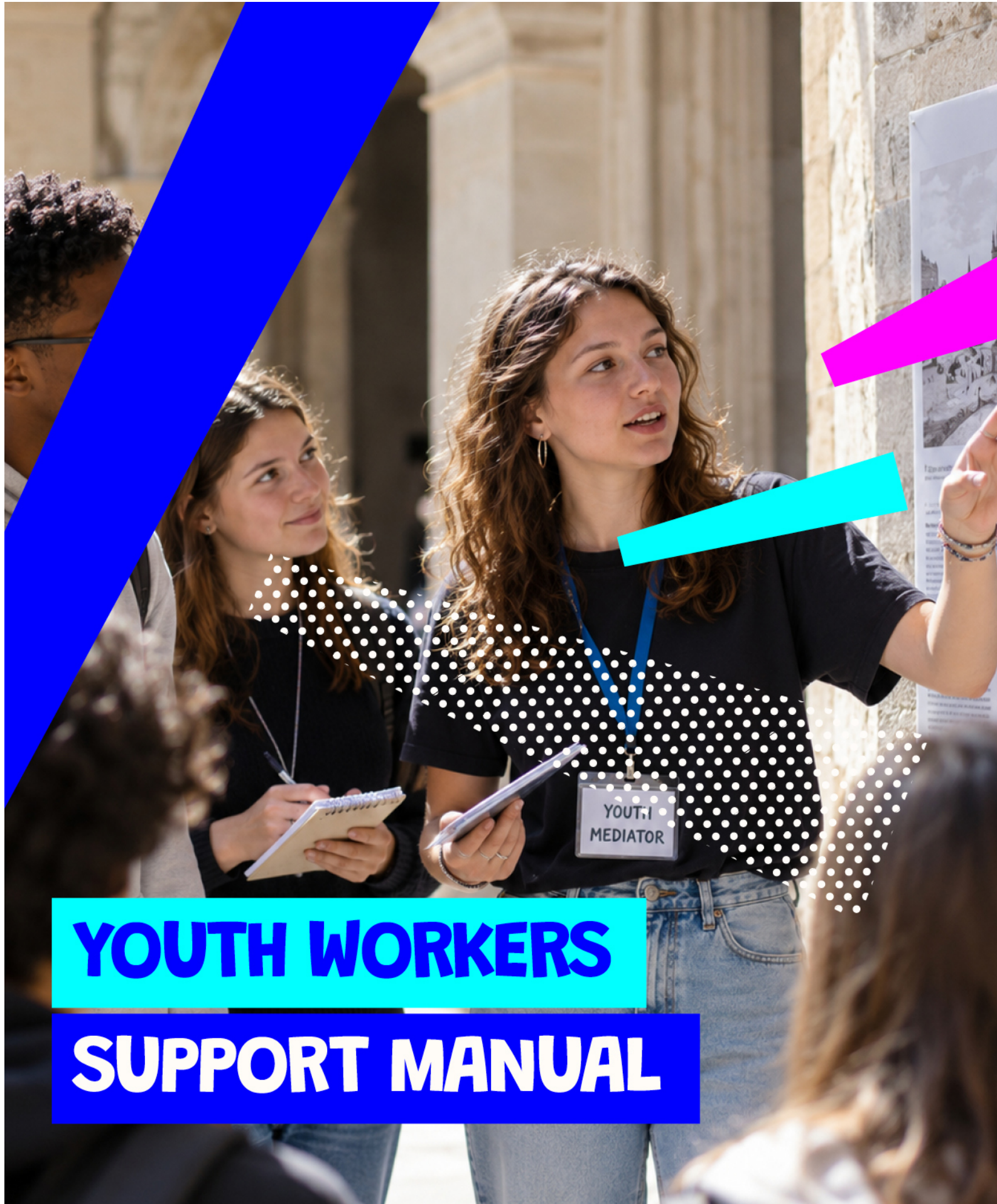




YOUTH WORKERS

SUPPORT MANUAL

MEDIATE!
YOUR FUTURE



Co-funded by
the European Union

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	3
<i>Chapter 1 – Youth Worker Essentials</i>	4
1.1 The Role of the Youth Worker as Facilitator	4
1.2 Creating Safe & Brave Learning Spaces	6
1.3 Action pages	8
<i>Chapter 2 - Designing Cultural Mediation Activities</i>	10
2.1 What Makes a Cultural Mediation Activity	10
2.2 Using online course, toolboxes and other project resources	13
2.3 Action pages	16
<i>Chapter 3 – Leadership & Group Facilitation</i>	20
3.1 Leadership Styles	20
3.2 Managing Group Dynamics & Conflict	22
3.3 Action Pages	24
<i>Chapter 4 – Dissemination in Practice</i>	27
4.1 Planning and Collecting Dissemination Content	28
4.2 Sharing Results with and through Young People	31
4.3 Action pages	33
<i>Chapter 5 - Sustainability & Evaluation</i>	36
5.1 Evaluation as a Learning Tool	37
5.2 Building Long-Term Sustainability	39
5.3 Action pages	43

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Mediate Your Future! Youth workers support manual*. This manual has been created for young project coordinators, youth workers, facilitators, volunteers, and anyone who is beginning to design and lead cultural mediation activities. This manual focuses on practice; it brings together practical guidance and reflections developed through the experiences of the project partners. The aim is not to provide a single "right way" of facilitating, but to offer ideas, approaches, and resources that can help you feel more confident in your own practice. Each chapter explores a key aspect of cultural mediation, alongside the main content, you will find "Action Pages" containing practical tools, checklists, real-life experiences, and reflections that you can immediately apply to your own work. Youth work is rewarding, but it can also be unpredictable. Activities do not always go as planned, groups respond in unexpected ways, and every experience offers new opportunities to learn. For this reason, the examples shared throughout this manual include not only successful experiences, but also challenges, mistakes, and the lessons that emerged from them.

We hope it will encourage you to experiment, adapt, and continue developing your own style as a facilitator, always keeping young people's participation, curiosity, and creativity at the centre of your practice.

Chapter 1 – Youth Worker Essentials

1.1 The Role of the Youth Worker as Facilitator

What is a facilitator?

A facilitator guides a process in which people explore ideas, share perspectives, and construct meaning together. Although this role often overlaps with that of a teacher, educator, or animator, the facilitator's primary focus is supporting the process rather than leading it.

Key competences applied

Facilitation requires more than organisational skills. Key interpersonal competences include:

Active listening: paying attention to participants' words, emotions, and experiences.

Empathy: recognising different backgrounds and responding in ways that make everyone feel respected and valued.

Impartiality: creating space for respectful dialogue without imposing personal views, while never accepting discrimination, exclusion, or behaviour that compromises safety and dignity.

Synthesis: connecting ideas and summarising key insights to turn individual contributions into shared learning.

Non-hierarchical leadership

Leadership is not based on authority, status, or control. Instead, it is rooted in trust, credibility, and responsibility. Non-hierarchical leadership recognizes that the facilitator is responsible for supporting the group without positioning themselves above it. The facilitator provides direction when needed, ensures that activities remain purposeful, and creates opportunities for participation, while acknowledging that valuable ideas and perspectives can come from everyone involved. This approach encourages a culture of mutual respect and shared ownership.

Professional ethics

Professional ethics provide a framework that helps facilitators create positive and supportive relationships with participants. Respect means recognizing the dignity and value of every individual, regardless of their background, opinions, or abilities. Confidentiality is equally important, as participants are more likely to share ideas and experiences when they feel that their privacy will be respected. Fairness requires facilitators to avoid favoritism and ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to participate. Professional ethics also involve recognizing personal limits and responsibilities. Facilitators are not expected to have all the answers, but they should be honest about what they know, acknowledge mistakes, and remain committed to learning and improvement. Ethical practice is not about being perfect. It is about acting with integrity and creating relationships based on trust, respect, and accountability.

1.2 Creating Safe & Brave Learning Spaces

Safe space vs brave space

Participation flourishes when people feel safe to express themselves without fear of discrimination, ridicule, or exclusion. At the same time, meaningful learning requires a brave space where participants can explore different perspectives, question assumptions, and discuss challenging topics respectfully. For example, people may have different views on the meaning of a historical monument or local tradition. Effective facilitation combines both: participants should feel supported to ask questions, express disagreement, and take risks while knowing they will be treated with respect.

Co-creation of group agreements

Learning environments work best when participants feel a sense of ownership and responsibility. For this reason, many facilitators choose to develop group agreements together with participants rather than introducing a fixed set of rules at the beginning of an activity. When agreements are created collectively, they often feel more relevant and meaningful than externally imposed rules. They become a shared reference point that supports participation, mutual respect, and accountability throughout the activity.

Prevention of toxic dynamics

Creating a positive group culture is often more effective than reacting to problems after they appear. Participants are more likely to contribute openly and respectfully when expectations are clear and when the learning environment is built on mutual trust. By promoting respect, inclusion, and active participation, facilitator helps create conditions in which everyone feels valued and able to contribute. When people understand that different perspectives are welcome and that respectful behavior is expected, many potential difficulties can be avoided before they affect the group experience.

Managing physical and relational space

The physical space can influence participation, communication, and comfort in significant ways. Factors such as accessibility, visibility, seating arrangements, and opportunities for different forms of expression (oral, written, or visual) can affect how participants interact with one another. A space that encourages interaction and accommodates different needs supports participation more effectively than one designed around passive observation. Facilitators must pay attention to relational space too. This includes the group's atmosphere, the quality of interactions, and participants' sense of belonging. When both the physical and relational dimensions are considered, participants are more likely to feel connected, engaged, and confident in contributing to the learning experience.

1.3 Action pages

Step-by-Step guide

Step 1 – Clarify your role: How will you support, not lead?

Step 2 – Check your group: Do I know the group's needs and expectations?

Step 3 – Prepare the space: Is the space accessible and ready?

Step 4 – Establish a positive group culture: Can everyone participate in a way that suits them?

Step 5 – Facilitate participation: Have I planned how to encourage respectful dialogue?

Step 6 – Reflect after the activity: What worked well, and what didn't?

Do	Don't
Listen actively and show genuine interest in participants' contributions.	Focus only on delivering content or completing activities.
Encourage different viewpoints and interpretations.	Assume there is only one correct answer or perspective.
Create opportunities for everyone to participate.	Allow participation to be dominated by only a few voices.
Acknowledge mistakes and learn from them.	Feel that you must appear perfect at all times.
Build trust through consistency and respect.	Make promises you cannot keep.
Pay attention to the atmosphere of the group.	Ignore signs that participants feel uncomfortable or excluded.

Checklist

- ☐ The purpose of the activity is clear.
- ☐ I know who the participants are.
- ☐ The space is welcoming and accessible.
- ☐ Materials and resources are ready.
- ☐ Opportunities for participation are included.
- ☐ Different perspectives will be respected.
- ☐ I am ready to listen, observe, and adapt.

What if...

Participants are reluctant to participate?

A lack of immediate participation does not necessarily mean a lack of interest. People need different amounts of time to feel comfortable in a new environment, particularly when they do not know one another well. Instead of trying to force participation, focus on creating a welcoming atmosphere and offering multiple ways for people to contribute. Trust often develops gradually. Remember that meaningful engagement is often built through patience, consistency, and attention to the needs of the group rather than through pressure or persuasion.

That time when...

During an adults creative workshop, we invited participants to contribute to a collective painting activity but nobody wanted to start. People were worried about not being artistic enough or making mistakes in front of others. Instead of encouraging them with more explanations, we began painting ourselves, showing that the goal was not to create something beautiful, but simply to express ourselves. Seeing that nobody was being judged, participants gradually joined in. By the end of the workshop, the room was full of conversation, creativity, and enthusiasm, and many people did not want the activity to end. This experience reminded us that creating a safe and non-judgemental environment is often more important than explaining the activity itself.

Chapter 2 – Designing Cultural Mediation Activities

2.1 What Makes a Cultural Mediation Activity

Designing cultural mediation activities means creating experiences that encourage participation, dialogue, and connections with culture, heritage, and community. A common challenge for youth workers is finding ways to make these experiences both meaningful and realistic within a specific local context.

This chapter explores what makes a cultural mediation activity distinctive and outlines key principles that can be adapted to different groups, topics, and settings.

What Makes a Cultural Mediation Activity in the Mediate Your Future! Project?

In the *Mediate Your Future!* project, cultural mediation is understood as a process of building connections between people, culture, heritage, and community. Its purpose is not only to share knowledge, but also to encourage participation, dialogue, and collective meaning-making.

Participants are not passive recipients of information. They're engaged as much as the facilitator is. They explore places, histories, traditions, and contemporary cultural issues, share experiences, and develop their own interpretations. Through this process, they build knowledge, confidence, collaboration skills, and community engagement.

The role of the youth worker is not to provide ready-made answers, but to create opportunities for exploration, reflection, and action. Different perspectives and experiences are treated as valuable parts of the learning process.

For example, instead of simply listening to a lecture, participants may investigate local stories, talk to community members, analyse sources, or create their own interpretations. Active participation and dialogue remain at the centre of the process.

Whether focused on heritage, history, art, nature, digital culture, or contemporary social issues, cultural mediation activities help participants build meaningful connections with culture and become more active members of their communities.

Key Elements of Activity Design

Effective cultural mediation does not require a complex structure, but it does require careful planning. Focus on four key elements: objectives, participants, activity design, and resources.

Objectives. Define what participants should gain from the experience. Whether the goal is to develop communication skills, explore local heritage, or encourage civic engagement, clear objectives help guide decisions and evaluate outcomes.

Participants. Define who the participants are by considering their age, experiences, interests, motivations, and support needs. If little or no information about the participants is available in advance, begin by learning about the group through introductions, simple icebreakers, observation, or open questions, and adapt your approach as you go. Effective cultural mediation creates opportunities for meaningful participation for as many people as possible.

Activity Design. Define how participants will engage with the topic through a sequence of introduction, experience, and reflection. Together, these stages help participants understand the topic, engage actively, and connect the experience to their own lives. There is no one-size-fits-all approach - adapt the activities to the participants' age, group dynamics, interests, expectations, and the context in which they take place.

Resources. Define what resources are needed to deliver the activity, such as locations, materials, local partners, experts, or community knowledge. Resources should support participation and learning without overshadowing participants' experiences.

Simplifying Activities Without Losing Quality

A valuable activity does not need to be complex or resource intensive. What matters most is the quality of participants' experience.

In your cultural mediation work, you'll often encounter various limitations, from budget and time constraints to staffing. But always stay focused on the topic and one clear objective. Prioritise dialogue, active participation, and reflection rather than trying to achieve too many goals at once.

Make use of local resources. Heritage walks, conversations with residents, archival photographs, public spaces, participants' own memories, local artists, libraries, museums, community centres, neighbourhood landmarks, or everyday objects can all become valuable starting points for cultural mediation without requiring specialised equipment or significant funding. For further inspiration, explore the other project outputs, where you will find a wide range of practical examples of cultural mediation activities that can be adapted to your own context.

The strength of cultural mediation lies not in the scale of an activity, but in creating meaningful experiences that help participants connect with culture, heritage, and their community.

2.2 Using online course, toolboxes and other project resources

A well-designed activity does not always require creating everything from scratch.

Mediate Your Future! offers a range of resources that can support youth workers at different stages of planning and delivering cultural mediation activities. The key is knowing not only what is available, but also when to use each resource.

When to Use the Project Resources

Training for Growth. A free online training course introducing the principles, methods, and practical steps of cultural mediation. Start here if you are new to cultural mediation or need a refresher before planning an activity.

Active Citizens Booklet. An introductory publication exploring the links between culture, heritage, active citizenship, and community engagement. Use it to better understand the ideas and values underpinning cultural mediation.

EU Heritage Experiences. A collection of inspiring heritage-based examples and models showing how culture, heritage, and active participation can be combined in different contexts. Use the models as inspiration for combining heritage, culture, and active participation in your own context.

Toolbox for Creation. A practical toolkit containing methods, planning templates, and guidance for designing cultural mediation activities. Use it to define objectives, select methods, and structure the learning process.

Best Practices Guide. A collection of real-life examples illustrating how cultural mediation has been implemented in different contexts, together with lessons learned and practical solutions to common challenges.

Assessment Tool. A self-assessment and evaluation tool designed to support cultural mediation projects. Use it before activities to identify participants' needs and strengths, or afterwards to reflect on outcomes and assess competencies in cultural mediation.

Adaptation Modules. A set of practical modules explaining how to adapt activities to different audiences, learning environments, accessibility requirements, and cultural contexts.

Youth Worker Manual. A comprehensive handbook guiding youth workers through the entire process of planning, facilitating, evaluating, and sustaining cultural mediation activities.

White Paper. A policy and recommendations document summarising the project's findings, lessons learned, and proposals for integrating cultural mediation into youth work and related fields.

Adapting Resources to Different Experience Levels

If you are new to cultural mediation, start with the *Training for Growth* - online course, *Active Citizens Booklet*, *EU Heritage Experiences*, and *Best Practices Guide* to build a foundation in key concepts and methods.

More experienced youth workers may benefit most from the *Toolbox for Creation* and *Adaptation Modules* when designing activities or adapting them to different groups and contexts. Beginners may find the *Assessment Tool* especially valuable for identifying their strengths and areas for improvement.

Whatever your level of experience, **Mediate Your Future!** resources are designed to support and inspire your work, not to be copied without adaptation.

Planning Time and Feasibility

Not every activity requires the same amount of time or resources.

Short activities work best when focused on a single topic, place, or aspect of heritage. *Toolbox for Creation* and *EU Heritage Experiences* can provide useful inspiration.

Half-day or full-day workshops allow for deeper group work, local research, and presentation of results. *Best Practices Guide* and evaluation tools from the *Toolbox for Creation* can be particularly helpful at this stage.

Longer projects may involve partnerships, public engagement activities, educational materials, or participant-led initiatives. *Adaptation Modules* and the *White Paper* can support larger-scale planning.

Whatever the format, choose a scope that matches participants' needs, available time, and organisational capacity.

Common Constraints

Youth workers often face common challenges such as limited budgets, time constraints, organisational difficulties, communication barriers, or diverse participant needs.

When this happens, focus on the main objective, simplify the activity, and make use of local resources. *Adaptation Modules* and *Best Practices Guide* can help identify practical solutions.

A simple, well-designed activity is often more effective than an ambitious project that cannot be delivered realistically.

2.3 Action pages

Step-by-Step guide: Designing a Cultural mediation Activity

1. **Start with a meaningful topic** - Choose a place, story, object, tradition, community issue, or cultural phenomenon that is relevant to participants and connected to the local or European context.
2. **Define the purpose** - Decide what participants should experience, explore, discuss, or better understand through the activity. Focus on one main objective.
3. **Understand your participants** - Consider participants' interests, previous experiences, motivations, and support needs. Adapt the activity to the people who will participate.
4. **Choose the relevant *Mediate Your Future!* Resources** - Select the resources that best fit your objective and context.
5. **Create opportunities for participation** - Plan activities that encourage participants to observe, discuss, investigate, create, share experiences, and contribute their own perspectives.
6. **Build a simple structure** - Include a short introduction, a meaningful main activity, and time for reflection and discussion.
7. **Check feasibility** - Make sure the activity matches the available time, budget, location, organisational capacity and participant's profile.
8. **Consider inclusion and accessibility**. Check for potential barriers such as physical or sensory access, language, digital access, financial constraints, or neurodiversity, and provide different ways for participants to engage, including options that do not require speaking in front of the group.
9. **Implement and observe** - Remain flexible. Listen to participants, observe group dynamics, and adjust the process when necessary.
10. **Reflect and improve** - Collect feedback, identify what worked well, and note any changes that could strengthen future activities.

Do	Don't
Start from participants' interests, experiences, and local context	Focus only on delivering information
Encourage dialogue and multiple perspectives	Expect one correct interpretation
Adapt Mediate Your Future! resources to your context	Copy activities without adjustments
Use local knowledge, stories, and community resources	Assume a large budget or specialised equipment is necessary
Create opportunities for active participation	Let participants remain passive observers
Leave time for reflection and discussion	Fill every minute with activities
Consider accessibility and inclusion from the start	Treat adaptation as an afterthought
Plan realistically and stay flexible	Overcomplicate the programme

Checklist

- The objective of the activity is clearly defined.
- The topic is relevant to participants and connected to the local or EU context.
- Participants will actively contribute to the process rather than only receive information.
- The activity includes opportunities for dialogue and reflection.
- Relevant **Mediate Your Future!** resources have been selected.
- The structure is realistic for the available time and resources.
- Necessary materials, partners, and logistical arrangements are prepared.
- Accessibility and inclusion have been considered.
- A backup plan is available if needed.
- Roles and responsibilities are clear.
- A method for collecting feedback and evaluating the activity has been planned

What if...?

Do not force discussion immediately. Start with pair work, small-group conversations, visual methods, observation tasks, or individual reflection. Many participants need time before sharing their opinions in a larger group. Remember that participation can take different forms and does not always begin with speaking.

What if the activity feels too ambitious? Simplify it. Reduce the number of objectives, shorten the programme, or focus on a single theme, place, or story. A smaller activity completed successfully usually has a greater impact than an overly ambitious project that cannot be fully delivered.

What if participants have very different levels of knowledge or experience? Use methods that value personal experiences alongside factual information. Encourage peer learning and create opportunities for participants to contribute from their own perspectives. In cultural mediation, different experiences can be a resource rather than a challenge.

What if the activity needs to be adapted for different needs or contexts? Review potential barriers related to accessibility, language, learning styles, or local conditions. Use the Adaptation Modules and adjust methods, materials, or timing where necessary. Small changes can often make participation easier for everyone.

What if unexpected challenges appear during the activity? Treat flexibility as part of the process. Weather conditions, technical problems, low attendance, or changes in group dynamics are common in youth work. Focus on the main objective and adapt the format when necessary, rather than trying to follow the original plan at all costs.

That time when...

During a cultural mediation activity focused on local heritage, facilitators prepared a presentation based on historical sources and photographs. Although the content was well researched, participants remained passive and disengaged.

The facilitators then invited participants to share their own memories, stories, and connections to the place. The discussion quickly became more dynamic, with participants exchanging experiences, asking questions, and reflecting together.

The most valuable part of the activity was not the information itself, but the opportunity to connect heritage with personal experience. The lesson was clear: cultural mediation works best when participants actively contribute their own perspectives rather than simply receive information.

Chapter 3 – Leadership & Group Facilitation

Stepping up to the role of coordinator, facilitator, and leader of cultural mediation projects means accepting that facilitation is not merely about rolling out a schedule of activities. Above all, it is a mindset—one defined by listening, flexibility, and, at times, a healthy dose of improvisation when dealing with people. Together, we will explore how to guide a group effectively, weather the "storms" (conflicts!), and maintain positive energy—all grounded in real-world experience.

3.1 Leadership Styles

The word "leadership" can sometimes be intimidating. People often picture it as implying acting like an authoritarian leader who imposes their vision. In cultural mediation and youth work, however, forget that cliché. Leadership is the art of guiding a group toward its destination while allowing everyone to reach their full potential.

Finding your style and knowing when to switch

There is no single "right" leadership style. The secret lies in your ability to navigate between three main approaches, depending on the type of your group (its needs, confidence, and current experience):

- **The directive (or structuring) style** is useful at the very beginning of a project, when the young people do not know each other and are looking for clear instructions. You establish the framework, the timing, and the safety rules.
- **The participatory (or democratic) style:** this is the core of our work. You make proposals, and the group debates, co-constructs, and votes. You are the guardian of the process, not the sole decision-maker.

- **The delegative (or empowering) style:** the Holy Grail. The group is mature, and the necessary skills are in place. You step back to become a background resource.

How to adjust the style depending on the group.

- A good coordinator observes before acting. If you adopt a delegative style with a group of shy young people who have just met, you will be met with dead silence and anxiety. Conversely, a directive style with a highly motivated, experienced group will stifle their creativity.
- **The golden rule:** assess the level of competence (do they know how to do it?) and the level of motivation (do they want to do it?). Adjust your approach at the start of every meeting.

Stimulate protagonism.

"Protagonism" means ensuring that young people are the main actors in the story, not mere spectators of your workshops. To spark this:

1. **Assign genuine responsibilities:** not just "putting away chairs," but "managing the coffee break budget" or "leading tomorrow's icebreaker."
2. **Allow for mistakes:** if a young person takes the lead on an activity and the outcome is a bit chaotic, value the initiative before debriefing the approach.

Micro-behaviours of positive leadership.

Leadership lies in the details. It is your micro-behaviours that build trust:

- **Eye contact and smiling:** Welcome each person warmly by making non-intrusive eye contact. This respects individual preferences while validating their presence.
- **Positive reframing:** Instead of saying "No, that's not possible," say, "That's an interesting idea; how could we adapt it to fit our budget?"
- **Body posture:** uncross your arms and sit at the same level as the participants (avoid standing at the board if everyone else is seated in a circle).

3.2 Managing Group Dynamics & Conflict

A group is a living entity. It is born, grows, goes through crises, stabilises, and eventually separates. Understanding these cycles will prevent you from panicking when the atmosphere becomes tense.

Key considerations:

Phases of group dynamics.

Based on Bruce Tuckman's model

Phase	What's happening in the group	Your role
1. Forming	Politeness, observation, shyness. The participants gently test one another.	Softly directive: reassuring, setting the ground rules, breaking the ice.
2. Storming	Personalities are asserting themselves. Friction is arising, and the framework is being challenged.	Mediator: acknowledging tensions and clarifying roles without judgment.
3. Norming	The group is finding its rhythm. The shared rules are accepted.	Facilitator: fosters cohesion, plans for the medium term.
4. Performing	The energy is fluid. The group works autonomously and creates.	Low-key support: celebrating successes, giving space.

Types of participants.

In every group, you will encounter certain behaviour types. Learn to work with them rather than fight against them:

- **The natural leader** commands attention and speaks rapidly.

Tip: Turn them into an ally by asking them to co-facilitate a breakout group, while ensuring they don't monopolise the conversation.

- **The shy/reserved person** has great ideas but hesitates to interrupt.

Tip: Use written exercises (like Post-it notes) or strict round-robin formats to provide a safe space that builds their confidence.

- The sceptic/complainer criticises the agenda or the method.

Tip: Don't take it personally. Approach them during a break: "I get the impression the method isn't working for you; what do you think we could improve?" Give them a sense of ownership.

Conflict prevention and energy management

The best way to manage conflict is to anticipate it. Most of the tension in a workshop stems from a lack of clear boundaries or a drop in energy.

- **The ground rules agreement:** co-create the rules from day one (respect, active listening, non-judgment, punctuality). If tension arises, refer to the agreement rather than your own authority.
- **The energy gauge:** never launch a complex brainstorming session right after a heavy meal or at 5:30 PM. Use energisers (short, 3-minute games) to refocus the group's attention.

3.3 Action Pages

– Step-by-Step guide

The chronological flow of a workshop day is crucial for building trust and maintaining group momentum.

1. The check-in (mood check), 15–20 min.

Never start straight away with writing or production tasks. Gather everyone in a circle. Ask each person to share their energy level or mood using a single word or a number from 1 to 5. This allows you to identify anyone tired or preoccupied immediately.

2. Reviewing the framework and objectives, 5 min.
- Clearly explain the day's agenda: "This morning we create; this afternoon we test." Providing participants with a clear structure often helps them engage more confidently.

3. Alternating work sessions, in blocks of no more than 90 minutes.

Break up your activities. Alternate between periods of individual reflection (using Post-its), small-group discussions (3–4 people), and sharing outcomes with the whole group. Take proper breaks every hour and a half.

4. Debriefing and check-out, 15 min.

Gather the group before leaving. What did we learn today? What was challenging? End on a positive note to reinforce cohesion before parting ways.

Do & don't

To-do list	Avoid
Value processes as much as results. The journey the young person has taken matters more than the deliverable's perfection.	Taking attacks personally. If a young person storms out of the room in anger, it is often a sign of internal frustration, not hatred toward you.
Practice active listening by rephrasing what the participant says to ensure they feel understood.	Trying to save the situation all by yourself. If the group is bored, say so: "I sense that energy is low. Shall we stop or switch activities?"
Sharing one's own vulnerability: admitting when one doesn't know or when one has made a mistake.	Allowing microaggressions or sexist/racist jokes to take hold under the pretext of "maintaining a good atmosphere."

Checklist

Before entering the room or starting your coordination meeting, check these boxes:

- My physical space is set up to encourage interaction (ideally in a circle, without table barriers).
- My visual aids (flip chart, markers, Post-it notes) are ready and accessible to everyone.
- I have prepared two backup plans in case the main activity proves too difficult or moves too quickly.
- I am clear about my own emotional state and energy level today.

What if...?

What if... a participant flatly refuses to take part in an activity?

Don't force them to participate in front of everyone; that would create a power struggle. Instead, suggest a role such as benevolent observer, timekeeper, or official session photographer. Often, the desire to join the group returns naturally once the pressure subsides.

What if... two young people start insulting each other right in the middle of a workshop?

Stop immediately. Separate the project content from the interpersonal dynamic. Call a general timeout. Take the two young people aside—out of the room—to defuse the situation using "I" statements ("I cannot accept insults in this space; what is going on?").

That time when...

"During a video production project with ten young people from very diverse backgrounds, we reached the third day—the notorious '**storming**' phase. Two natural leaders were clashing over the script. Tempers flared, the atmosphere turned icy, and the rest of the group retreated into silence.

My initial internal reaction was panic; I saw my schedule falling apart. Instead of making a snap decision or asserting my authority as coordinator, I halted the exercise. I placed the script on the table and said, 'Let's wipe the slate clean. We're going to do an improv exercise where each of you plays the other person and argues their case.'

Seeing themselves good-naturedly caricatured made them burst out laughing. The tension dissipated. We then set up an anonymous voting system to approve ideas for the script.

The lesson I learned: conflict isn't a failure of facilitation; it's a necessary step for the group to truly take ownership of the project. You need the courage to pause and work through it together."

Chapter 4 – Dissemination in Practice

You never know the impact of your project. That's the truth about everything you do in the field of cultural mediation and youth work. If you were selling chocolate or mobile phones, you could measure your impact and results. The more goods you sell, the more efficient you are, the higher the income you bring to your company and so on. Cultural mediation and youth work is the opposite. You work with people and for people. You do something together, participants are satisfied, then the project ends. How to make its resources, discoveries and lessons learned accessible to a wider group of people so that they can use them, build upon them new activities? This is where dissemination comes in. A simple example will make it clearer:

Mike organised a project to help young people learn about the history of their neighbourhood. The project lasted one year. During that time, young people created a **heritage map** of their neighbourhood, an **audioguide** available on a streaming platform, several **videos** about places of special importance, four **guided tours**, and a **treasure hunt game**. Mike learned a lot during that year. Based on the experience gained and the evaluation conducted throughout the project, he prepared a **brochure** that shares know-how, insights, and dos and don'ts. Everything put in **bold** is a project result. After being shared, they were used by other people. The treasure hunt helped parents introduce their children to a district they just moved into. A teacher included videos in their lesson plans. A guide used the heritage map to prepare a new tour. A brochure inspired a youth educator from another city to run a similar initiative.

4.1 Planning and Collecting Dissemination Content

As the example above shows, what you create in the project might be very useful to others. Some usages are predictable, some will surprise you. But before that happens, you need to ensure that information about your project's results reaches as many people who might be interested as possible. But for that you need a plan.

A good idea is to create a dissemination plan where you'll set up measurable goals, such as:

- How many and what kind of organisations you want to reach
- How many individuals you want to reach and what is their profile (e.g. teachers, educators, researchers)
- Which channels you want to use (website, social media, newsletters) and for what (e.g. a website is good to store all results in one place, social media for updates).

If your project is done in partnership with other organisations, such a document sets up clear goals and guidelines for everyone.

This is why, from the very beginning, you should think about dissemination as not only an integral part of your project, but also as a phase of each project's activity. This will help you keep it in mind and prepare for it.

To get an overview of when each result will be ready and when a dissemination action will be needed, mark it on the project timeline.

Practical tip: check if in those months we're celebrating a 'World Day' of the topic related to the result. If yes – you can use it.

Table 1. Release of the project results – example

	Jan .	Fe b.	Mar.	Apr .	Ma y	Jun .	Ju l.	Au g.	Sept.	Oct .	No v.	Dec .
Heritage Map												
Audioguide												
Videos												
Guided tours												
Treasure Hunt												
Brochure												

Planning will allow you and your organisation to prepare for dissemination about your project and:

- secure a space on the Internet where the results will be published (new website, dedicated section of organisation's website) – a central hub for your project
- Block 'post slots' in your organisation's social media profiles
- Do additional research for stakeholders particularly interested in that specific result.
- Reflect on ideas for the dissemination and collect materials for it.

The last bullet point brings us to another important matter: collecting dissemination content. What should you collect? Who should collect? How to collect?

We can put it like this: collect everything. During activities you undertake within the project, take pictures, record short videos (e.g., participants' statements), gather participants' feedback, and note your and your team's impressions. Pictures and short videos will illustrate dissemination materials and attract attention. If you already have an idea for how to disseminate certain results (e.g., a treasure hunt), take pictures that illustrate it. Participants' feedback and impressions will bring

personal perspective – one or two quotes will provide a human dimension. How you'll collect dissemination materials depends on two factors: your needs and budget. If the budget allows, you can hire a photographer and professional evaluator. Each of them will need to be briefed by you so that they know your goals and expectations. But, in most cases, you'll have to handle it on your own. For pictures, a good phone will be enough. For evaluations – a simple form with a few open-ended questions should provide you with enough data to use. But remember! Don't publish anything without the participants' (or their legal guardians if they're minors') consent. They have to be aware that pictures taken might be published, and that what they write in the questionnaires might be quoted in dissemination materials, even if you anonymise the answer. Transparency is very important. It builds confidence.

4.2 Sharing Results with and through Young People

Before you start disseminating, you need to define whom the message is addressed to. The target group will differ depending on the project and its goals, your organisation's localisation and other factors. How to define them? You'll find guidelines and materials for that in the Mediate your Future online course and Mediate your Future – Toolbox for creation.

No matter what the target groups are, you can actively engage young people, your project's participants, in the dissemination. But to do so, you need to prepare your organisation and young people.

Preparing your organisation

Make sure that the communication specialist in your organisation is aware that part of the content will be prepared by young participants. As it may differ from what the organisation usually releases, everyone has to be prepared and agree to it.

Imagine the following situation:

Young people prepared a 2-minute video on the project. It took them 3 days to record and edit it. You send the results of their work to the communications officer, who refuses to publish them because they don't meet the standards. The result? A risk of conflict in the team (you vs the communications officer), young people disappointed, and the urgent need to search for a 'replacement post' arises. We're sure that's not what you want.

Preparing young people

From the very beginning, project participants should know whether you want to engage them in dissemination and exactly what your expectations are. And they (and their legal guardians) need to agree on that. A good idea would be to organise a separate meeting dedicated to project dissemination – what it is, how your organisation does it, how participants will be engaged and what the rules are for

safe and ethical online content sharing. You can invite a communication officer for that meeting.

Setting clear, transparent dissemination goals for everyone engaged in the project, including participants, will ensure the project's safety. Young people actively involved in dissemination will have a real influence on what is published and will feel they control what is being said publicly about the initiative they're engaged in.

Engaging young people actively co-creating dissemination will help you reach younger audiences with short-form videos (like Reels or Shorts), podcasts, or user-generated content (UGC). Besides a wider range, you can use this occasion to familiarise youth with the different needs of Internet users. You can provide them with basic guidance on accessibility, such as adding subtitles to videos, alternative text for images (alt text), or using plain language where appropriate.

Remember: a good, well-targeted dissemination plan that engages your organisation and participants might yield surprising results. Because the most important thing is to ensure that what you create within the project will be used and reused by others years after your project ends.

4.3 Action pages

Step-by-Step guide

You are a great project coordinator. You don't have to be a social media ninja. But you need a dissemination plan. Because what you do is worth sharing.

1. Define your target groups and stakeholders.
2. Choose dissemination channels most relevant for each group.
3. Mark on the project schedule months in which the results will be ready.
4. If possible, discuss dissemination with your communication team.
5. Set up measurable success indicators for dissemination.
6. Create a dissemination plan, even a very basic one.
7. Decide if and to what degree you want to engage participants.
8. Review the plan regularly and adapt if needed.

Do's & don'ts

Behind the dissemination strategies, there's a wealth of knowledge. If you feel that dissemination call – go for it. But if you don't feel very confident in that area and you're all on your own with dissemination, without the support of specialists, just stick to the few rules we've collected below.

Do's:

- Choose a maximum 3 dissemination channels (e.g. mailing, one social media platform, one channel to communicate with participants)
- Use social media you already know
- Read a few articles on how that platform works, what content it promotes, etc.
- Be authentic – write in your own style and words

Don'ts

- Don't follow social media trends thoughtlessly
- Think twice before opening a separate social media account for your project. Building audiences and outreach takes lots of time and effort.

- Don't press yourself to publish daily. Keep to the rule: less is more. One well-written message is more impactful than 10 poorly written ones.

Checklist

Dissemination is often related to some requirements. If the project is funded by an external grant program, you'll be obliged to fulfil what you've written in the application form (e.g. the number of posts you'll publish on social media) and to inform that the project is funded by this or that programme (e.g. by putting the organisation's logo). To avoid unpleasant surprises at the project's end, which happened to all of us at the beginning of project coordination, you should regularly check if:

- You fulfil all funding requirements in terms of dissemination
- You meet the indicators
- You publish regularly
- All project partner organisations are equally engaged in dissemination (you can ask them to update dissemination logs every two–three months)

What if...?

What ifs... can be paralysing. Below, we provide a list of the most common ones (and how to deal with them) for project dissemination.

What if...

- The project result(s) is/are not satisfying
They might not seem satisfying to you. But someone might find them very useful and inspiring. Besides, sometimes the process is more important than the final result.
- Some participants don't agree to publish their image, and some do
It happens really often. If the group is small, it is easy to remember who agrees and who doesn't. In larger groups, you can ask participants to put on a small green or red sticker to indicate whether they want to be photographed. There might be groups or places where photographing participants is forbidden (e.g., hospitals, youth detention centres). In that case, ask if you can photograph participants' hands.

- You don't have this one perfect picture making a 100% match for the dissemination message
With a little help from your friends (or participants, if you're still in touch), you'll manage. Invite them for a short session and take the pictures you need.
- The result is delayed and is not ready to publish
Don't panic. Organise. Discuss it in advance with your organisation's communication officer and adapt the dissemination plan or... skip the post, publish something else project-related. It is you who knows what was supposed to be published, not your followers.
- You get burned out from content creation but have to publish today
Write something very simple. Like: "Hey, that's how the guided tour was last Saturday! Put a thumb up if you join us next time". Not every post has to be a Pulitzer winner.

That time when...

I remember co-coordinating a one-and-a-half-year project involving almost 70 kids and indirectly their parents, a group of around 140 people. These were parents bringing kids to workshops on Saturdays, picking them up, curious about the backstage – what's going on during the workshop, what's the project's general progress, what are the next milestones. They also needed to be up to date with all important dates, meetings, schedule changes and so on. So we discovered we had quite a large group of stakeholders who were very interested in the project's progress. How to address that need efficiently and with the least effort? Sending recap emails with heavy attachments (pictures)? Direct conversations? Open days for parents? No. We created a closed group on a social media platform. Efficient. Easy. Quick. Accessible. Everybody was happy.

This example shows two things:

- We can never forget about internal communication – with our team or participants
- Sometimes a new group of stakeholders may appear, and you'll have to respond to their needs.

Chapter 5 – Sustainability & Evaluation

Evaluation and sustainability are often treated as the last steps of a project. In practice, they work much better when they are present from the beginning:

- Evaluation helps youth workers understand what participants experienced, what changed, and what should be adapted.
- Sustainability helps the activity leave something useful behind: a method, a relationship, a resource, a new habit, or a local partnership that can continue after the first workshop is over.

This approach is reflected throughout the project's resources, including the e-learning modules, practical toolbox, youth-led initiatives, and pilot activities carried out across the partnership. These experiences demonstrate how evaluation, planning, and long-term sustainability can be adapted to different local contexts while supporting meaningful participation. They also confirm that evaluation is not simply a reporting requirement. It is a way to listen, learn, adapt, and help participants take ownership of their own learning and cultural mediation projects.



Photo credit: Les Expéditions / CEMEA pilot training, Saint-Nazaire.

5.1 Evaluation as a Learning Tool

Why evaluation matters

Evaluation is different from monitoring or assessment. Monitoring follows whether activities are carried out as planned, while assessment usually focuses on participants' learning or performance. Evaluation looks more broadly at the overall quality, relevance and effects of an activity. It helps people learn from what really happened, not only from what was planned. In cultural mediation, an activity can be successful even when the original plan changes. Participants may ask unexpected questions, need more time, prefer a different format, or create results that were not imagined at the beginning.

A good evaluation therefore looks at both results and process. It asks: Did participants understand the purpose of the activity? Did they feel able to contribute? What helped them engage? What made things difficult? What should be kept, changed, simplified, or developed next time?

This approach is especially important in youth work, where confidence, cooperation, expression, and participation are often just as important as the final product. A map, a video, a guided tour, or a workshop output is valuable, but the learning journey behind it is valuable too.

Participatory evaluation

Participatory evaluation means involving participants in the reflection, rather than evaluating them from the outside. It can be very simple. At the end of a session, ask participants what they discovered, what was unclear, what they enjoyed, and what they would change. When possible, give them more than one way to answer: speaking, writing, drawing, voting with stickers, completing a short form, or discussing in pairs.

This matters because not everyone is comfortable giving feedback in the same way. Some participants will speak easily in a group. Others will be more honest in writing, or during an informal conversation. The youth worker's role is to create several small opportunities for feedback instead of waiting for one big final evaluation.

Participatory evaluation also supports empowerment. When young people are asked to analyse the activity, they become co-designers of the next step. Their feedback can influence the rhythm, the tools, the communication, the accessibility of the activity, or the way responsibilities are shared.

Lightweight tools

Evaluation does not need to be heavy. Useful lightweight tools include:

- A three-question exit ticket: What did I learn? What was difficult? What would I like to try next?
- A traffic-light check: green for clear/useful, orange for partly clear, red for confusing or difficult.
- A mood or energy scale from 1 to 5 at the beginning and end of the session.
- A short group debrief with one question about content, one about group process, and one about next steps.
- A facilitator log written immediately after the activity, before details are forgotten.
- One follow-up message a few weeks later to see whether participants reused anything.

The best tool is the one people will actually use. If the group is tired, use one question. If participants are very young or have language barriers, use visual choices. If the activity is long, evaluate several times during the process instead of only at the end.

Different useful templates to schedule your project and set your indicators are available in the project's toolbox here. It invites teams to define the main stages of a project, identify who is responsible for each step, and choose simple quantitative and qualitative indicators. This kind of tool can be used in many local settings because it does not impose one model of success. It simply helps the team check whether the project is moving in the right direction and what needs to be adjusted.

5.2 Building Long–Term Sustainability

From single activities to ongoing practice

Sustainability does not always mean creating a large new programme. Sometimes it means making sure that a small activity can be repeated, adapted, or remembered. A cultural mediation activity becomes more sustainable when it produces resources that others can use, when participants gain confidence to continue, or when a local partner sees how the activity can fit into their own work.

Think of sustainability from the first planning meeting. Ask what will remain after the activity: a method, a contact list, an exhibition, a digital map, a guide, a set of photos, a local story collection, or a group of young people who know how to lead the next session. This changes the way you document the process and the way you share responsibilities.

Involvement of local actors

Local actors make projects stronger because they bring knowledge, trust, and continuity. Schools, youth centres, museums, social organisations, libraries, local historians, residents, artists, and public services can all help connect the activity to real local life.

A sustainable activity is rarely carried by one person alone. It grows when several actors understand what they can contribute and what they can gain from the process.

The lesson on valuable partnerships in the project's e-learning module gives another transferable example. The Value Matrix asks each partner what they contribute, what they receive or learn, and what added value they bring to the project. This is a simple way to make reciprocity visible. It can be used by a local youth centre working with a museum, by a school cooperating with an NGO, or by an international partnership trying to balance responsibilities between organisations.

Mini–ecosystems

A mini-ecosystem is a small network of people, places, resources, and habits that allows an activity to continue. It does not need to be formal at the beginning. It may

start with one youth worker, one group of participants, one local partner, and one reusable tool.

For example, an interactive map created by a young Ukrainian participant can become more than a one-off digital product. It can be used by newcomers to discover a city, by teachers to introduce local geography, by youth workers to start a walk, or by another group as a model for their own neighbourhood. The resource becomes sustainable when it is easy to find, easy to understand, and easy to adapt...

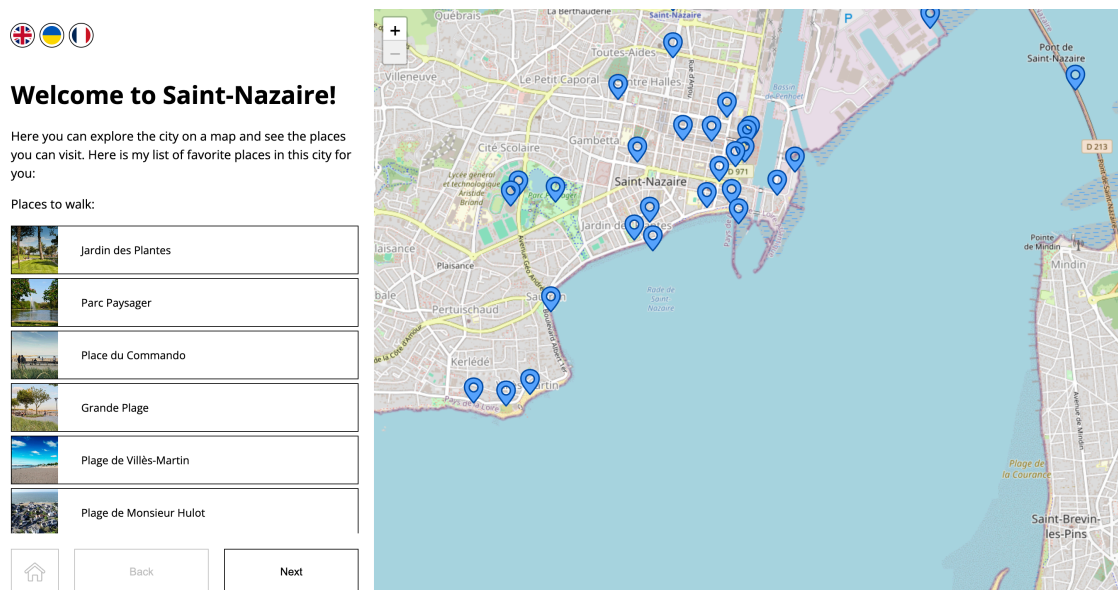


Photo credit: Les Expéditions / youth-led interactive map of Saint-Nazaire.

The same logic appears in the WP3 toolbox. A Team Canvas can help a new group clarify strengths, needs and motivations before starting. A Workflow Canvas can help partners decide how they communicate, make decisions and track tasks. A Sustainability and Legacy Planning Toolkit can help the team think early about what will remain after the activity. Each organisation can adapt them to its own participants, language, timeline and resources.

Use the toolbox

The matrices and templates mentioned in this chapter do not need to be recreated from scratch. We invite you to download and adapt the Mediate Your Future! toolbox documents from the project website: mediateyourfuture.eu.

Useful starting points: Project Schedule and Indicators, Team Canvas, Value Matrix, Workflow Canvas, and Sustainability & Legacy Planning Toolkit.

Low-cost strategies

Many youth organisations work with limited time and budgets. Sustainability should therefore be realistic. Low-cost strategies can be very effective when they are planned carefully.

- Document the activity with photos, screenshots, short quotes, and facilitator notes.
- Create a simple template so the activity can be repeated by another group.
- Store resources in a shared folder with clear names and short instructions.
- Invite participants to explain the activity to the next group.
- Use free or familiar digital tools when they are enough for the objective.
- Build partnerships around existing events, places, and community routines.
- Plan a small follow-up moment instead of trying to create a large continuation immediately.

Which toolbox document should I use?

Need	Tool / matrix	Use it when...	Keep as evidence
Plan and monitor	Project Schedule and Indicators	You need a simple timeline, roles and progress markers.	Updated timeline, indicators, short notes on changes.
Build a team	Team Canvas	A group is starting or needs to clarify strengths, needs and motivations.	Photo/export of the canvas, agreed roles.
Balance partners	Value Matrix	Several organisations contribute different resources or expertise.	Filled matrix, partner feedback, revised responsibilities.
Stay organised	Workflow Canvas	The team needs clear communication, decision-making and task tracking.	Shared workflow rules, task board, meeting notes.
Prepare legacy	Sustainability & Legacy Planning Toolkit	You want to decide what remains after the activity.	Reuse plan, storage link, handover contacts.

5.3 Action pages

Step-by-Step guide: Evaluating and sustaining your activity

1. Define what you want to learn from the evaluation before the activity starts.
2. Choose one or two simple feedback tools that fit your group.
3. Observe the process during the activity: participation, energy, difficulties, and unexpected moments.
4. Collect participant feedback in more than one format when possible.
5. Debrief with the facilitation team soon after the activity.
6. Identify what should be kept, changed, simplified, or developed.
7. Decide what can remain after the activity: a resource, a method, a partnership, or a next step.
8. Share useful results with participants and partners.
9. Make the resource easy to reuse by adding short instructions, credits, and context.
10. Plan one realistic follow-up action, even if it is small.

Do & don't

Do	Don't
Evaluate the process as well as the final result.	Measure only numbers or outputs.
Use short, accessible feedback tools.	Ask participants to complete long forms when they are tired.
Let participants say what should change.	Treat feedback as a judgement of your personal performance.
Keep notes immediately after the activity.	Rely on memory several weeks later.
Plan sustainability from the beginning.	Think about continuation only when the project is ending.
Make resources easy to understand and reuse.	Create beautiful materials that nobody knows how to adapt.
Work with local partners and existing structures.	Try to carry the whole continuation alone.

Checklist

- The evaluation questions are clear and useful.
- The feedback method is adapted to the age, language level, and energy of participants.
- Participants have at least one safe way to express criticism.
- The facilitation team has planned time for debriefing.
- Consent and image rights have been checked before using photos or quotes.
- The main lessons learned are written down in a simple format.
- At least one output or method can be reused by another group.
- Local partners know where to find the results.
- A realistic follow-up action has been identified.

Handover checklist

Before closing the activity, check that someone else could understand, reuse or adapt what you created.

- The main lessons learned are written in a short, accessible format.
- The relevant toolbox matrix or template is saved with the project files.
- Photos, quotes or participant outputs have consent and credits.
- Partners know where to find the final resources.
- At least one person or organisation is identified for the next step.

What if...?

What if participants give very little feedback?

Do not conclude too quickly that they have nothing to say. Try a different format: anonymous notes, visual voting, a one-word checkout, or informal conversation during a break. Sometimes the question is too broad. Instead of asking 'What did you think?', ask 'What should we keep next time?' or 'What was the least clear moment?'

What if the evaluation shows that the activity was too dense?

This is useful information, not a failure. Reduce the number of objectives, add more time for practice, split the content into shorter steps, or provide a recap sheet. In the French pilot, feedback on the project's e-learning modules showed that learning time can vary a lot from one person to another.

What if there is no budget for continuation?

Focus on what can continue without money: a shared folder, a reusable template, a local contact, a participant presentation, a short guide, or a partnership with an existing event. Sustainability often begins with making the next step easier.

What if a partner wants to reuse the activity in a different context?

Share the core objective, the minimum materials, and the points that can be adapted. Encourage them to keep the spirit of the activity rather than copy every detail.

That time when...

During the French pilot, two young participants developed interactive maps connected to local heritage and everyday discovery. One map helped newcomers explore the city of Saint-Nazaire through useful and meaningful places. Another invited users to discover birds in the Briere marshes. At first, these projects could have been seen simply as final outputs of the training.

But the evaluation changed the way we looked at them. The important question was not only: 'Is the map finished?' It was also: 'Who could use it? What did the participant learn while creating it? How could another youth worker adapt this idea? What local stories or needs does it reveal?'

This shifted the focus from product to continuity. The maps became examples of how young people can turn personal interests, local places, language needs, and digital skills into mediation tools. The lesson was simple: a sustainable result is not always the biggest one. It is often the one that another person can understand, reuse, and make their own.

The wider project's toolbox shows the same principle at partnership level. A timeline, a value matrix or a workflow canvas may look less visible than a public event, but they often make the difference between a one-off action and a practice that can be repeated. When these tools are kept, translated, shared and adapted, they become part of the project legacy too.

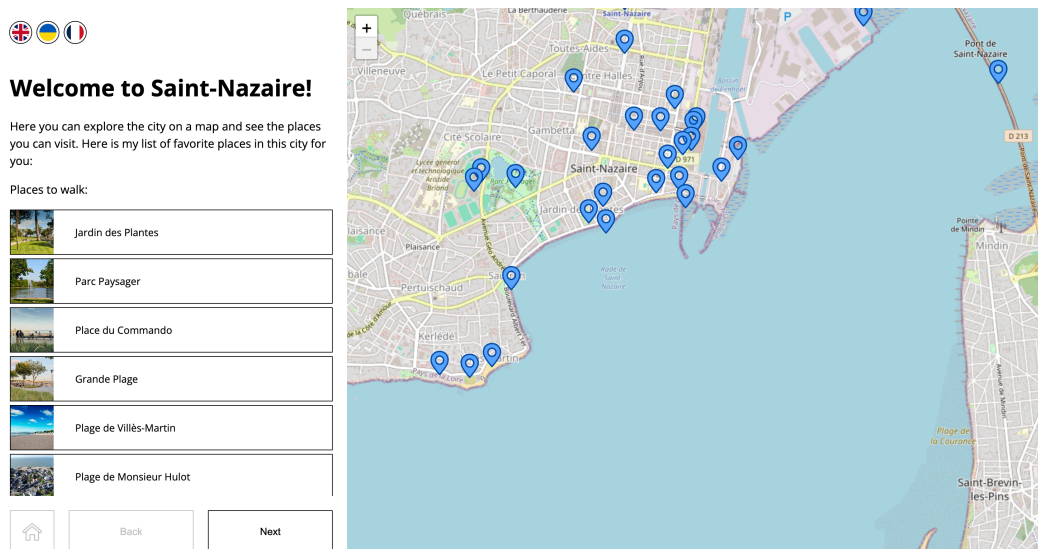


Photo credit: Les Expéditions / youth-led interactive map on birds in Briere.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

(Project code: 2024-2-FR02-KA220-YOU-62D7ACAC)