

SNAP ACTIVISM

**INCLUDING
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN CREATIVE ACTIVISM**





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INTRODUCTION

Activism is a way in which we are changing the world around us and making our communities, hoods, schools, countries better. It allows us to shape our environment according to our needs and imagination. Especially youth activism. Energy, creativity and innovation young people put in that process is the most significant. Nobody can contribute with those characteristics to the change, like they can. Young people are the ones whose imagination is not bound with social restrictions and whose creativity goes far out of the box.

However, we reach the point in which youth activism barely exists, due to the lack of time and rapid development of online social life. So, if we want to empower change in our communities and shaping of our environment for the better, we need to stimulate on the spot youth activism. We need to create innovative methods which will bring

back their energy and creativity in our everyday life. With “SNAP Activism – Including High School Students in Creative Activism” toolkit, we aim to promote new innovative methods of youth activism tailored for needs and habits of high school students in order to boost their participation and active citizenship. We created this approach by shaping methods in according to their everyday habits, inciting high school students to take advantage of their online aspect of life, and by adjusting those methods to high school breaks.

Since this “SNAP Activism – Including High School Students in Creative Activism” toolkit is designed for youth workers and trainers from formal and non-formal setting, interested in inciting youth activism, at its beginning they can found all types of activism that suits the best a SNAP idea. Youth workers and trainers are often aware of their target group, however certain characteristics can be easily forgotten or forgetfully omitted. Therefore, whole chapter is dedicated to the everyday interests, needs, habits and

challenges of high school students, and how all of them can serve designing a best possible approach for getting their attention. These two segments, types of activism in combination with the profile of high school students, empowered us to create a several methods for engaging young people in a meaningful way, motivating them for activism and change-making in their surroundings, schools, neighborhoods, etc.

This toolkit is a set of recommendations and examples of methods for inciting youth activism, tips and tricks, intended to help youth workers to create innovative and unique approach to high school students and boost their participation. However, it should be noted that each of the methods should be adapted to the special set of circumstances, traditions, rules of the schools or aims of the activity, among others. Only with that, this

“SNAP Activism – Including High School Students in Creative Activism” toolkit can reach its full potential, and activities of youth workers, trainers or facilitators make a meaningful step in empowering youth activism and creating a better environment for youth.

1.

TYPES OF ACTIVISM TAILORED FOR SNAP

As progressive beings, people are eager spend their whole life learning, gaining new knowledge and developing skills in order to make their life richer, meaningful and to fulfill its own aspirations. However, opportunities for such a lifelong learning, a continuous process that can last throughout a person's entire life, from quality early childhood education to post-working age¹, is in one hand very important to establish in every society and on the other, not easy maintain and cherish.

The early school experience provides the fundamental foundation for educational progress in later years. Failure at this stage, in terms of acquiring a positive disposition to learning; in acquiring the fundamental learning tools of literacy and numeracy; in developing a positive sense of personal well-being and the requisite interpersonal and social skills needed to participate in the everyday life of the community, can very seriously limit the life chances of children².

Therefore, in order to ensure this opportunity to all people in all stages of life, it is equally important to foster education of young people outside of the formal educational system, as it is within it, namely informal and non-formal education. Since, informal education is mostly passive, in this toolkit we are focusing on importance of non-formal education, a more structured and intentional once.

„I NEVER TEACH MY PUPILS, I ONLY PROVIDE THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH THEY CAN LEARN.“

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Non-formal education aims to give people opportunity and provide conditions to learn on voluntary basis, through various structured and planned situations such as skills share, sport activities or courses and workshops among others, but whose core purpose is not necessary an education. Not every non-formal education method is activism, however every activism is in a way a non-formal education.

By boosting activism in our societies, organizations and individuals are highly contributing to the education of people, and thus to the development of our societies. This boosting is especially important for youth, whose

creativity and imagination is not bounded. However, in order to boost activism you need to know them (chapter 2 of the “SNAP Activism – Including High School Students in Creative Activism” toolkit), and to know what are the best possible methods to approach them. Therefore, following part of this chapter will present **best types of activism for SNAP methods:**

1. **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES;**
2. **GAMES / GAMIFICATION;**
3. **ACTIVITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA;**
4. **STREET ACTIVISM;**
5. **ART**

¹ The Council of the European Union, Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning;

² Department of Education and Science, Dublin (Ireland), Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education.

1.1. OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Happening indoors, is a common feeling of all young people when they are relating themselves to the term “learning”. Over the time that became their comfort zone in which learning has been reduced to listening to the teacher, and empowering of their social and personal skills is slowly blurs.

If someone wants to incite learning of social and personal skills of young people, they need to bring them outside of their comfort zone, and made them go “outdoor”. Many programs, particularly for youth, make use of activities or outdoor adventure as a means of developing personal attributes such as self-esteem, confidence, responsibility and trust in a positive way, and building on individuals’ achievements and success to encourage further development.³ This method is very important for inciting activism among young people

due to the fact that it increases team skills, help build leadership skills, make them understand each other better and gather together over common cause.

Many of them are crucial for activism of one young individual in the early stage of his/hers life. Many activities can fall down in the scope of the outdoor activities, among others there are:

1. **SPORT ACTIVITIES IN THE NATURE LIKE CLIMBING, ROPE GEOCACHING OR RAFTING;**
2. **ADVENTURE BASED ACTIVITIES;**
3. **CULTURAL FIELD-TRIPS;**
4. **SKILLS SHARING ON SURVIVING IN THE NATURE;**
5. **TEAM BUILDING GAMES;**
6. **THRUST BUILDING GAMES.**

³ Include Me Toolkit: <http://include-me.info/outdoor-activities/>

1.2. GAMES/GAMIFICATION

From board games to video games, from youth to adults, from playing in teams to individual playing, everybody likes to engage themselves into gaming. A method often undermined in formal education, which could help young people gain knowledge and skills in much better, long term and meaningful way.

Not only that they learn about something through playing, but they became practically involved in problem resolution/goal achieving, developing by that many more individual and group skills that couldn’t be gained through formal ways of learning. By involving students in gaming, one can increase their ability to learn, develop their logical and strategic thinking and stimulate their thinking.

No matter if we talk about board games, role plays or video games, play is useful because it simulates real life

experience – physical, emotional, and/or intellectual – in a safe, iterative and social environment, not because it has winners and losers.⁴ Young people are experiencing games as opportunities for having more fun and more interested time, and by bringing games into more formal setting such school is, you are making school and learning looking much interesting to them. In the same way, this method can incite activism of high school students, making them spending their high school breaks more creative. Games which can be used for inciting activism of young people can be:

1. **BOARD GAMES;**
2. **VIDEO GAMES;**
3. **INTERACTIVE PEER-TO-PEER GAMES;**
4. **ROLE PLAYS / FORUM THEATERS;**

⁴ <https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2014/06/27/games-in-the-classroom-what-the-research-says/>

1.3.

ACTIVITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

It has been often said that the Internet have changed everyday life of people, changed the way we learn, find news, do our businesses. Social media outlets became integral part of people lives, giving them opportunity to further develop and express their identity. However, it could be argued that it had significant influence to the decreasing of “on the spot” activism which is changing our communities. Mostly, because organizations and individuals that were inciting activism in the past, haven’t been prepared for this new trend.

In education, social media platforms influenced youth in a way that they started exchanging information through them, using tutorials to learn lessons and gain skills, and informing themselves. Social networks are very powerful tool for fostering activism, especially of young people, which has been proven by many serious events happening all over world, shaking those communities. Young people are spending large amount of time every day on these networks, communicating, learning, shaping their opinion and entertaining themselves.

That time could be channeled for inciting virtual activism of young people in a way they start doing something meaningful in the online sphere which at the end can be reflected on the real life, but also it can be channeled in a way of raising support for certain ideas which ultimately led toward their action on the field.

Youth workers and trainers need to be aware of the specifics and power of this tool when creating methods for inciting youth activism, in both of these ways.

In the sense of activism, social media tools can be used for creating groups and pages which are calling for a certain action or raising support for some idea, creating entertaining and interactive content adjusted to their habits, creating a call for an action, gamification of certain issues and challenges, etc. They can be specially important in attracting attention of high school students and calling them for the SNAP action during their high school breaks.

⁵ Include Me Toolkit: <http://include-me.info/outdoor-activities/>

1.4.

STREET ACTIVISM

Activism in the street or street activism is a first thing that crosses people's mind when you call them to action. Talking about high school students, it is a method of "engaging young people where they choose to meet - corner shop, park or urban housing estate, and working with them to an agreed outcome"⁵.

It allows students to become engaged in a concrete action, empowering their self-confidence, and therefore to feel power of activism in changing the life around them. Most actions of this type are focused on rising awareness of people, pointing out on some problems or on doing social experiments which can be further disseminated through some action or within formal system of education.

As previously mentioned, this method can be greatly supported by the social media tools, through getting support

for an idea and reaching out to the greater masses and bringing them to the streets. Power of street activism lies in a fact, that it has direct influence on other people, much more than other methods. Some of the activities which can be implemented in the street are:

1. **FLASH MOB / PERFORMANCES;**
2. **PROTESTS;**
3. **GUERRILLA ART WORK;**
4. **SOCIAL EXPERIMENTS;**
5. **COMMUNITY WORK.**

1.5.

ART

Creative forms of expression and activism were always much more successful in transferring long term, and therefore meaningful messages and knowledge. Additionally, speed in which young people obtain, analyze and process information today left almost no space for written or spoken and mainly rely on visual messages.

Having in mind previously mentioned, art took very important place in inciting activism among youth. Involvement in such activities can empower creative expression and development of imagination, which can led toward innovative approaches in resolving problems and advocating for certain issues through activism. Most of

these art works can have even greater influence if after goes viral. The greatest example of it in 21st Century is Banksy.

His unique and creative graffiti which are aiming to bring attention to some of the world most important moral, economic, political and social challenges became globally famous by using social media. A various types of art we are talking here about:

1. **PICTURES / PHOTOS;**
2. **SCULPTURES;**
3. **VIDEOS;**
4. **COMICS;**
5. **GRAFFITI.**

⁵ Include Me Toolkit: <http://include-me.info/street-based-youth-work/>

2.

WHO ARE THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

Going to work with high school student, requires from each youth worker or trainer to get to know these teenagers. They need to understand how they live, why they behave in certain way, what are their most common problems, and when they do that, than they can start developing strategy how to approach them and fulfill their goal.

Often, this group has been understood as the one which is most difficult to draw their attention, and thus most difficult to incite their activism in some field. However, it is also considered as group which, if they find something interesting

and worthy, is a most passionate about. Therefore, their active citizenship depends on drawing their interests, and to draw their interest you need to have a good and creative strategy, and to have all of that you need to know them.

In this chapter we will try to go into the heads of a high school students, and give you, as close as possible, perception of their habits, way of living and challenges they are facing every day.



2.1.

INTERESTS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR HABITS

Let's do a little profiling in order to get to know interest and habits of high school students. Maybe the best way to do description of the target group today is offered by the analytic tools on social media. We could use these steps to make a perfect profile of them. There is a whole set of questions one

could and should ask to get a perfect description.

Youth workers/trainers can use some of the following questions as help in this process (it depends on a goal organization want to achieve with the project or activity):

1. Who are they?
2. What do they like to do?
3. What is their favorite food/drink? Where they buy it?
4. What do they wear?
5. Where do they hang out?
6. How do they spend their free time?
7. How often do they travel? Where do they go?
8. What do they read?
9. Are they into sports? If yes, which one?
10. Where do they meet with their friends most often?
11. Who is their favorite singer?
12. Which is their favorite movie?
13. Who are their role models?
14. Which type of phone do they have?
15. What is their favorite social network?
16. Which brands do they like to follow?
17. Which apps do they use the most?
18. Which technologies do they use?
19. Which type of cafes do they like to go?
20. When do they become active?
21. What motivates them to be active?
22. Which types of activism attracts them most?
23. What games do they play?

“Marko is 17 years old and he attends the third grade in the Gymnasium in Kragujevac. During school breaks, Marko likes to walk around with his 4 friends from the class and most often they eat Burek (traditional Serbian meal) in the nearby bakery. After that, they go to the shop to buy their favorite drink – Coca Cola. Snapchat is a social media network where he spend most of the time, but he also has profiles on Facebook and Instagram where he follows his role models, Michael Jordan, Novak Djokovic, Eminem, Weekend and Emilia Clarke from the TV show – Games of Thrones, of which he is expecting new season to be published. On the weekends they go out in one popular bar which plays pop music. In his free time, if Marko is not on the basketball court, he is playing Counter Strike game with his friends. Every Tuesday there is a discount in the movie theater, a he doesn’t miss opportunity to go there with his girlfriend, where they enjoy watching comedies. Last week he attended a recycling education workshop where he participated in a team which had a best solution for improving environment around the school. Motivated by that, Marko organized a basketball tournament in his neighborhood to collect money for repairing benches where he spent most time with his 4 friends from the class.”

Going into more detailed description allows you to know how they are behaving every day. It allows you to be familiar with their routes, places where they spend most time, their interest, etc. Equally important is to know their problems, issues, challenges, and therefore next chapter is dedicated to it.



During their 4 years in the high school, students are facing numerous challenges and problems. Those problems can seriously influence the rest of their lives or they can limit their wish to actively participate in their surroundings or just represent obstacles which don’t allow them to show their full potential, among other.

Also, the possibility to overcome those challenges can, in return, incite their activism or help them react better on the obstacles that are put in front of them. Therefore, as it was said previously, it is important to understand this when preparing programs for inciting activism of young people. Some of the most common issues/challenges among students are:

Formal education system and institutions in its surroundings most often don’t provide support and framework of empowering youth to make decisions. Feeling of discouragement and fear whenever they need to make some decision is common. It is especially emphasized in a moments when their decisions can affect their future career, which mostly result in allowing others to decide in their name or becoming uninterested of that.

In addition to the previous, students are facing pressure of being successful, both by society and their nearest family. Spending most of the time thinking how to please their parents or some other actor in their life, which can result in limiting of their personal and professional development.

Having in mind previously said, fear of self-expression is intensified by possibility to be bullied. Students are putting in front of them question “How to fit into society/into my social group”.

Problem of bullying which became even more visible with social media tools. It existed also in the reality, but with the Internet it was transferred to a level on which is more visible and on which bullying is happening more intensively, limiting further space for avoiding it. Thus, this new level represents a much bigger threat for safety and health of students.

Issue of finding themselves is mostly supported by the feeling of discouragement to make decisions, and prejudices and stereotypes of the society. They are more often focused on “fixing” some part of their life in which they are not so good, rather than advancing their talents.

2.3.

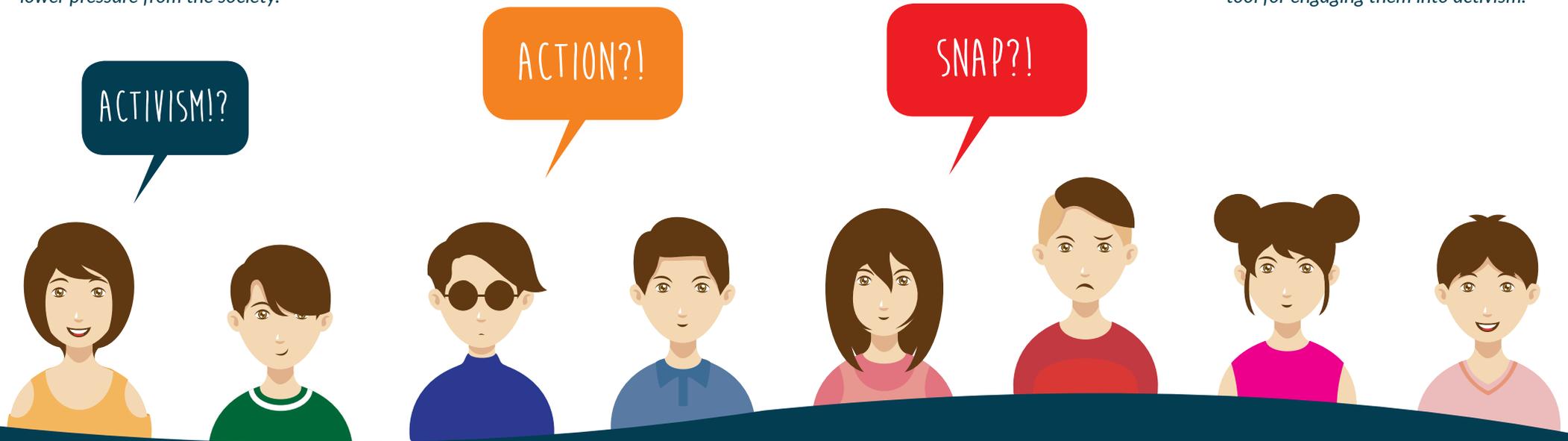
HOW TO GET THEIR ATTENTION?

Due to everything mentioned in the previous two chapters of the “SNAP Activism – Including High School Students in Creative Activism” toolkit including trends, challenges, etc., and due to the fact that formal high school environment doesn't fit the needs of the students for becoming more active, they directed their activism towards the online sphere. It is a place where they can express more easily and a place where there is much lower pressure from the society.

There, students are surrounded mostly by the people who share their worries, habits, and who understand them better, namely their peers. We're not going into deep about the possible bad side of such a living, but to emphasize importance of their online presence for getting their attention and calling them to action.

In preparation of methods which can incite high school activism, youth workers need to be aware of habits and challenges. Also, when preparing a plan to get their attention these two areas must be in a focus, and if directed properly, through online media they can get a massive support.

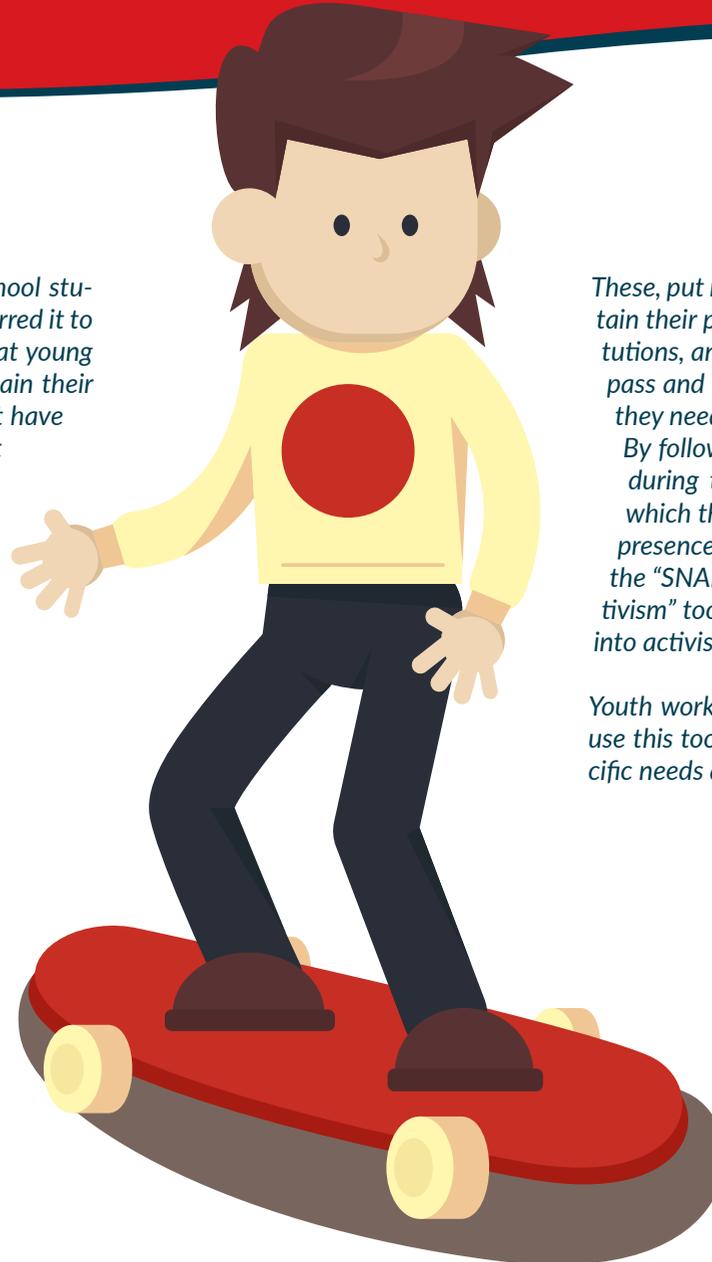
Certainly, social media tools are not the only way for attracting high school students, but they are cheapest and often most focused ones. Other method is to provide them a creative content which is tailored according to their habits and which answer on some of the issues they are constantly facing. Also, actions like performances and social experiments, where they are not aware that they part of it till the very end, can be successful tool for engaging them into activism.



3.

METHODS FOR INCITING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CREATIVE ACTIVISM

The way of living in the 21st Century influenced high school students by decreasing their on-the-spot activism and transferred it to an online sphere. Analyses and researches pointed out that young people due to their formal obligations and need to maintain their social life in order not to be excluded for the society, don't have time any more to actively contribute to the development of the societies by involving their knowledge, skills, passion or vision.



These, put new and unknown pressure on youth organizations to maintain their purpose of being a bridge between citizens and formal institutions, and involve youth into life of the communities. In order to bypass and overcome this challenge, organizations became aware that they need to change something in the approach to young people.

By following the schedule of average high school student, a breaks during their formal education turn out to be a rare situation in which they gather together on the spot and decreasing their online presence. A perfect place to engage them into activism. The rest of the "SNAP Activism - Including High School Students in Creative Activism" toolkit will focus on a creative methods for involving students into activism.

Youth workers can implement similar actions in their environment, or use this toolkit to create their own approach, in according to the specific needs and habits of high school students in their communities.



3.1.

A WALL OF UNDERSTANDING

3.2.

ESCAPE SCHOOL

DURATION TIME 15 – 20 minutes

WHERE High school lobby

WHO High school students

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY A Wall of Understanding

RESOURCES REQUIRED Plasterboard, several colored chalks;

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY A Wall of Understanding aims to help high school students to express themselves, speak about their worries and issues they are facing, and raise awareness about it.

On the plasterboard should be written a big call for an action sentence as a headline, which will call students to express biggest pressures they are facing in their lives currently. On the school break, when passing down the lobby students will notice a huge board with a call for action. They will approach and write their worries, needs, problems and challenges. After the high school break, one must summarize what has been written and make conclusion into one sentence.

That sentence should be used to be addressed together with a picture of the filled plasterboard for a campaign on social networks, raising awareness about the topic, and it should be used to be addressed by the student parliament in the high school boards in order to call them, school representatives, to create programs or adjust their lectures to it.

DURATION TIME 15 – 20 minutes

WHERE High school lobby

WHO High school students

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY Escape School

RESOURCES REQUIRED Tape, prepared tasks for students, tickets, space for movie projection, projector, movie;

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY Escape school is set to introduce students with the importance of high school activism through student parliament.

In the lobby of the school, it should be marked a room with the tape on the floor. In a different part of the room should be set a tasks in the form of riddles, which after solving should direct student towards the next task, until they solve them all. One person needs to be at the entrance of the room which will invite students to come and play the game, and win a prize.

All riddles should be formed in a way that they teach students the history of the high school student parliamentarianism in their school, its legal background, rights of the students and importance of activism through high school parliament. Each student which participated in the game should be given a prize in the form of a ticket for movie projection in cultural space of the community, after which should be organized a networking with some experienced activists.

3.3.

STOP BULLYING, TAKE ACTION

DURATION TIME 15 – 20 minutes

WHERE High school yard

WHO High school students

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY Stop bullying, take action!

RESOURCES REQUIRED Paper board with printed message, two high school students

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY This is a role play activity which has a goal to raise awareness on intensity and possible consequences of bullying. You should choose in coordination with school representatives two high school students which can perform this role play, out of which one should be a person which tends to have violent behavior and one which if a more quiet person.

The first one should play a bully and other should be a victim. During the school break, in the school yard, a bully should approach to the victim and out of nowhere start to loudly tease him/her.

That teasing should last for a minute, and victim should have his/hers head down, pretending to be offended and scarred. From this point on, there can be two scenarios:

SCENARIO I Someone interrupts the act of bullying and gets involved in protecting a victim. In this situation, a bully should give a hand to the interrupter and thank him for stepping in. In this moment a narrator joins action and explains that everybody needs to react like this whenever they see an act of bullying or call supervisor, or institution in charge. This should be followed up by some statistical frightening story which will emphasize importance of such an action.

SCENARIO II Nobody interrupts, or even worse, somebody joins the bully. Bully should then turn around and ask everybody why aren't they reacting / why have you joined me in bullying. In both situations, audience will be confused. Narrator than steps in and explains with his statistical and frightening story, why everybody must react in those situations by stopping bullying or calling a supervisor or institution in charge.

Once the narrator finishes their story, students should be called to pick up paper board on which should be written hashtag with short creative message for stopping bullying and take a picture with it. They will be called to post this picture on their Facebook and Instagram profiles as a part of the stop bullying campaign.

3.4.

MY PARENTS ARE SO BORING

DURATION TIME 5 + 10 minutes
WHERE High school classroom
WHO High school students and their parents
TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY My parents are so boring
RESOURCES REQUIRED None

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

Sexism, a form of discrimination based on gender or sex, is often present among high school students, and mostly girls are affected by this. This workshop is a combination of role play and social experiment which aims to blur prejudices and stereotypes of women. This performance needs to be done in coordination with the teacher and fathers of children from selected class.

Fathers should be prepared in advance and consulted to come to the school under excuse that they were called by a teacher and while they are waiting teacher to come, they should talk seriously with one another in front of the children, behaving like they are teenagers and expressing some forms of sexism from their family relations. Goal is to make those students feel uncomfortable.

After 5 minutes of talking, teacher should enter classroom and first 10 minutes of their lecture, dedicate to the problem of sexism, together with parents and ask students about how they feel and what is their thinking about such a behavior.

3.5.

SPORTCOURAGE YOURSELF

DURATION TIME 20 minutes
WHERE High school playground
WHO High school students and teachers
TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY Sportcourage yourself!
RESOURCES REQUIRED Basketball, motivational leaflets;

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

High school students are often feeling discouraged when making decisions, thus this activity is focused on encouragement of young people through sport.

During the high school break, in the school playground, teachers should start playing basketball which will be enough to attract students to come and watch. Another teacher should interrupt a game, as many as possible times calling for a time out, and in that moment they should act stressful situation and invite students to help them by deciding what action to play.

Teachers as institutions, represent a big enough pressure in their eyes, which students would need to overcome in order to make decisions. At the end of the game, creative motivational leaflets should be given to all students with a message to do not be afraid to make decisions in their lives.

DURATION TIME 10 minutes

WHERE High school lobby

WHO High school students

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY Hi, my name is...

RESOURCES REQUIRED Plastic box, slips of colored papers

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION
OF THE ACTIVITY**

“Hi, my name is...” action aims to contribute to the self-expression of high school students and building relationships with other students they didn’t know before. In an open box, in the middle of the lobby of the high school, should be placed a large number of slips of paper in various colors.

Each colored slip should contain a question (green papers – question number 1; blue papers – question number 2; etc.). Two students who pick up same colored papers are matched, and they should answer on the question/express their opinion on the question and start interaction with his game partner.

Questions should range from entertaining to ones on which they need to express themselves about the issues and challenges students are facing. One person needs to stand by the box and that person needs to explain the rules to the interested students.



SNAP ACTIVISM

libero 
MAKE A MOVE LIBERATE IDEAS

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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