GET UP STAND UP SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST INJUSTICE

RESOURCE PACK FOR PROFESSIONALS
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Get Up Stand Up Supporting young people in their fight against injustice,, Resource Pack for Professionals.

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Introduction

This resource supports pack the training for youth workers on 'Politicisation with young people in socially vulnerable situations'. Participants receive it after the training. It provides material that can help in processes of politicisation. Therefore, it follows the same steps as the training. We list the questions you can ask at each step and provide a number of tools. In reality, of course, these steps are often intertwined.

Politicisation with young people in socially vulnerable situations

Politicization refers to practices that contribute to the public disagreement about how we organize our society together. Within this broad definition, politicising work with young people in socially vulnerable positions has consequences on the positioning:

- Content: forms of inequality, exclusion and discrimination are central. This can be concerning issues of access and distribution (economic), but also of recognition (cultural) and participation in decision-making (politics).

- **Strategy**: dialogue is a possibility, but forms and moments of confrontation and conflict are inevitable; the underlying imbalance of power relations are questioned, and counter-power is built up. The practice includes not only the claim for rights to be given and developed by governments and other actors, but also the claim for the right on self-development and alternative practices.

- **Domain**: the domain is broad and certainly not limited to governments. Politicisation practices are aimed at all kinds of actors and institutions, on a large and small scale, on different levels.

- **Subject**: the young people take the floor themselves, speak for themselves, become visible in a 'political' practice. In practices of politicisation, the starting point are young people seen as equal citizens. The role of the supervisors is supportive. Often processes of conscientization precede the politicisation process and the outing of the issues in public

- **Pedagogy**: politicization is not to be separated from common pedagogical work but is a result. The safe climate and the confidential relationship with and trustworthiness of supervisors is not only the basis of good pedagogical work with young people in socially vulnerable positions but is the same in practices of politicisation.

- **Layered process**: the micro-level of the interaction with and between the young people always offers opportunities to initiate politicisation. In many cases the process from individual experience to collective action is at the heart of a politicising process that levels up to manifests at the mezzo and macro level.

Process of Politicisation

Step 1 Starting point

Every youth worker has undoubtedly experienced it: young people come with complaints or grievances, with stories of exclusion or discrimination. The question is: do you do something with this? And if so, what?

Step 2 Individual or collective stories: is there an issue?

Some important questions to consider:
- What is your own **perception of your role** as a youth worker?
- What **thoughts and feelings** play a role? Have you signaled this kind of grievances so many times that you think nothing will change? Or do you think the sighs are legitimate and you would like to deal with them?
- What **assessments** about young people come into play? Do you think it is their responsibility or is there more? Or do you want to make it a collective story?
- Who ultimately determines if and what happens to these stories? What is your **organisation's stance** on this? Would they encourage or inhibit you? Why?

TOOL: clustering reactions

Grievances of young people can sometimes be very diverse. For some, this is important, while others are running around with other mice concerns in their heads. Then it is important to cluster reactions that you pick up during activities. In this way, you can look together with the group for what stands out. What is a real problem, not only individually, but also collectively?

An example from Flemish youth welfare work
(Uit de Marge)

Graphic based on the work of :

Springt er eentje uit?

Step 3 Safe climate and trust as a basis

Essential to processes of politicisation is a safe climate in your relationship with the youth:

What makes the climate unsafe for you as a professional? How can you deal with this? How can the climate become safer? What support do you need? Who can give it to you?

What makes the climate unsafe for young people? This can involve two forms of safety: 1) the safety of being able to make strong statements without a repressive response and 2) the safety of not being humiliated or damaged as a young person. How can you deal with this?

What support do you need? Who can give it to you?

Chance card 1 "We can't change that"

Do you recognize these kinds of statements and this kind of fatalism? Who makes them: young people or youth workers or other people involved? How do you want to tackle this and break through the feeling of powerlessness? Can the power of the group be an added value in this?

Step 4 On the formulation of the problem

It is essential to make a good analysis of the problem. There are three ways to look at a problem formulation or definition:

1. **WHAT**: what is at the heart of the problem?
2. **HOW**: how do we work to formulate the problem?
3. **WHO**: who formulates the problem? And above all, what is the role of the young people in this process?

TOOL: a problem tree

What is at the heart of the problem? (the tree trunk) What are the main causes? (the roots)
What are the main consequences? (the branches)

→ **The branches:**

→ **The trunk:**

→ **The roots:**

Chance card 2 "This is too hard and goes way too slow"

A well-developed problem tree usually does not provide easy answers, so this kind of reaction is understandable. How do you counter them? How do you ask for patience?

Step 5 How to determine the goals?

What do you want to achieve? And what do young people want to achieve? It is important to reflect on this.
In doing so, it is important to make a distinction between
- Short-term goals and long-term goals.
- Minimum goals that you want to achieve and maximum goals that are possible 'in an idealworld'.
- Content goals (as an answer to the problem) and process goals (the voice of young people to be heard more through forms of participation in the future).
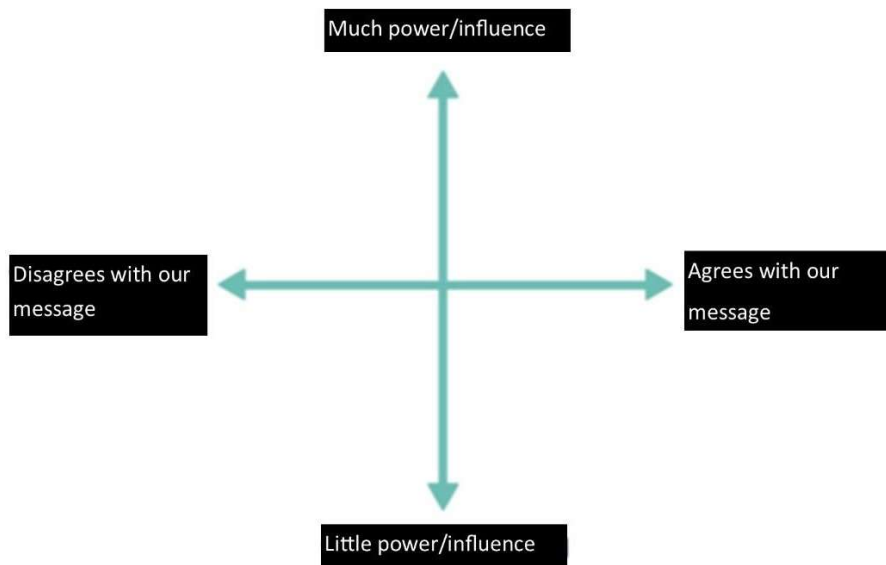
TOOL: thinking about goals
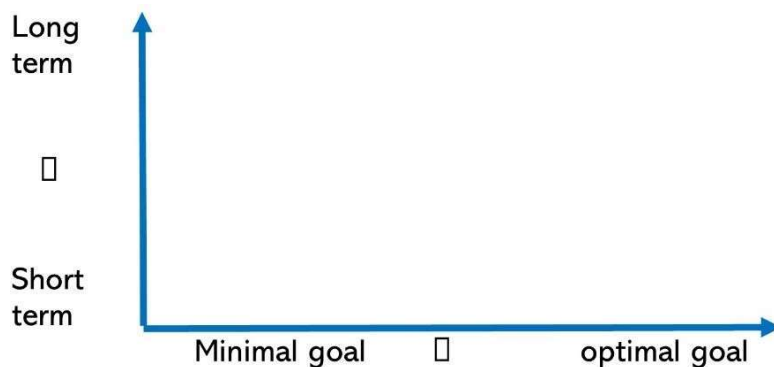
Step 6 Who are supporters? Who are the opponents?

No doubt there are other organisations working on the same issues. Alliances can therefore be useful. Even though they also bring questions with them. Even if you share the same point of view, not everyone is on the same page in terms of content and/or strategy.

TOOL: charting supporters and opponents

Try to estimate possible supporters and opponents based on
- Option 1: two criteria
o Are they on the same page in terms of content?
o Do they have much influence on the issue?

Much power/influence

Disagrees with our message

Agrees with our message

Little power/influence

- Option 2: four criteria,
- Do they have the same position ('standpunt' - position)?
- Do we trust them ('vertrouwen' - trust)?
- Do they have power ('invloed' - influence)?
- Are they engaged in this issue (is the issue a priority for them) ('betrokkenheid' – involvement)?

Graphic Title

— Actor 1 — Actor 2 — Actor 3 — Actor 4 — Actor 5 — Actor 6 — Actor 7 —

Influence

Position

Trust

Involvement
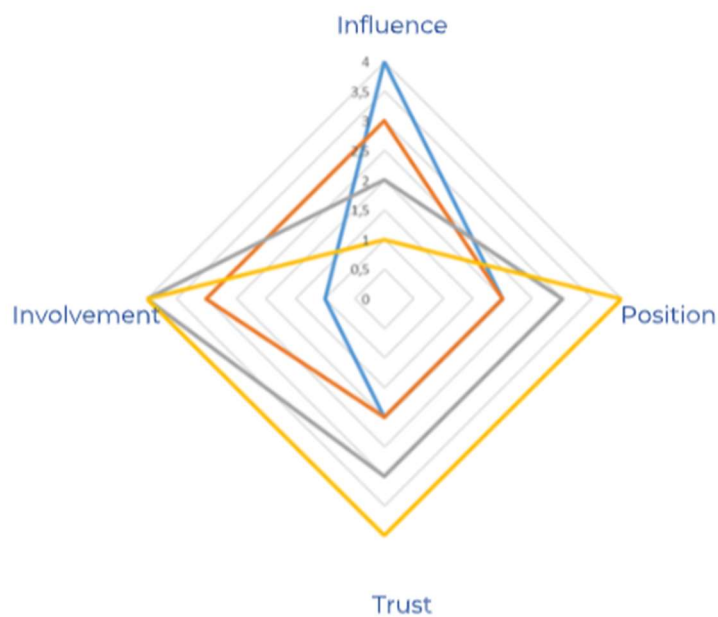
Step 7 Which strategy and form of action to choose?

Many professionals and organisations almost automatically choose strategies of cooperation and dialogue and are rather reluctant to confrontation or conflict. Sometimes these are strategies that young people are more likely to choose out of impatience.

Think about the advantages and disadvantages of these strategies and about concrete forms of action. And important: do this together with the young people.

TOOL: possible actions

Awareness campaign Petition Open letter social media action

Street action Picnic Sit-in Occupation Demonstration

Concert Opinion in the press Protestsongs

background

Aidan Ricketts in his '*The Activists' Handbook*'[1] tries to create an overview of different forms of action and their strategies. He uses four categories:

1. Forms of action aimed at gaining support for your idea or demand in **society**, possibly with a certain target group or within 'the general public'. This includes numerous awareness-raising activities and actions. Important here is often the use of music, humour or comedy, elements from popular culture, …

2. Forms of action aimed at increasing more resonance through the **media**. In the past, the challenge was to convince traditional media (newspapers or television) to bring something about your action. Today, almost all organisations have their own media channels such as a website, newsletters, social media channels, …

3. Forms of action aimed at directly appealing to **politicians**. You can do this behind the scenes, far away from all possible attention. This strategy is not in our demarcation of politicisation. But one can act , so to speak, in front of politicians, with as many supporters as possible and indeed extensively covered by the media.

4. Forms of action aimed at enabling **legally provided opportunities**.

Many actions are, of course, a combination of different categories.

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[1] https://aidanricketts.com/the-activists-handbook/

Gaining public support	Via the media	Directly towards politicy makers	Via legal ways
Awareness-raising activities and actions Networking Petitions Action picnics Demonstrations Manifestations Humor Protestsongs	Media-actions Press releases Opinions and letters Reports Own media (website, social media, own YouTube channel,...)	Lobbying Negotiating Delivering petitions, letters, ... Manifestations Strikes Digital activism Direct actions	Participation processes Legal objection processes File a complaint with an ombudsman or a court

In practice: rarely one track, mostly combinations

How to work with media?
- Traditional media (newspapers, (local) television, ...?
- Own media channels?
- Other social media?

Step 8 How do you properly perform the activity?

In addition to a script, task lists and a communication/media plan, there is another very important question:
- How do you ensure that youth and children explicitly stay in the picture during this politicising moment?
- Can any of them take the floor? Speak to the press? How do you prepare them for this? How do you protect them (including on social media)?

Opportunity Card 3: "We accomplished something!"
Small or big successes are often very decisive in this kind of process. How do you share these with the young people and how do you celebrate them?

Opportunity Card 4 "We're not allowed"
Setbacks are inevitable during politicising processes. Not everyone is waiting for your action. How do you deal with setbacks?
How do you view actions of "civil disobedience" (violating legal restrictions to get your message across)? What are benefits and dangers? Where is the boundary? And how can you make that go well?

Step 9 Closing
How do you plan to evaluate the whole process with the youth?

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