vision and advocating student participation as a top school priority.
- ▶ Participating in consultation meetings on school policy changes, either in person or online, to raise awareness about the importance of participatory culture in school-level decision making.
- ▶ Contributing to discussions on projects presented by students through working meetings and providing written feedback, among other means.

Participation of students in formal and non-formal education activities

- ▶ Engaging in school-organised meetings focused on career development opportunities and sharing their own professional and career experiences.
- ▶ Collaborating with parents' groups or committees to establish a fund for financing students' ideas through parental donations.
- ▶ At the initiative of a parental group/committee, conducting focus group discussions for teachers on parental support actions.
- ▶ Taking the lead in organising informative sessions within the parents' community to inform parents about various aspects of the curriculum and conduct working meetings with the pedagogical council.

Parents promoting student participation in community activities

- ▶ Establishing an initiative group of parents within the parents' group or committee dedicated to addressing issues related to school and community collaboration. This group offers consultations to school community members, including students and parents, on the advantages of various targeted programmes from local government.
- ▶ Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee design a preliminary version of the school and community co-operation strategy.
- ▶ Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee collaborate with students' initiative groups to initiate and execute information and support projects to benefit the community within the framework of school and community co-operation.
- ▶ Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee conduct field observations and gather photo/video documentation about various community issues together with high-school students.
- ▶ Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee disseminate various informational materials throughout the community, such as posters, infographics, brochures and booklets, to enhance public awareness about community issues.
- ▶ Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee collaborate with high-school students to study the activities of local self-government bodies.
- ▶ Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee engage with local self-government to jointly address and resolve community issues with the participation of high-school students.

Promoting student participation by parents in the activities of school collegial bodies and the development of school policy documents – Case studies, examples, instruments

Objective: Parents promote student participation in the school's democratic governance and decision-making processes and sharing of principles and values based on responsibility.

Action: Together with students, request public information about the allocation of funds for student activities in the school's budget and their subsequent use.

RESOURCE A – REQUESTING PUBLIC INFORMATION: AN APPLICATION TEMPLATE

To: Public school [...] principal
Ms/Mr...
From: Parent of [...] grade student of the same school
Applicant: [name, last name]
Personal number:
Address:
Phone:
Date:

APPLICATION

Action: Parents who are members of the board of trustees monitor how funds earmarked for student needs are allocated within the school budget development process.

Action: Establishing a parent advisory/consultative council to support student participation in transforming ideas into projects, preparing budgets and facilitating communication with external parties.

CASE STUDY – The practice of parental guidance for student empowerment

In one school, the parents' committee recognised the significance of supporting student initiatives and decided to conduct a survey to assess the professional competences of parents. The objective was to identify areas where parents could volunteer and offer guidance to the students.

After careful evaluation of the collected data and consultation with the student self-government, it was determined that, in the initial phase, parents with relevant skills and resources would be selected to support student initiative groups. These selected volunteer parents would play a pivotal role in assisting students in shaping their ideas into project applications.

Action: Within the framework of collegial management bodies such as the trustee council, disciplinary committee and parent committee, establishing a parent consultation schedule to ensure communication between students and parents as needed, providing vital support for student participation.

Action: Participating in surveys designed to gauge the needs and interests of parents, for the development of strategic development vision/plans for the school and advocating the importance of student engagement as a priority issue for the school.

Action: Active engagement of parents in both in-person and online consultation meetings regarding changes in school policies. Actively participating in the decision-making processes at the school level, promoting understanding of the importance of participation culture.

CASE STUDY – Involving parents in the discussions concerning the school budget

A representative from the parents' committee took the initiative to engage with the board of trustees at a school. The request was to hold a public discussion regarding the budget project for the upcoming year. This request was prompted by several parents of primary and secondary students who had voiced their desire to participate in the school budget discussion.

To maximise the involvement of interested parties, the parents' committee suggested that the council meeting be conducted using an online platform.

Action: Involvement in the discussion of projects submitted by students for discussion (working meetings, written feedback, etc.).

Parents' role in supporting student participation in formal and non-formal education activities – Case studies, examples, instruments

Objective: Parents promote the participation of students in formal and non-formal education activities.

Action: Participation in meetings organised by the school on career development opportunities, sharing with students information about their professional and career experience.

CASE STUDY – Parents for student participation: interview

Step 1 – Gathering information about various professions and creating a guide that provides students with valuable insights into different careers at the secondary level.

Step 2 – Working closely with teachers and mentors to develop an interview questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to extract information from professionals about key aspects of their respective careers.

Step 3 – With the interview guide in hand, students engage with their parents to learn about career choices and significant career milestones.

Step 4 – The next stage involves the organisation of a "professions week" in active collaboration with educators. During this week, parents from various professions play a central role. They visit the school and share their insights about their careers, discussing both the opportunities and challenges associated with their professions.

Step 5 – Students collect and organise the information obtained from these interviews. They clarify the definitions of industry-specific terms and practical experiences shared by parents. Feedback from parents is gathered to enhance the quality of the content.

Step 6 – The final product, the “Guide to professions”, is shared with parents who practise the listed professions for their review to ensure that the content is accurate.

Step 7 – The electronic version of the textbook is presented and the entire school community, including parents and other community members, actively participates in the process.

Action: Establishing a student ideas financing fund, initiated by the parents’ committee and funded by parents’ donations.

CASE STUDY – Parents supporting students

The parents’ committee of a school initiated the creation of a fund to finance students’ ideas. The fund was financed through various sources, including exhibition sales, voluntary donations from parents, school grant projects and more. The parents’ committee effectively communicated this initiative to parents and the community, garnering support in the form of materials for exhibition sales and donations from parents and community organisations. A fund charter was established, outlining the competition procedure for students’ school projects, the composition and schedule of the competition jury, evaluation criteria for project applications and the format for project implementation reports.

Action: At the initiative of the parent committee, hold a meeting for teachers focused on actions for supporting parents.

RESOURCE A – ORIENTATION QUESTIONS AND MEETING STAGES

Opening question:

- ▶ Please introduce yourself (name, surname, subject you teach).

Introductory question:

- ▶ Please share your experiences with parent involvement in both formal and non-formal activities.

Basic questions:

- ▶ In your opinion, what circumstances encourage parents to actively participate in school life?
- ▶ Can you describe the factors that hinder parental participation in school life?
- ▶ Within your subject area, can you identify specific parental actions that could help increase student participation in both formal and non-formal activities?
- ▶ Summary question: Is there anything else you would like to add or share?

Action: At the initiative of the parents’ group/committee, holding working meetings with the teachers council in order to inform the community of parents about the various components of the curriculum.

CASE STUDY – Parental involvement in students’ formal education activities

The parents’ committee of one school brought forward an initiative following significant interest from the parent community. Parents inquired about the types of assignments in academic subjects and the evaluation rubrics/schemes developed in subject departments. They believed that having access to this information would enable them to track their children’s learning progress and provide support when needed.

Parents promoting participation of students in community activities – Case studies, examples, tools

Objective: Parents promote the participation of students in community activities.

Action: Establishing a group of parents within the parents' group or committee dedicated to addressing issues related to school and community collaboration. This group offers consultations to school community members, including students and parents, on the advantages of various programmes from local government.

Action: Selected members of the parent group/committee design a preliminary version of the school and community co-operation strategy.

Action: Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee collaborate with students' initiative groups to initiate and execute information and support projects to benefit the community within the framework of school and community co-operation.

CASE STUDY – Our support to the community

The parents' initiative group at one school, with active participation from primary and secondary students, conducted an information campaign in the community under the slogan "We protect children's rights". During the campaign, they distributed informational booklets throughout the district. These booklets contained contact information for agencies working on issues related to child protection and offered real support in cases of child abuse or violence.

CASE STUDY – Social media brings us closer

At one school, parents took the initiative to create a social media page, engaging primary and secondary-level students. This page was established to keep the community informed about events organised by the students and parents at the school. It also served as a platform for the distribution of educational materials on important topics and priority directions for the community. Community members and organisations could provide feedback and offer suggestions through this page.

Action: Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee conduct field observations and gather photo/video documentation about various community issues together with high-school students.

CASE STUDY – Presenting initiatives to municipality representatives

A group of parents, with the aim of fostering a participatory culture among high-school students, conducted a citizens' survey (Resource A) to identify challenges and needs in the municipality. After processing the collected data, they identified a current issue that needed attention. They decided to inform the relevant municipal services about the citizens' interests and arranged a meeting with the local territorial unit representative (local council member or trustee). At the scheduled time, a group of parents and high-school students met with the representative in person. During the meeting, they presented a list of identified problems and discussed potential collaboration on addressing these issues.

RESOURCE A – IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS IN THE MUNICIPALITY

► 1. Please, name three problems that exist in the municipality in your opinion

- Problem 1:
- Problem 2:
- Problem 3:

► 2. Which problem do you think should be solved first?

► 3. How do you think this problem can be solved?

Action: Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee disseminate various informational materials throughout the community, such as posters, infographics, brochures and booklets, to enhance public awareness about community issues.

Action: Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee collaborate with high-school students to study the activities of local self-government bodies.

CASE STUDY – Requesting public information from the local self-government

A group of parents, driven by the goal of nurturing civic responsibility and promoting participatory culture among students, actively engaged with the local municipality. They submitted a formal request for public information, actively involving themselves, to obtain information about the projects implemented in the municipal budgets over the past three years that were aimed at supporting youth initiatives in the community. They also sought details on the budget allocations and expenditures for these projects from the municipality’s budget (Resource A). This information was crucial for them to generate ideas and initiatives.

RESOURCE A – REQUESTING PUBLIC INFORMATION

<p>To: Ms/Mr [...] Public Information Officer of [...] Municipality City Hall</p> <p>From: [Name and last name] Personal number: Address: Phone: Date:</p> <p>Application</p> <p>We kindly request information regarding the projects that have been executed in the municipality's budget to support youth initiatives over the past three years, along with details of the funds allocated from the municipality’s budget for this purpose.</p> <p>Sincerely, [...]</p>

Action: Selected member(s) of the parent group/committee engage with local self-government to jointly address and resolve community issues with the participation of high-school students.

CASE STUDY – Installation of drinking water points in a municipality’s public spaces

A pressing concern for the municipality’s residents is the absence of drinking water points in public gathering places and recreational areas. In response to this issue, a dedicated parent group, in collaboration with secondary-school students, undertook a campaign to address this challenge. The group’s mission was to eradicate the problem by gathering signatures from concerned citizens and submitting these petitions to the local self-government bodies, which included the council and city hall.

RESOURCE A – ADVOCACY STRATEGY TEMPLATE (EUROCHILD 2021)

<p>Issue</p> <p>▶ What is the issue/problem that we want to do something about?</p>
<p>Goal</p> <p>▶ What is the change we want to bring about through our actions?</p>
<p>Objectives</p> <p>▶ What set of smaller goals will help us to achieve our overall aim? <i>(Make sure objectives are : specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-specific)</i></p>

<p>External opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What can help us? ▶ External challenges ▶ What can hinder us?
<p>Internal resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What are our assets that we bring to the campaign/advocacy work? ▶ What do we have in terms of people, money, experience, etc.? <p>Internal weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What is holding us back? ▶ What do we need to run the campaign?
<p>Target audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Primary target: Who can make the change that you want? Who influences them? ▶ Secondary target: Who is our target influenced by? (e.g. voters, shareholders) ▶ Allies: Who is for the change and what do we need to do to work with them? ▶ Opponents: Who is against the change (and what do we need to do to get them to help us achieve the change? Is it possible?)
<p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What message(s) do we need to get across? Are they the same for everyone?
<p>Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What things will we actually do to achieve our campaign objectives? How should our activities build on each other chronologically?

RESOURCE B – REFLECTION TABLE

Please rate your contributions to the development of democratic school culture on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest contribution and 5 is the highest contribution.

▶ I support the participation of students in democratic governance/decision-making processes in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ I support the participation of students in the curricular and extracurricular activities.	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ I support the participation of students in community activities.	1	2	3	4	5
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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The tool “Promoting authentic student participation in schools” emphasises the importance of the principles of engagement and participation. Participation within the school setting is a critical component of school culture, encompassing the active involvement of students, teachers, administrative staff, parents and the wider community. While the participation of all stakeholders is vital, this tool specifically emphasises the engagement and participation of students. The tool is designed to equip educators, school leaders, administrators and other staff with the essential knowledge and tools necessary to effectively engage students in activities that influence their learning experiences and the overall democratic functioning of their educational institutions. The tool can be used by individual teachers, teams of school staff and school leadership and provides insights into the concept of participation along with guidelines and practical tools for self-evaluation, reflective questions and recommendations for planning and implementing authentic student participation. The concluding section of the tool presents comprehensive guidelines for teachers, students and parents, which may be utilised as a stand-alone document. This allows schools to assess, plan and execute student participation activities while offering exemplary practices for inspiration. It supports a transformative approach to education with the aim of promoting a more inclusive and democratic school culture.



TOOLKIT FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

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