

# YOUPART Project



Co-funded by  
the European Union



02-2026

J.A.F.

**This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.**



# Training Toolbox – YouPart Project

---

## 1. Introduction

The YouPart Project supports the social inclusion, personal development, and active participation of young people, particularly those facing social, economic, or educational challenges. Through creative and non-formal approaches—such as movement, theatre, “clowning”, and group coaching—the project aims to strengthen young people’s emotional well-being, self-confidence, and sense of belonging.

This **Training Toolbox** is a practical resource for youth workers, educators, and organisations. It brings together a selection of best practices, three detailed Training Units, and complementary video tutorials to support the design and delivery of inclusive activities. The materials can be used as ready-to-implement sessions, inspiration for new workshops, or training content for professionals. Facilitators are encouraged to adapt the methods to the needs, abilities, and contexts of their groups, promoting creativity, reflection, and positive social interaction.

---

## 2. Best Practices

### 2.1 Germany

#### **Best Practice 1:** Build-up

**Leading organization:** YAPA Germany e.V., a non-profit German-African association focused on supporting young people in their educational and professional development.

- **Country:** Germany
- **Language:** German
- **Type of activity:** Group activity
- **Main objective:** To clarify the different educational pathways in Germany and to provide guidance on the German school system.
- **Description:**  
The *Build-Up* initiative is aimed at young people who lack clear career prospects or feel uncertain about their future professional paths. The program offers guidance and orientation within the German education and employment system, helping participants to



better understand available opportunities and make informed decisions about their future.

Through personalized support and expert advice, young people receive assistance in identifying suitable educational pathways, vocational training options, higher education possibilities, and international mobility opportunities such as internships abroad.

**Skills developed:**

- Job interview preparation and simulation sessions
- Support with job applications, including CV writing and application portfolios
- Access to experts from various professional fields
- Mentorship opportunities through YAPA mentors after graduation

**Why it is a good practice:** *Build-Up* represents a good practice as it combines personalized guidance, peer learning, and professional mentoring to support young people during key educational and career transitions. By addressing both national and international opportunities, the initiative enhances employability, informed decision-making and active participation in society.

**Resources**

- <https://www.yapagermany.de>
- <https://www.deutsche-stiftung-engagement-und-ehrenamt.de/projekte/durchs-ehrenamt-zur-teilhabe/>
- <https://mitmacher.org>
- <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de>

**Best Practice 2:** YOUng people STANDING OUT through the promotion of local heritage in rural areas

- **Leading organization:**

NGO NEST, an umbrella organization promoting and implementing international projects aimed at social change. The organization supports adults and young people by acting as a hub for European projects, from design and research to implementation.

- **Country:**

Germany

- **Language:**

German



- **Main objective:** to promote social inclusion, employability, and active participation of young people in rural areas and to support the promotion and sustainable development of rural territories.

- **Description:**

The *young people standing out* project focuses on empowering young people, particularly those living in rural areas and classified as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The initiative aims to strengthen participants' key competences and sense of initiative while addressing social exclusion and limited employment opportunities in rural contexts.

By providing young people with digital and social media marketing skills, the project enables them to actively promote local heritage, including culture, gastronomy, crafts, and the built and natural environment. Through this approach, young people become key actors in the development and visibility of their local communities, generating a positive "social ripple effect".

**Skills developed:**

**-Digital and media literacy**

Use of social media and digital marketing tools to promote local heritage.

**-Communication skills**

Creating messages and content tailored to different audiences and stakeholders.

**-Civic engagement and active citizenship**

Participation in local development processes and contribution to rural communities.

**-Employability skills**

Increased readiness for the labour market through practical experience and transferable skills.

**Why it is a good practice:** This initiative is considered a good practice due to its integrated approach to youth empowerment, combining digital skills development, active citizenship, and local heritage promotion. By involving young people as protagonists in the development of their rural areas, the project contributes to social inclusion, employment opportunities, and sustainable territorial development.

**Resources**

- <https://www.youstandout.eu/>
- <https://ngonest.de/you-stand-out/>

**Best Practice 3: Team Ability**

- **Leading organization:**

Landesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung Thüringen e. V. (LKJ), an organization



committed to youth participation and to promoting access to education and culture. Its aim is to improve the conditions for young people growing up in Thuringia through cultural education methods and approaches.

- **Country:**

Germany

- **Language:**

German

- **Main objective:** To strengthen self-awareness and personal competences among young people, and to support personal development and career orientation.

- **Description:** The *Team Ability* project focuses on strengthening young people's personalities by helping them identify, express, and positively use their individual abilities. The initiative is based on the concept of self-awareness and personal development, using creative and play-based pedagogical methods.

Through participatory and experiential activities, including theatre and group work, young people are encouraged to recognize their own strengths, appreciate diversity, and collaborate with others in a supportive learning environment. The project promotes holistic learning and aims to empower participants both on a personal and social level.

**Skills developed:**

- Self-awareness and self-confidence
- Social and interpersonal skills
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Communication skills
- Creativity and self-expression
- Respect for diversity and inclusion

**Why is it a good practice?:** *Team Ability* is considered a good practice due to its holistic and inclusive approach to youth development. By combining cultural education, creative expression, and participatory methods, the project effectively strengthens young people's personal, social, and collaborative skills, contributing to their long-term personal growth and active participation in society.

**Resources:** <https://lkj-thueringen.de/projekte/ability> <https://lkj-thueringen.de/projekte/ability/publikationen>



## 2.2 Bulgaria

### **Best Practice 1:** Drama and Art Therapy for Children and Youth

- **Leading organization:** “Our World” Association, an organization working to support vulnerable groups through psychosocial, educational, and creative interventions.
- **Country:** Bulgaria
- **Language:** Bulgarian
- **Main objective:** To prevent aggressive behavior, bullying, and emotional distress among migrant women and youth through drama and art therapy, while strengthening emotional expression, empathy, and coping skills.
- **Description:** The *Drama and Art Therapy for Children and Youth* project was implemented between October 2018 and March 2019 in refugee centres in Harmanli and Sofia. The initiative provided weekly drama and art therapy sessions for migrant women, children, and young people, following a specially developed methodology focused on creative expression and emotional balance.

Participants engaged in theatre therapy, improvisational games, and artistic activities in a safe and supportive environment. Through these methods, they were encouraged to express difficult experiences, develop emotional awareness, and build confidence. The project also included the creation of theatre performances and short films, which were publicly presented, reinforcing participants’ sense of achievement and group cohesion.

#### **Skills developed:**

- Emotional expression and self-regulation
- Empathy and emotional awareness
- Communication and self-expression skills
- Creativity and imagination
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Coping skills for dealing with challenges
- Teamwork and collaboration



**Why is it a good practice?:** This initiative represents a good practice due to its effective use of drama and art therapy as tools for psychosocial support and social inclusion. The methodology is well-established, adaptable, and suitable for replication with different vulnerable groups. By combining therapeutic processes with public performances, the project reinforces personal growth, self-confidence, and a strong sense of individual and collective achievement.

**Resources:** Abstract by Dr. Iva Paneva, “*Theatre as Therapy*”:

<https://natfiz.bg/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2.-avtoreferat-na-l.-Paneva.pdf>

Guide to good practices in Bulgaria and abroad:

[https://artoffice.bg/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/patevoditel-FINAL\\_compressed.pdf](https://artoffice.bg/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/patevoditel-FINAL_compressed.pdf)

Handbook of good practices:

<https://aspira.si/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Good-Practices-Youth-Art-Resilience-4.pdf>

## **Best Practice 2:** Lead and Inspire

- **Leading organization:** Bulgarian Youth Forum, a youth organization working at national and international level to support youth participation, empowerment, and capacity building.
- **Country:** Bulgaria
- **Language:** Bulgarian, English
- **Main objective:** To strengthen leadership competences of youth workers in order to improve the quality of their work with young people and support their personal and professional development.
- **Description:** The *Lead and Inspire* project is an Erasmus+ initiative designed to address the need for leadership development among youth workers. The project focused on supporting youth workers in understanding leadership concepts and applying them effectively in their daily work with young people.

A nine-day training course took place in June 2022 in Vrbovo, Bulgaria, using non-formal education methods. Through simulations, teamwork, role-playing activities, coaching techniques, and creative methods such as drama, participants enhanced their leadership knowledge and practical skills. The project also encouraged participants to reflect on their future work by developing clear visions and missions based on leadership principles.

## **Skills developed:**

- Leadership and decision-making skills



- Mentoring and coaching competences
- Communication and motivation skills
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Strategic thinking and planning
- Problem-solving and management skills

**Why is it a good practice?:** *Lead and Inspire* is considered a good practice because it effectively combines non-formal learning methods with practical leadership training. The project strengthens the capacity of youth workers to support young people, promotes reflective practice, and provides transferable tools that can be adapted to different contexts and thematic areas.

**Resources:** <https://bulgarianyf.eu/lead-and-inspire/>

### **Best Practice 3:** New Point of View

- **Leading organization:** Theatrical and social formation *Theatre Tsvete*, an organization working with young people through theatre-based and participatory methods to promote social inclusion, civic engagement, and personal development.
- **Country:** Bulgaria
- **Language:** Bulgarian
- **Main objective:** To empower young people as active initiators of positive social change by combining human rights education and forum theatre methods in order to prevent risky behavior and strengthen civic participation.
- **Description:** The *New Point of View* project was implemented between June and November 2023 under the National Program for the Implementation of Youth Activities of the Bulgarian Ministry of Youth and Sports. The project responds to the growing mental and social challenges faced by young people in an unstable and unpredictable social environment, which can lead to risky behavior and disengagement.

By combining informal training on the Convention on Human Rights with forum theatre techniques, the project actively engaged young people as conscious participants in identifying social problems and proposing solutions. Theatre-based methods were used as a tool for reflection, dialogue, and empowerment, enabling participants to raise awareness, strengthen civic responsibility, and initiate youth-led cultural and social initiatives at local and municipal level.



**Skills developed:**

- Civic engagement and active citizenship
- Awareness of human rights and social responsibility
- Critical thinking and problem analysis
- Communication and public expression
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Creativity and problem-solving
- Leadership and initiative-taking

**Why is it a good practice?:** *New Point of View* is considered a good practice due to its effective use of forum theatre as a participatory tool for youth empowerment and social inclusion. The methodology is highly adaptable and particularly suitable for working with vulnerable groups of young people. By combining education, creativity, and civic engagement, the project strengthens young people's capacity to address social challenges and contributes to the development of civil society.

**Resources:** <https://theatretsvete.eu/nova-naglasa/>  
<https://theatretsvete.eu/nishto-ne-ostava-skrito/>

## 2.3 Spain

**Best Practice 1:** Art Therapy in the Classroom: Workshops for Motivation and Absenteeism Prevention

- **Leading organization:** City of San Fernando de Henares (Madrid), in cooperation with local education and youth services.
- **Country:** Spain
- **Language:** Spanish
- **Main objective:** To prevent school absenteeism and increase student motivation by providing vulnerable high school students with emotional self-management tools through art therapy in the classroom.



- **Description:** The *Art Therapy in the Classroom* initiative implements weekly art therapy workshops for high school students at risk of absenteeism in San Fernando de Henares, Madrid. The program is delivered during school hours over a four-month period and is led by trained art therapists.

The sessions combine creative expression, mindfulness, and body awareness to create a safe space for self-discovery and emotional regulation. Through structured artistic activities, students are encouraged to explore their emotions, strengthen their sense of identity, and develop strategies for conflict resolution and self-management within an academic setting.

**Skills developed:**

- Emotional self-regulation and self-awareness
- Motivation and engagement in learning
- Creative expression and communication
- Conflict resolution skills
- Self-confidence and autonomy
- Critical thinking

**Why is it a good practice?:** This initiative represents a good practice due to its preventive approach to school absenteeism and its integration of art therapy within the formal education environment. By addressing emotional wellbeing as a key factor in academic engagement, the program creates measurable positive outcomes and shows strong potential for replication in other schools.

**Resources:** Initiative webpage:

<https://www.sanferjoven.org/arteterapia-en-las-aulas/>

Human resources – Kálíka Art Therapy Centre:

<https://www.kalikaarteterapia.com/sobre-nosotros>

Initiative featured by INJUVE:

<https://www.injuve.es/conocenos/noticia/ayto-de-san-fernando-de-henares-arteterapia-en-las-aulas>

**Best Practice 2:** Expressing and Creating through Art: COVID-19 Pandemic, Lockdown, and its Consequences for Young People



- **Leading organization:** City of Cazalla de la Sierra (Andalusia).
- **Country:** Spain
- **Language:** Spanish
- **Main objective:** To support young people's emotional wellbeing during and after the COVID-19 lockdown by providing creative spaces for self-expression, reflection, and community building through artistic activities.
- **Description:** The *Expressing and Creating through Art* initiative was developed in response to the social and emotional challenges faced by young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project created three volunteer groups, each focused on a different artistic discipline: music, visual arts, and audiovisual storytelling.

Through collaborative and autonomous creative processes, participants expressed their personal experiences related to the pandemic and lockdown. Activities included video production, art workshops resulting in a collective exhibition, and music rehearsals leading to a final concert. The initiative helped reduce feelings of isolation, strengthened community bonds, and fostered personal growth and emotional healing during a particularly difficult period.

#### **Skills developed:**

- Emotional expression and emotional awareness
- Creativity and artistic skills
- Communication and storytelling skills
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Community engagement and social participation
- Digital skills related to audiovisual production

**Why is it a good practice?:** This initiative represents a good practice due to its participatory and multidisciplinary approach, allowing young people to process complex emotions through creative expression. By combining individual reflection with collective artistic production, the project supports emotional wellbeing, strengthens community ties, and empowers young people as active contributors to their local cultural life.

**Resources:** Initiative featured on INJUVE:

<https://www.injuve.es/conocenos/noticia/ayto-de-cazalla-de-la-sierra-expresar-y-crear-con-arte-el-confinamiento-la-pandemia-y-sus-consecuencia-en-los-jovenes>



### **Best Practice 3:** MUS-E Program at CEE Infanta Elena

- **Leading organization:** Yehudi Menuhin Foundation (FYME), through the MUS-E program, in collaboration with CEE Infanta Elena, a school for students with special educational needs.
- **Country:** Spain
- **Language:** Spanish
- **Main objective:** To promote social and educational inclusion, creativity, and emotional expression among students with special educational needs through dance and movement-based artistic activities.
- **Description:** This educational workshop is part of the MUS-E programme and was implemented at CEE Infanta Elena by a professional artist from the Yehudi Menuhin Foundation. The activity consisted of twelve dance and movement sessions delivered throughout the academic year.

The sessions used dance, creativity, and guided movement games as tools to foster multicultural awareness, respect for diversity, and self-expression. In addition to its educational dimension, the workshop served as a motivational and inclusive space adapted to the individual needs of the students, encouraging participation and engagement in a supportive environment.

#### **Skills developed:**

- Creativity and imagination
- Emotional expression and self-awareness
- Social and interpersonal skills
- Body awareness and motor skills
- Respect for diversity and inclusion
- Communication and self-confidence

**Why is it a good practice?:** The MUS-E programme is considered a good practice due to its inclusive and arts-based educational approach, specifically tailored to students with special educational needs. By integrating dance and movement into the school environment, the initiative enhances social inclusion, emotional development, and



positive relationships, while demonstrating strong potential for replication through other artistic disciplines.

**Resources:** MUS-E programme – Yehudi Menuhin Foundation:

<https://fundacionyehudimenuhin.org/programas/mus-e/>

CEE Infanta Elena – MUS-E activity report:

<https://cee-infantaelena.centros.castillalamancha.es/content/programa-mus-e%C2%AE>

---

## 3. Training Units

### 3.1 Building Self-Esteem and Developing Self-Awareness through Movement and Body Expression (Physical Theatre).

**Overall duration:** 90 minutes

**Target group:** Disadvantaged young people (NEETs, marginalized youth, young people at risk of school dropout) and youth with low self-esteem, limited resources, or reduced opportunities for artistic and personal development.

**Required materials:** Stools or chairs; white A4 sheets; markers; large paper sheets; ample free space; comfortable clothing.

**Objectives:** Strengthen self-esteem and self-awareness through body expression, develop emotional expression, body awareness, and self-confidence, encourage creativity, imagination, and freedom of movement, Promote communication, trust, and cooperation among participants and offer a safe space for self-discovery through non-formal theatre-based methods.

**Methodology:** This unit uses physical theatre, movement improvisation, and creative expression to foster self-awareness. Activities are designed to help participants explore their body language, connect with emotions, and translate personal qualities into movement. The approach is experiential, playful, and non-judgmental, ensuring that each participant progresses at their own pace.

The facilitator guides the group using simple instructions, demonstrations, and supportive feedback, creating an environment where movement becomes a tool for reflection, empowerment, and communication.

#### Structure of the Session

☑ Warm-up (5–10 min): Welcome and explanation of the session purpose, establish group agreements (respect, active observation, no right or wrong movements), exploration of open/closed postures and their emotional meaning.



### **Main activities (60–70 min):**

#### **-Activity 1 – The Life of a Tree (10 min)**

Participants explore the life cycle of a plant through movement, discovering transitions between poses and reflecting on moments of comfort, challenge, or insight.

#### **-Activity 2 – Dancing My Name / Dancing My Strengths (45 min)**

A three-step artistic process:

1. Writing their name vertically and identifying qualities or strengths for each letter.
2. Representing those strengths through chair-based poses.
3. Creating a short movement sequence and later a duet choreography with a partner.  
Rehearsal and creative interpretation with selected music tracks.

#### **Activity 3 – Showtime (10 min)**

Participants present their duets on a designated “stage,” fostering self-confidence and group support.

- Reflection and sharing: each participant chooses the pose where they felt strongest; their silhouette is outlined on large paper. They may add drawings or words. Then, a group exhibition and voluntary presentations.

Closing and summary of key learnings:

- Movement as a tool for self-knowledge.
- Strength of emotions and creativity.
- Discovery of personal potential.

(Group cheer calling each participant’s name three times)

#### **Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased self-esteem and self-awareness.
- Improved ability to express emotions through movement.
- Strengthened confidence and body positivity.
- Development of creativity, imagination, and autonomy.
- Enhanced cooperation, trust, and communication skills.
- Identification of personal strengths and areas for growth.



- Greater sense of empowerment and motivation.

#### **Tips for Facilitators:**

- Create a safe, accepting, and creative atmosphere from the beginning.
- Use short, accessible instructions; demonstrate when necessary.
- Encourage personal pace and celebrate individual process.
- Prepare varied music pieces (different tempos and moods).
- Allow sufficient time for transitions and reflections.
- Support participants with sensitive, positive, and non-judgmental feedback.

#### **References / Resources:**

Graham, S., & Hoggett, S. (2009). *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*.

Farber, K. (2001). *When Bodies Matter: Teaching Adolescents About Community, Critical Consciousness, and Identity Through Movement*.

Physical theatre activities: <https://physicaltheatre.online/index.php/75-2/>

### **3.2 Empowering Growth through Group Coaching.**

**Overall duration:** 90 minutes

**Target group:** Disadvantaged young people (NEETs, unemployed youth, marginalized communities, young people facing social or economic difficulties) and youth with low self-confidence, reduced motivation, or limited access to coaching or mentoring opportunities.

**Required materials:** Flipchart and markers; sticky notes; printed worksheets (Wheel of Life, reflections); timer; soft background music

#### **Objectives:**

- Introduce participants to the basic principles of group coaching.
- Develop active listening, empathy, and powerful questioning skills.
- Strengthen self-awareness and self-confidence.
- Support participants in identifying personal goals and small achievable steps.



- Foster trust, cooperation, and peer-to-peer support.
- Encourage positive thinking and personal motivation.

**Methodology:** This training unit uses non-formal education, coaching techniques, and peer learning. Participants engage in interactive exercises focused on trust-building through movement, peer coaching to practice supportive communication, positive visualization and affirmations, and active listening and paraphrasing.

The facilitator adopts a non-directive coaching approach, offering guidance through questions, not advice, and ensuring a safe and confidential atmosphere.

### Structure of the Session

- Introduction / Warm-up (10 min): Welcome participants and clarify the purpose of group coaching, start a short discussion: "What is coaching?". Establish group ground rules (respect, confidentiality, active listening, no judgment).

Main activities (60–70 min):

- Energizer – The Mirror Exercise (10 min)

A paired activity where one participant leads slow movements while the other mirrors them.

Activity I – Understanding Group Coaching (25 min)

- Mini-Presentation (5 min)

Explanation of coaching (asking questions to help someone find their own answers), mentoring (giving advice), therapy (healing past experiences).

Introduction to key coaching skills: active listening, powerful questioning, encouragement.

- “Paraphrase & Reflect” Game (20 min)

Participants exchange small personal challenges in pairs and must summarize without giving advice.

Activity II – Goal Setting & Peer Coaching (30 min)

- Wheel of Life (15 min)

Participants rate satisfaction levels in different life areas and identify one area they want to improve.



-Peer Coaching (15 min)

In pairs, participants guide each other through open-ended coaching questions.

III-Relaxation Exercise – Visualization & Affirmations (10 min)

Guided visualization with soft music to imagine future success and well-being.  
Participants share one inner strength they discovered.

- Reflection and sharing (10–15 min):

Group discussion about how it felt to be truly listened to, what did you learn about supporting others and what is one goal you want to work on

Closing: Facilitator summarizes key takeaways:

- Listening is a powerful tool.
- Coaching empowers others to find their own answers.
- Small steps bring real change.

(Final group cheer or collective affirmation)

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Improved self-confidence and sense of personal agency.
- Stronger communication, empathy, and active listening skills.
- Enhanced goal-setting and reflection abilities.
- Greater openness to peer collaboration and mutual support.
- Better understanding of coaching as a tool for growth.
- Increased motivation to make positive changes in daily life.

**Tips for Facilitators:**

- Create a supportive, confidential, and non-judgmental environment.
- Use simple, clear language and avoid coaching jargon.



- Encourage participation but never force personal sharing.
- Give participants enough time to think and express themselves.
- Model active listening and powerful questioning.
- Use relatable examples that connect with the group's life experiences.
- Be patient and celebrate small achievements.

### References / Resources:

Whitmore, J. (2009). *Coaching for Performance*.

Rogers, J. (2016). *Coaching Skills: The Definitive Guide to Being a Coach*.

International Coaching Federation (ICF) – Core Competencies.

### 3.3 Unlocking a specific perception of the world, of people and of myself through the clown in me.

**Overall duration:** 120 minutes

**Target group:** Disadvantaged youth (NEETs, marginalized communities, young people at risk of school dropout), migrant and refugee youth with limited opportunities for expression and integration, young people with low self-esteem, reduced confidence, or lack of access to creative and personal development experiences.

**Required materials:** Red clown noses, scarves, hats, sticks, balloons, open space.

#### Objectives:

- Enhance creativity, imagination, and emotional expression through clowning.
- Support self-confidence, spontaneity, and authentic self-expression.
- Build group cohesion, trust, and a sense of belonging.
- Encourage presence, playfulness, and awareness of the “here and now.”
- Reduce self-criticism and promote acceptance of mistakes as part of learning.
- Strengthen empathy, cooperation, and non-verbal communication.

**Methodology:** This training unit is based on clowning as a tool for social and personal development, following the principles of the A.R.T. method (Access, Release, Transform).



Participants explore their internal “clown”—a character of curiosity, vulnerability, humor, and authenticity. Through improvisation, ritual, movement, emotional expression, and playful interaction, participants learn to let go of judgment, be fully present, connect with others in honest and spontaneous ways.

### **Structure of the Session**

- Warm-up (10–15 min): Welcome, explanation of the workshop purpose, and introduction of the clown as a playful, expressive identity, establish a safe and non-judgmental group atmosphere, and light physical warm-up to reduce tension and prepare the body for exploration.

- Main activities (75–90 min) :

#### **Circle Movement Game (5 min)**

Participants introduce themselves using a name + spontaneous movement, which the whole group repeats.

#### **Movement-Based Introductions (5 min)**

Participants present their name and a movement representing a personal hobby.

#### **Silent Line-Up Game (10 min)**

The group must silently order themselves by categories (birth month, shoe size, alphabetic order).

#### **“Yay! Let's...” Game (5 min)**

High-energy game reinforcing joy, spontaneity, and group enthusiasm.

### **Embodied Play and Improvisation**

#### **Activity I – Transforming and Passing an Object (5 min)**



Participants mime transforming an imaginary object and pass it around the circle.

### **Activity II – The Ritual of the Red Nose (15 min)**

A guided ritual introducing the clown persona:

- Participants put on the nose in silence,
- Adopt clown presence,
- Explore the space through gestures and non-verbal interaction,
- Connect with others through curiosity and authenticity,
- Close the ritual by removing the nose consciously.

### **Activity III – The Applause Ritual (10 min)**

Each participant steps onto a stage, bows, and receives unconditional applause.

### **Activity IV – Emotion Chairs (15 min)**

Participants express emotions (happiness, sadness, surprise, fear, love) individually and in groups, interacting in character.

### **Activity V – Improvised Clown Sketches (30 min)**

Small groups create short clown sketches with simple props, following a narrative arc (setup, surprise, resolution).

🔍 **Reflection and sharing (10–15 min):** In a circle (without noses), participants reflect on how they felt during the activities and on stage, their sense of comfort and safety, relationships with others, what they discovered about themselves, and what enthusiasm and playfulness brought to the experience.



The emphasis is not on performance evaluation but on emotional insight and self-awareness.

📌 Closing (5–10 min): Participants connect fingertips with neighbors and try to clap simultaneously, feeling the group's shared impulse.

Final words of gratitude, encouragement, and acknowledgment of each participant's contribution.

### **Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased self-confidence, spontaneity, and emotional expression.
- Enhanced presence, creativity, and capacity for playful exploration.
- Reduced fear of mistakes and judgment.
- Greater empathy, cooperation, and sense of belonging.
- Deepened non-verbal communication skills.
- Awareness of personal emotions, strengths, and relational patterns.
- Strengthened resilience and openness to new experiences.

### **Tips for Facilitators:**

- Maintain a safe, respectful, and supportive atmosphere.
- Reinforce non-competitiveness and acceptance.
- Encourage effort, not performance quality.
- Celebrate mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Model authenticity, presence, and playful curiosity.
- Guide transitions gently and keep the group emotionally grounded.

### **Resources:**

Rogers, C. R. (1979). *The Foundations of the Person-Centered Approach*.

Boal, A. (1993). *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

Morán-Intriago, F. J., Giraldo-O'Meara, A., & Berge, C. *The Clown... Far Beyond Clowning: A Community-Based Intervention Strategy for Social Work*.



YOU(TH) CLOWN – SALTO-YOUTH Toolbox.

*Applied Theatre for Unemployed Youth*, scholar.lib.vt.edu

*Social Circus* methodology (arts-led education for marginalized youth).

---

## 4. Video Tutorials

### Part 1 – X-Plore

**Associated Training Unit:** *Building self-esteem and developing self-awareness through movement and body expression*

**Purpose:**

This video demonstrates the energizer “**X-Plore**”, a foundational warm-up that helps participants explore open and closed body postures and the emotions associated with them. The exercise introduces the connection between physical expression and emotional states, encouraging awareness of how posture influences confidence, presence, and self-perception.

The video guides participants through:

- Neutral, open, and closed postures
- Slow transitions between poses
- Varying tempo and levels of body openness
- Short reflection on comfort, stability, and emotional response

**Use:**

Facilitators can use this video at the beginning of the session to model the introduction of the workshop, demonstrate posture exploration, and set an atmosphere of curiosity and embodied awareness. It is ideal for warming up the body, reducing tension, and preparing participants for deeper movement-based activities.

### 2. The Life Cycle of a Tree

**Associated Training Unit:** *Building self-esteem and developing self-awareness through movement and body expression*

**Purpose:**

This tutorial demonstrates the full activity “The Life of a Tree,” guiding participants through expressive movement based on the stages of a plant’s growth. It supports body awareness, creativity, imagination, and emotional expression.

**Use:**



The facilitator can play or reference the video during practice to help participants visualize poses and transitions, or use it beforehand as preparation.

### 3. My Name Dance

**Associated Training Unit:** Building self-esteem and developing self-awareness through movement and body expression

**Purpose:**

This tutorial explains how to transform the personal strengths identified in the “My Name” exercise into individual and paired movement sequences.

It demonstrates how participants create poses, transitions, and short dances using a chair to support stability.

**Use:**

Useful for modeling the process before Activity 2, or as visual reinforcement for choreography creation.

### Warm-Up Game

**Associated Training Unit:** *Unlocking a specific perception of the world, of people, and of myself through the clown in me*

**Purpose:**

This video demonstrates an introductory warm-up game designed to prepare participants for clowning work. It encourages openness, physical relaxation, and playful engagement while reducing initial tension or self-consciousness. Through simple movement and group interaction, participants begin to shift into a more spontaneous, embodied, and receptive state—essential for the clowning methodology.

**Use:**

This video can be used at the beginning of the session to help facilitators guide the warm-up phase, model the tone of playfulness required for clown exploration, and establish group connection. It supports facilitators in demonstrating how to create a safe, relaxed, and energetic atmosphere before moving into deeper improvisation and clown identity work.

## Part 2 – Embodied Play and Social Connection through Ritual and Improvisation

**Associated Training Unit:** *Unlocking a specific perception of the world, of people, and of myself through the clown in me*

**Purpose:**

This video presents a sequence of core clowning activities designed to deepen embodied expression, interpersonal awareness, and group cohesion. Through ritual, play, and improvisation, participants experiment with presence, vulnerability, and authentic interaction. The tutorial includes demonstrations of four central exercises from the training unit:

- **Activity 1 – Transforming and Passing an Object:**

A collaborative imagination exercise where participants transform an invisible



object and pass it along the circle, encouraging creativity, spontaneity, and shared meaning-making.

- **Activity 2 – The Ritual of the Red Nose:**  
A symbolic and transformative moment where participants adopt the clown identity. The ritual fosters curiosity, emotional openness, and non-verbal expression while emphasizing respect, awareness, and authentic connection.
- **Activity 3 – The Applause Ritual:**  
Participants enter a small stage area to receive enthusiastic, unconditional applause. This activity strengthens confidence, self-acceptance, and comfort in being seen by others.
- **Activity 4 – Emotion Chairs Exercise:**  
Through embodied emotional expression, participants explore different emotional states individually and collectively. The exercise builds emotional literacy, empathy, and creative communication.

#### **Use:**

This video can be used by facilitators as a practical guide for implementing the core experiential components of the clowning session. It visually models the timing, tone, and facilitation style required for each ritual or activity, helping trainers create a safe and playful environment where participants can explore identity, emotion, and interpersonal connection. It is particularly useful for preparation before leading the session or as a demonstration tool for trainers in training.

**Associated Training Unit:** *Unlocking a specific perception of the world, of people, and of myself through the clown in me*

#### **Purpose:**

This video presents **Activity 5 – Improvised Clown Sketches**, a central creative component of the clowning methodology. In this activity, participants form small groups to co-create short clown scenes using improvisation, spontaneity, and simple narrative structure. The goal is to translate the embodied exploration and emotional expressiveness developed in earlier stages into collaborative, playful performance.

The exercise helps participants to:

- Express themselves creatively through character and physicality
- Trust their intuition and allow playful surprises to emerge
- Strengthen teamwork, communication, and shared imagination
- Experience performing in a supportive, non-judgmental environment
- Build resilience and confidence through playful risk-taking



**Use:**

This video can be used by facilitators to understand how to guide group creation of clown sketches, including how to structure the task, support spontaneous storytelling, and maintain a safe atmosphere. It is ideal for preparing trainers to lead the final creative stage of the workshop or as an illustrative example during facilitator training sessions.

## Part 1 – Energizer: The Mirror Exercise

**Associated Training Unit:** *Empowering Growth through Group Coaching*

**Purpose:**

This video demonstrates *The Mirror Exercise*, an energizer used to begin the group coaching session. The activity helps participants build trust and connection while developing non-verbal communication and focused attention. By alternating between “leader” and “mirror,” participants experience the importance of presence, observation, and attunement—essential skills for effective coaching.

This exercise reinforces coaching principles such as:

- Active, attentive listening (through movement)
- Empathy and sensitivity to others
- Awareness of body language
- Trust-building and cooperation

**Use:**

Facilitators can use this video to understand how to introduce and guide the energizer at the start of a coaching session. It serves as a visual example of how to form pairs, establish roles, maintain slow pacing, and conduct the brief debrief discussion afterward. The video is especially useful for trainers preparing to cultivate a calm, attentive, and connected group atmosphere before moving into deeper coaching techniques.

## Part 2 – Understanding Group Coaching

**Associated Training Unit:** *Empowering Growth through Group Coaching*

**Purpose:**

This video demonstrates the key elements of **Part 2 – Understanding Group Coaching**, introducing participants to the fundamental principles of coaching and the core communication skills required in a coaching environment. It visually presents how to distinguish coaching from mentoring or therapy and how to practice essential techniques such as active listening and paraphrasing.

The video supports the development of:

- Understanding what coaching *is* and *is not*



- Awareness of coaching principles (non-judgment, curiosity, respect)
- Active listening skills
- Paraphrasing and reflection skills
- Confidence in giving space for others to find their own answers

It also illustrates how youth can support each other through peer-to-peer dialogue rather than advice-giving.

**Use:**

Facilitators can use this video to introduce or reinforce the conceptual foundation of group coaching. It works well as a demonstration before the “Paraphrase & Reflect” activity, helping participants understand expectations, tone, and communication style. Trainers can also review the video during preparation to model clear explanations and gentle facilitation.

### **Part 3 – Goal Setting & Peer Coaching**

**Associated Training Unit:** *Empowering Growth through Group Coaching*

**Purpose:**

This video presents the key elements of **Part 3 – Goal Setting & Peer Coaching**, demonstrating how young people can identify areas for personal growth and practice supportive coaching techniques in pairs. It visually guides the facilitator through the two core components of the activity:

- **Wheel of Life Exercise:**  
Participants reflect on their current level of satisfaction across different life areas and identify one priority for improvement. The video illustrates how to complete the wheel and how to guide participants in interpreting their results.
- **Peer Coaching Activity:**  
Participants work in pairs, asking open-ended coaching questions to help one another think, reflect, and define a small step toward their chosen goal. The video shows how to maintain a coaching mindset—without giving advice, judgments, or solutions.

Together, these segments help strengthen:

- Self-awareness and decision-making
- Goal-setting and realistic planning
- Empathy and active listening
- Coaching communication skills
- Confidence in personal development processes



**Use:**

This video can be used by facilitators as a demonstration before conducting the goal-setting activity. It helps trainers understand how to introduce the wheel of Life, how to structure peer coaching pairs, and how to model supportive coaching questions. It is also a valuable preparation tool for youth workers who want to establish a reflective, constructive, and empowering coaching environment.

---

## 5. Final Recommendations

To ensure the successful implementation of the methods and activities presented in this Toolbox, the following recommendations are suggested for youth workers, facilitators, and organizations working with disadvantaged young people:

### 1. Create and maintain a safe space

Establish clear group agreements from the beginning (respect, confidentiality, non-judgment).

A safe environment is essential for creativity, emotional expression, and personal growth.

### 2. Prioritize inclusion and accessibility

Adapt activities to different needs, learning styles, physical abilities, and cultural backgrounds.

Use simple language, visual supports, and flexible movement options to ensure participation for all.

### 3. Value process over performance

Whether working with art therapy, physical theatre, clowning, or coaching, focus on exploration, self-expression, and learning—not on technical skill or “doing it perfectly.”

### 4. Encourage autonomy and agency

Promote decision-making, self-reflection, and peer support.

Activities should empower young people to discover their strengths and become active agents in their own development.

### 5. Embrace creativity, playfulness, and experimentation



Creative approaches (movement, improvisation, storytelling, clowning) help young people reconnect with their emotions, imagination, and sense of possibility.  
Allow room for spontaneity and curiosity.

## **6. Normalize mistakes as part of learning**

Reinforce that errors, awkwardness, or uncertainty are natural and welcome.  
This reduces fear of judgment and increases willingness to participate.

## **7. Facilitate reflection and sharing**

After each activity, allow time for guided reflection to strengthen emotional awareness, internalize learnings, and build group cohesion.

## **8. Use coaching techniques to foster supportive communication**

Active listening, open-ended questions, and non-directive guidance help young people feel heard and respected.  
Avoid giving advice unless it is explicitly requested.

## **9. Encourage continuity beyond the session**

Whenever possible, help participants transfer what they learn into everyday contexts—school, relationships, employability, and community involvement.

## **10. Invest in facilitator preparation and self-care**

Youth workers need time to prepare, reflect, and recharge.  
A well-grounded facilitator creates a more stable, empathetic, and effective learning environment.

**This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.**

**This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.**