

June 2023



Youth-Led Change

A Systems Thinking
Activity Toolkit



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About Press:

Press - Save the Children Youth Norway is the only youth organisation in Norway working exclusively with children's rights. We are an organisation for all youth between the ages of 13 and 25, and we are religiously and politically independent organisation. We base all of our work on the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

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Press - Save the Children Youth Norway

PB 6902

St. Olavs plass

0130, Oslo

press@press.no



World Obesity Federation

C/O WeWork – Cursitor, 5th Floor

38 Chancery Lane

London

WC2A 1EN

enquiries@worldobesity.org



To everyone in the Youth Task force, EAT Foundation, Press, Von Kommunikasjon, World Obesity Federation, Norwegian Institute for Public Health and everybody else that has contributed - **thank you!**



Preface

Knut Inge Klepp

Every policy starts with an idea, a vision about something that could be improved.

Most policies are developed by adults - politicians influenced by different stakeholders, based on their priorities and their perspectives of the world. Youth today grow up in a different world, with other perspectives and priorities. It is therefore important that youth are involved and that you are provided opportunities to take part in the policy process of creating new ideas and advocating for them.

Not everyone will become a politician in parliament, but in a democracy, there should be room for all views; in your school, workplace and in your local community. Through the Youth Activity Toolkit you will learn exactly that!

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to making this Toolkit, and in particular to Press - Save the Children Youth Norway and Alfred Mestad Rønnestad who has been responsible for its development.

I hope you find it useful and I wish you all good luck in your policy work!

Knut Inge Klepp

Project leader for the CO-CREATE project

Oslo, June 2023

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Introduction

This Toolkit is developed by youth for youth to help you learn about developing policy ideas through a series of activities. The Toolkit's goal is for you, as an individual or a group, to find issues in your local community and develop ideas on how to change them! Together, you're invited to discuss and learn more about issues that impact your lives through the methods of Visual Voice and Systems Mapping before you're going to make your very own policy idea.

"Youth-Led Change" is about obesity and systems thinking. If you want to do the activities on another subject, for example crime, it would be a good idea to talk about the respective theme before you start so that your group has a general idea of what you are going to be working on.'

Once you finish all the activities in the Toolkit, you'll be better equipped to think about how different things in your community and society connect to each other. This way of thinking is called systems thinking. It helps you understand all the different factors that contribute to a problem. By using systems thinking, you can figure out the root causes of issues and how they're related, which will make it easier to come up with solutions.

Obesity in adolescents is one of the biggest public health challenges in Europe today and is for many the cause of different diseases, reduced mental health and life quality. The individual person is often blamed for being obese, but research shows that policies and laws have a big influence on obesity in many countries. Therefore it's important that youth learn to see issues that are on a systemic level, so we can solve the issue at hand!

The Toolkit has been developed as part of the EU Horizon 2020 project CO-CREATE - confronting Obesity: Co-Creating policies with youth².

Find out more about the CO-CREATE project here:

www.co-create.eu



Introduction to Youth Involvement

Youth participation is both important and highly under-appreciated in our societies. Being an under-appreciated and under-represented group in the world, youth today make up about sixteen percent of the world population. One of the reasons youths are so important is that the current youth are the ones who will live the longest with the consequences of the policies and actions implemented today. At the same time, most of us are not included in decision-making processes regarding our lives and futures. It is important to include youth in these processes, and it can help with the implementation of sustainable and effective policies which serve us all.

The CO-CREATE Youth Task Force has since 2020 worked for youth involvement in policy-making processes. Through inputs and ideas from CO-CREATE Youth Alliances across Europe, we have made the CO-CREATE Youth Declaration, with four demands we see as necessary in order to ensure better health for all children and youth. Through our work, we have met many inspiring and hardworking people across the globe that have challenged us and inspired us to keep fighting. Youth and adults have to come together to tackle the health issues we are facing today.

Youth is important for bringing unique perspectives to the table, being the only ones with experience of what it is like to be a youth today. We have different opinions and experiences which shape us differently, just like all other generations. Yet, we are compared to each other and distilled into one person. The youth of today are ready to be included in policy-making processes, and it is high time that we are invited. Nothing about us without us.

Tale Lejon (20)

Task force member in the CO-CREATE project

Volda, June 2023

Greetings from the other Youth Task Force members Ana Rita (21), Hanna Kristina (23), Mafalda (21), Pedro (21), Tale (20) and Zuzanna (19).



The four demands of the Youth Task Force:

1. Stop the marketing of unhealthy foods to children aged 18 or younger.
2. Sugar taxes to make unhealthy food and drinks more expensive.
3. Secure all children a high level of education on food and nutrition, and access to a healthy school canteen.
4. Offer all children free organised exercise at least once a week.



How to use the Toolkit

General information

The Toolkit will take you through three different activities. These build on each other, and it is recommended that you do all the activities in the suggested order. You can use the Activity Sheet, which you will find in the middle of the Toolkit, for all the activities.'

You can print more Activity Sheets from
www.worldobesity.org/healthy-voices

Facilitation

The Toolkit is designed to be used by a group of ideally 4-6 youth, between the ages of 14-24. If you are more, split into multiple groups. You can also do all the activities on your own. When holding an event where you are doing the Toolkit's activities, please host it in a universally accessible venue to make it as inclusive as possible. The Toolkit can be worked through in 2 to 3 hours.

If you are an adult hosting the event, make sure to include the younger participants on their terms! Create groups where youth make up most of the participants and give everyone room to speak.

Suggested time-frame

We recommend that you use 2,5 - 3 hours to complete the Toolkit, including one or two breaks. These timings are flexible, and the facilitator should adapt these time-frames to the work group.

- Introduction: 20 minutes
- Visual Voices: 40 minutes
- Break: 15 minutes
- Systems mapping: 30 minutes
- Make your own Policy Idea: 30 minutes
- Break: 5 minutes
- Summary and goodbye: 10 minutes



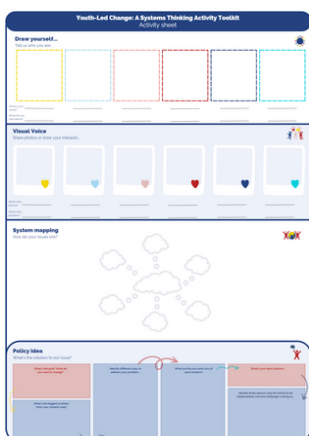


How to use the Toolkit

Guidelines

Everyone in the group should be given an equal opportunity to participate and express their views. Give everyone a chance to share their opinion and feel equal in the discussion.

Be kind to each other and respect that everyone has their own opinions. Everyone needs to respect this, even if they disagree a lot! Everyone should feel safe when expressing their opinions and their ideas.



The Activity Sheet

It is recommended that all activities are done on the Activity sheet. The Activity sheet is a big sheet in A2/A3 format. By using the Activity Sheet it becomes easier to get all your ideas down on paper and for everyone to collaborate.

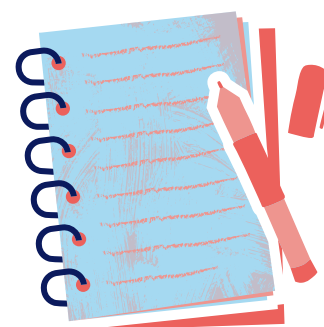
All of the three activities have their own designated space on the sheet.

Dialogue Forum

The Toolkit contains three activities. When you are done with the final activity of making your own policy idea, you are invited to take your idea one step further by participating in or organising a Dialogue Forum. Learn more on page 14.

Equipment list

- Post-it notes or paper to write individual notes
- Pens or marker
- The Activity Sheet



Visual Voice

Activity 1



What?

Visual Voice is an activity where you go out in your community and take pictures, using your phone or camera, of various objects and situations that interest you or provoke you³. By identifying and visualising issues that matter to you, you will start your journey towards making your own policy idea. Different people are engaged by topics. You can for example take photos of something related to climate change, use of public space, or of something you find in your school canteen or in advertisements on a local bus stop.

Why?

The aim of Visual Voice is to use the photos in discussions with your group and to find a topic that your group wants to create a policy about. You can therefore take photos of a problem in your local area, or of something you want more policies to focus on. Visual Voice can help you visualise areas of issues you want to create policies on⁴.

For example, have you ever thought about the shelf placement of unhealthy food in a store or your closest fast food chain's placement in your community?

Draw yourself

Before you start, get to know your group by drawing yourself in one of the boxes on top of the Activity Sheet. The drawing should include an illustration of yourself and something you care about.

Is the rest of the group able to guess what each person cares about?



Visual Voice

Activity 1



How?

- 1. Go out in your local area with your phone or a camera** and take pictures of different objects or situations that interest or provoke you. You can go out alone or in pairs.
 - a. If you take pictures of someone, you must always have their permission first. It is also encouraged to get permission from a person in charge if you want to take photos inside a building (i.e. a shop or a school).
- 2. Regroup and discuss the photos you've taken.** Everyone in the group chooses one picture each that they think illustrates the most important issue that needs more political focus.
- 3. Discuss in your group and discuss:**
 - a. What have you taken pictures of, and why is this important? Everyone in the group takes turns putting down their phone/camera with the picture on the Activity sheet, describing their image and why they took it.
 - b. What is the issue behind what's happening in the photo?
 - c. Reflect on your photo. Does it describe an issue only on a local level, or could you think of similar problems at the national or international level?
- 4. Through consensus or voting in the group,** choose the problem that the group is most interested in working with throughout the rest of the Toolkit. The picture will be the basis of the system map you will make in the next activity. It is a good idea to choose something that you all find interesting!

Example:

You may have taken a picture of a fast food store. Some questions for discussion might be:

- Is it located close to a school?
- What are the consequences of this location?
- Are there any healthy options nearby?
- Is this a relatively poor area?
- What is more expensive - a healthy or an unhealthy meal?
- Why is it like that?



By asking these kinds of questions, you are system thinking!

Alternative Activity

If you don't have the opportunity to go outside - go on social media or on the internet to find a picture or video instead!



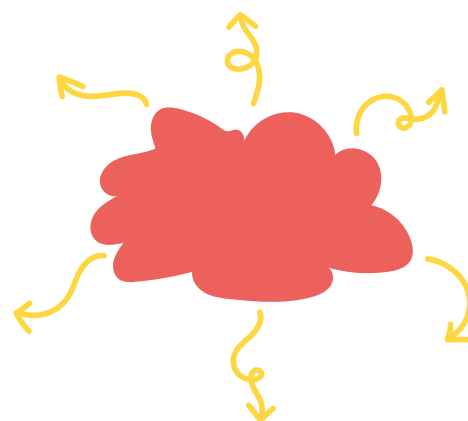
Systems mapping

Activity 2

What?

Systems mapping is a way to help make sense of all the messiness and details when dealing with big problems, such as the one you found during Visual Voice⁵.

Systems mapping is similar to a mind map and shows all the important relationships between the things that influence an issue. This can for example be used for mapping every factor that contributes to obesity in adolescence - for instance how it's often more expensive to buy healthy food than fast food.



Why?

When trying to solve a big problem, it can take effort to comprehend all the different factors that influence a problem. A system map is a tool that solves this by creating a better overview and helps you to learn system thinking. A system map tells a story. It is a story about how cultures, policies and decisions affect our society, and is also a story about you and your group.

After this activity you will better understand all the factors contributing to the issue behind the picture you took in the previous activity.





Systems mapping

Activity 2

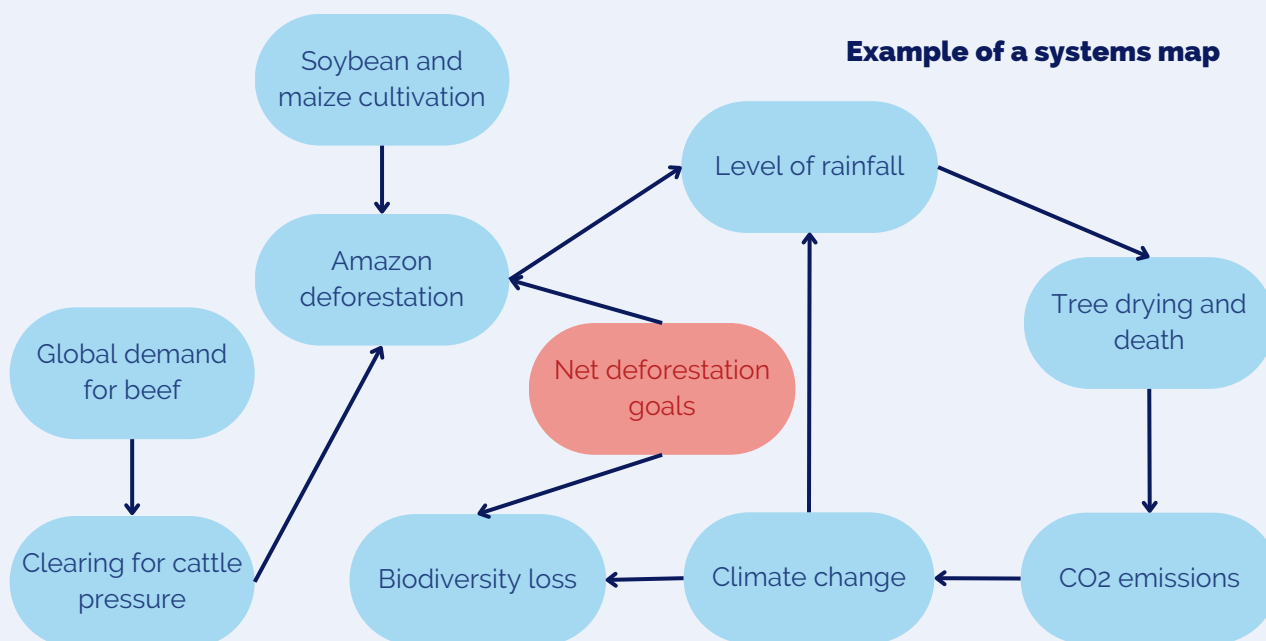
How?

Part one

1. **Look at the chosen photo.** Use 5 minutes independently to write down the things you associate with the issue behind the photos, such as people, actions, policies and activities.
2. **Everyone in the group** take turns presenting the things you have written down.

Part two

1. **Based on the notes you made**, spread all the thoughts and associations that you have out on the Activity sheet and in the systems mapping section draw lines between them to show how they are connected like the illustration on the bottom of the page. There are some boxes in the Activity Sheet to help you to get started.
2. **Discuss in your group how different things affect each other.**
3. **Add arrows to the lines** to show how the different ideas influence the other boxes. For example Amazon deforestation → Level of rainfall.
4. **Evaluate the map.** Has this given you all the causes and effects of your problem? Do you need to add anything?
 - a. Tip: You can also ask other groups for help.





Make your own policy idea

Activity 3

What?

A policy can be everything from building a new amusement park, to transporting humans to Mars, to building a new school canteen. Every policy starts with finding a problem and deciding on how to solve it. In the previous activities, you found issues and made your systems map with the causes and effects of the problem.

For this final activity, you will try to find the solution to the issue by developing your own policy idea.

Why?

Every problem needs to be solved! Every policy that politicians adopt into law, or every policy action, starts with someone's idea. Unfortunately, very few of these ideas are made by or with youth. By doing this activity you are completing a well-tested activity for learning about making a real policy.

Do you want to know more about existing policies? Scan the QR code to see how well (or poorly) your country is doing on exercise or food policy on a national level!



WCRF MOVING & NOURISHING
policy indexes

Tip: If you are doing the next activity with facilitation or together with an adult, try your ideas against these to test if their perspectives are different. You may learn something new, or teach the adult something!



Make your own policy idea

Activity 3

How?

1. **Using the Activity Sheet** - Your group must first decide on one issue from your system map. Try to find consensus on one issue. If you can't decide, take a vote.
2. **Identify what you think is the biggest problem** or challenge within the system map, based on the goal you set
3. **As a group, brainstorm different ways** to address the problem and try to find different solutions
4. **Discuss and write down the pros and cons** of the different solutions and pick the solution you as a group think is the most promising. This can be done on the Activity Sheet in the "make your own policy idea section"
5. **As a group, make a 30-second speech** about why the policy should be implemented based on your findings.

If there is more than one group, present your group's process throughout the Toolkit, from the photo you chose, to a bit about your system map, and then what your policy idea to solve the issue is! You can also present your speech to the other groups.



Thank you!

Alfred Mestad Rønnestad

Congratulations! You have now completed Youth-Led Change and you and your group have hopefully learned something new, and have learned to look at issues with a new perspective. Remember that some issues that may seem like an issue at a local level, is in reality an issue at systems level. I also hope that you keep being engaged in issues in your community and try to make a change!

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to making, designing and advocating for the Toolkit!

Alfred Mestad Rønnestad (24)

Project Leader for Youth-Led Change

Oslo, June 2023



Dialogue Forum Tool

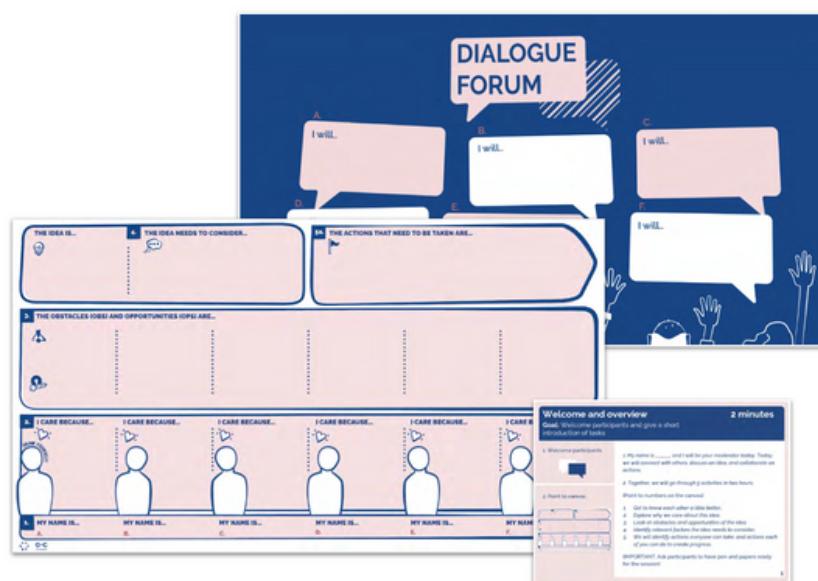
The next step of Co-Creation

Now that you have developed your policy, you can take the next steps of making it a reality. This optional activity takes about 1,5-2 hours and requires some more preparation. Through participating in, or organising a Dialogue Forum you can make a real difference!

What?

The Dialogue Forum tool is a free paper or digital canvas with five steps, designed for youth and adults to gather, discuss a policy idea and collaborate on action. It was created to facilitate discussions among youth, policymakers, and businesses, and to promote youth leadership in decision-making. If you would like to discuss your policy idea with other young people and relevant policy- and decision-makers, this is a tool you can use.

Each step runs through different aspects of the idea, with the goal of understanding others' perspectives and potential actions we can each take. At the beginning of a Dialogue Forum, the canvas is blank. It is gradually populated with text, drawings, and post-its as you move through the discussion. Each group accommodates up to six participants and one moderator, but you can scale it for more participants by using multiple tables (physical) or breakout rooms (digital). You can download the tool for free, it can be held in-person or online, and can be translated into your native language.





Dialogue Forum Tool

Facilitating Intergenerational Policy Dialogue

Why?

The Dialogue Forum tool can be used to develop your policy idea with other youth, adults and experts in the field, to refine your idea and identify possible solutions or actions. The five-step process allows you to bring your idea to the table, and leave with concrete actions and next steps.

How?

- A Dialogue Forum can be held anytime and anywhere, and takes 1.5-2 hours, for all to get to know each other, contribute equally, and explore the idea or issue in-depth.
- Download the tool, materials and step-by-step [Guidebook](https://eatforum.org/initiatives/co-create) for free on: <https://eatforum.org/initiatives/co-create>.
- Invite young people, youth organizations, and adults working on the topic (policy-makers, private sector, experts, etc.).
- Young people should make up at least 50% of total participants.

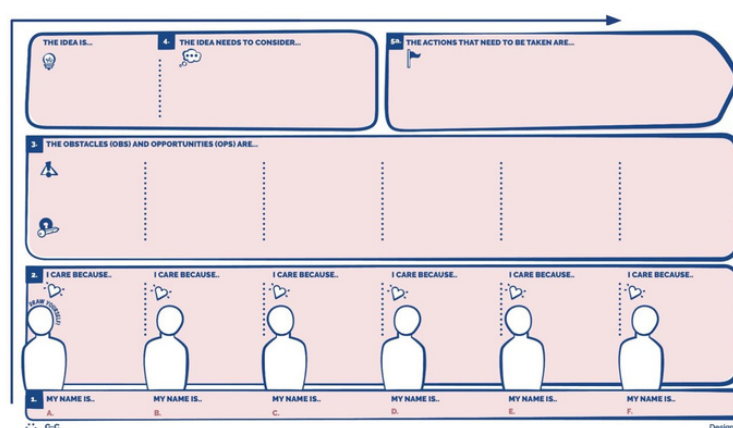
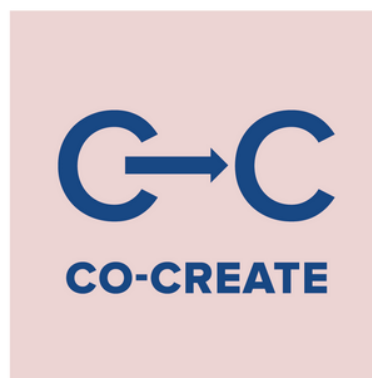


Image: blank physical Dialogue Forum canvas (left), and digital Dialogue Forum canvas (right)

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This Toolkit has been developed in the framework of CO-CREATE, a five-year (2018-2023) EU-funded research project. The project brings together 14 international organisations from 10 countries.

The aim of the CO-CREATE project is to prevent overweight and obesity in adolescents by providing knowledge and infrastructure on policies to make the healthiest choices the most preferred ones. One of the measures for achieving this is to teach adolescents how to make their own policies and to get engaged.