



# Me as a Change Maker

A methods collection to inspire participation  
and active citizenship



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## **Me as a Change Maker**

Me as a Change Maker is a methods collection created as part of the Participating 2gether project (09/2023–03/2026), co-funded by the European Union. The project is run by South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences and the city of Mikkeli.

The exercises are based on youth influence workshops, young people's own projects, and feedback from participating youth and experts.

### **The collection also draws on:**

- **MOMENTUM – Youth Participation Handbook** (Regional Council of South Savo)
- **Youth Diamond – Building a Bright Future (Plan)**
- **Facilitator Card Deck Vol. 2 (Metropolia)**
- **Future Coach Guide (Xamk)**



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## Me as a Change Maker

With the Me as a Change Maker methods collection:

A) participants explore values, future visions, and different ways to create change. They practice making their voice heard and expressing what matters to them. Everyone can make a difference – in their own way and in their own community.

B) participants take action on a current issue, a community topic, or carry out a small change project. Their views are shared with those who have influence. Participants receive feedback on impact, progress, and where the message went. At best, this opens dialogue around the topic.



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**The methods are divided into four categories.**

Introduction  
to the topic

Me as a  
change maker

Finding  
your own  
voice

Impacts and  
experiences

Pick the methods that suit you best. You can  
freely adapt the methods and materials.



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# Printable Materials

You can find printable method cards and materials at:



[xamk.fi/yhdessaosallistuen/#minavaikuttajana](https://xamk.fi/yhdessaosallistuen/#minavaikuttajana)

*Or*

[mikkeli.fi/osallistujavaikuta/nain-rakennat-yhteisollisyytta-omassa-ymparistossasi](https://mikkeli.fi/osallistujavaikuta/nain-rakennat-yhteisollisyytta-omassa-ymparistossasi)



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# Tips for Inspiring Participation

## **Boost self-efficacy**

Build confidence in your voice and future.

## **Enable self-direction**

Support personal ideas and projects.

## **Express impact**

Share the effects of participation, progress made, and where influence or information reached.

## **Make it clear**

Explain structures and language in an understandable way.

## **Find the best approach together**

Explore and try out different ways and levels of creating change.



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## Introduction to the Topic

In the green exercises, participants reflect on what comes to mind when they think about creating change, what matters to them, and the kind of future they dream of.

Creating change means using your voice and taking part in shared matters through small or big actions. It can be sharing an opinion, starting a conversation, or acting for what matters to you.

It also involves collaboration together with others, more can be achieved than alone. It is a way to participate, share your perspective, and help build a better future.

Everyone has the right and opportunity to create change, and every voice is an important part of collective decision-making and transformation.



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## Questions for a Time Traveler (10 min)

Creating change is linked to the desire to shape your own as well as the shared future. This exercise introduces participants to future thinking.

Participants reflect alone or in pairs on what they would ask a time traveler who has come from 10 years in the future. What about 50 years in the future? Write down 1–3 questions. The task can be limited by specifying that the time traveller answers only yes or no.

**Discuss:** What questions came to mind? What would you like to know about your own life? What about your local environment or community?



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## Preconceptions (5 min)

Map participants' thoughts and attitudes about creating change. This can be revisited later to see if perceptions have changed after other activities.

Participants answer the question: "What comes to mind when you think of creating change?" Answers can be shared aloud in turn or written on paper. This quick introduction can also be combined with an introduction round.

**Discuss:** Talk about the ideas that emerged with the whole group or in pairs.

## A Good Future Story (15–30 min)

Create a shared story set in a positive future.

The facilitator starts the story with a word (e.g., woke up, stepped, left), and participants take turns adding one word at a time. Continue for as many rounds as desired. One participant or the facilitator acts as a scribe, and the story is read aloud at the end. The facilitator can ask guiding questions along the way, such as: *What can you see around you? How do we move? Do we meet others? Where? What do we work or study? How do we spend free time?*

The goal is to casually reflect on the kind of future we want to help create. This works as an introduction or a fun closing activity, so humour is welcome.

**Discuss:** What is everyday life like in this future? What makes it a good future?



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## Value Cloud (5–10 min)

Participants receive a list of values (APPENDIX 1) or use value cards. They select the 3–5 values most important to them and enter them in Mentimeter (*mentimeter.com*), creating a shared value cloud. Values can also be written on paper.

Intrinsic motivation for active participation often stems from personal values. This exercise helps identify values that unite the group and can serve as a basis for a joint change project or group work theme.

**Discuss:** Which values are important and meaningful to you? What shared values emerged in the group? What common interests or causes does the group care about?



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## Future Visions (20–30 min)

Imagine two different futures and living environments one ideal and one problematic. Draw or write them on a map template (APPENDIX 2) or blank paper. Consider aspects such as nature and the environment, housing, social interactions, public spaces, school and work, services and transport, hobbies, and free time.

Compare the two visions individually, share parts with the group, and discuss. Presentations and discussions can also be done in small groups.

**Discuss:** What matters to me or makes life good? How can we move closer to the ideal future? What can I personally do or contribute?



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## Story Path (20–30 min)

Create a mini-exhibition of the past using photographs. Images can include your hometown from different decades or old everyday objects. Real items and newspapers can also be brought if available. Participants explore the photos at their own pace and can fill out a question sheet (APPENDIX 3) while doing so. Photos can be printed, for example, from the Finnish Heritage Agency archive (<https://museovirasto.finna.fi>).

The activity can also be done by visiting a museum or watching videos like “*Mikkeli 1963*” or “*Is Anyone Going to Mikkeli 1963*” (<https://kavi.finna.fi/elavamuisti>). This works as a basis for future-oriented exercises.

**Discuss:** What has changed over time? Is there anything from the past worth preserving? What has improved? What would you like to see change in the future?

## Me as a Change Maker

In the pink exercises, participants explore the ways they already create change. They reflect on their values, strengths, and interests, and on what kind of change making feels right for them.

Creating change is a way to shape the world and your everyday life to be the way you want it to be. When you share your ideas and take part, you give others a chance to hear your perspective. Only then can things move in the direction you hope for.

Every contribution matters: even small actions and words can start a change. Your views are important, because no one else sees the world exactly as you do. You know your own life best. The future becomes ours when we help shape it together.



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## Remembering Change Making (15 min)

Recall situations where you wanted to create change (APPENDIX 4). Situations can be related, for example, to home, school, hobbies, the environment, or a social or current issue.

Each participant writes down:

- What did you try to change, or in what situation did you seek change?
- What motivated you to act?
- What helped you move things forward, or what did you do?

Go through the answers together.





**Discuss:** How did creating change feel? What was easiest for you? What was hardest? Did you get support from others from whom? What did you learn about yourself? How could you use this experience in the future?



## Change Maker Bingo (15 min)

Circle all the ways of creating change you have used in the bingo grid (APPENDIX 5).

Score 10 points for each circle and 10 bonus points for each completed line.

-  Over 100 pts: Change Maker Wizard
-  60–100 pts: Master of Change
-  30–50 pts: On the Change Maker Path
-  0–20 pts: Spark Starter

OR count the group's total score and see if it reaches the goal set by the facilitator (e.g. 30 points × number of participants).

**Discuss:** Were the methods familiar? Was anything missing? What new way of creating change could you try next?



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## Grid of Change Making Methods (15 min)

The grid (APPENDIX 6) shows different ways to create change. Circle the methods you have already tried and underline those you could try in the future.

Change making takes many forms and happens at different levels from personal life choices to local communities, representative politics, and national or international organizations.

**Discuss:** Was any method unfamiliar? What could you try or use again? Did any feel uncomfortable, and why? Which methods would be easy to use in your everyday life?



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## What Kind of Change Maker Are You? (10 min)

Take the quiz (APPENDIX 7) and see what kind of change

maker you are based on the results.

**Discuss:** Did people get similar or different results? Was your result surprising, and what can you learn about your style? How could you use your strengths to create change?



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## Values in Everyday Life (15 min)

The goal is to recognize personal values and how they appear in everyday choices. Ask participants to choose three values (APPENDIX 1) that matter most to them.

Next, they choose one value and reflect on how it appears in their daily life in actions, choices, or opinions.

Reflection can be done by writing or by talking in pairs or in a group. Emphasize that even small everyday actions can be ways of creating change.

**Discuss:** Where do your values show in daily life? Was any insight surprising? How can everyday choices be change making?



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## From Values to Change (15 min)

The goal is to inspire participants to see themselves as change makers and to identify shared values that can guide action or a joint change project.

Ask participants to choose one value that matters to them (APPENDIX 1) and complete the sentence: “For the value \_\_\_\_ that is important to me, I could create change by...”. Inspiration for actions can be taken from the change making grid (APPENDIX 6).

Ideas are written on notes and displayed as a shared value map, which can be grouped together by themes.

**Discuss:** What shared values emerged? What kinds of change making actions felt possible? How did it feel to think of yourself as a change maker?



## Finding Your Voice



In the yellow exercises, participants try out different ways of creating change. They reflect on their views and practice expressing their opinions. The focus is on finding ways to make their voices heard.

The section also includes methods for collecting ideas and perspectives from participants and using them within their community or beyond.

When you can share your opinions with others, you can create change in your own life and in your community.

You can influence on many levels: internationally, nationally, in your town, in your communities, and in your own life, actions, and thinking. All of this is influencing.



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## Counter-Ad (30–60 min)

Participants choose an advertisement or actor whose message they want to examine from a moral perspective. They take a stand by reversing the message or highlighting the ethical viewpoint.

The counter-ad can be created using image editing software on a phone or computer, or by drawing and making a collage, for example by cutting words from magazines. Finished ads can be kept or displayed.

**Discuss:** What thoughts did the ads raise?  
What about the related issues or phenomena?



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## Statements on a Line (20–30 min)

Create an imaginary line in the room. One end means “strongly agree” and the other “strongly disagree”. The facilitator reads statements one by one, and participants place themselves on the line according to their opinion.

Example statements:

- I dare to share my opinion even if others disagree.
- I know how I can influence issues in my city or community.
- Social media is a good way to express opinions or influence society.
- It is easier for me to talk about my own life than shared issues.

**Discuss:** After each statement, talk about the thoughts it raises. What do you think about this statement? What different viewpoints are there?



## Dream City (30–45 min)

Using a simplified map of Mikkeli (APPENDIX 8), create a dream city by drawing, writing, or cutting images from magazines in a group or in pairs. The city can also be built in 3D using recycled materials or building blocks. Present the results to others.

Consider topics such as nature and the environment, housing, social interaction, public spaces, school and work, services and transport, hobbies, and free time.

Ideas and wishes can be shared with the local participation or wellbeing coordinator.

**Discuss:** What matters to you? What kind of place would you like to live in? How can we help move these ideas forward?



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## Messages to Decision-Makers (15–20 min)

Individually or in pairs, choose a topic you want to address or highlight (APPENDIX 9). Use the approach: thank, hope, suggest.

Think about who can influence the issue and write a postcard or joint letter to that person or organization. You can use ready-made postcards or make your own.

The activity can be combined with a visit, for example, to the town hall, so the postcards can be delivered in person. Arrange the visit and a short introduction beforehand.

**Discuss:** What do you want to thank for? What change do you hope for or suggest? Who can influence this issue, i.e., who should receive the message? Could someone agree with you and help advance the cause?

## Silent Protest (20–30 min)

Organize a mini protest by choosing a shared topic for the group or allowing each participant to highlight their own issue (APPENDIX 9).

Make small protest signs from cardboard, tape, and halved popsicle sticks, and arrange them together on a table as a collective display using sticky tack. Take a photo of the finished protest to share on social media or send to the relevant decision-maker. The activity can be enhanced with small toys or cardboard figures holding the signs.

**Discuss:** What issue do you want to take a stand on? Who should see this protest? How could we advance the issues raised?



## Silent Nature Protest (20–30 min)

Hold a quiet outdoor protest to take a stand on nature, the environment, or another issue important to you. Participants make protest signs from cardboard and place them in nature for example, hanging them between trees with string or setting them on rocks, roots, or the ground. Decorations using natural materials are encouraged.

Take a photo of the finished protest to share on social media, send to decision-makers, or use to spark discussion within the group. This method supports collaboration, making ideas visible, and quiet activism. Please remember to respect nature and collect any litter at the end.

**Discuss:** What issue do you want to address? Who is the message for? What small actions could help advance these issues in everyday life?



## Meeting Each Other (2–3 hours)

Organize open doors or visits to a community space or meeting place. The goal is to strengthen community and bring together people of different ages and backgrounds. Visits can be reciprocal and include small shared activities, such as making pins or power cards, playing board games, and enjoying coffee together.

**Discuss:** Who will be invited and where will the visits take place? How will they be communicated?

How did it feel to organize the visit or open house? What did we learn? What do we have in common? How could we further strengthen community in the future?



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## Change Making Poster (15–30 min)

Work alone or in pairs to create a poster supporting an issue. The poster should share your opinion, take a stand, or highlight something positive or important. Its goal is to make viewers think.

Choose a topic that matters to you, such as nature, friendship, equality, or wellbeing (APPENDIX 9). Write a short, clear message and use images and colours to support it. Posters can be made digitally, with magazine cutouts, drawn, or painted.

The finished poster can be displayed in a visible place or photographed for social media. Copies can also be made to display in multiple locations.

**Discuss:** Why did you choose this topic? What do you want viewers to think? Where could the poster make an impact?



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## Advocacy Social Media Post (15–30 min)

Create a social media post or a short series alone or in a group. You can make an image, video, or multiple posts. Content can include a slogan, artwork, meme, question, or short interview on a topic.

Choose a topic that matters to you and that you want to spark discussion about (APPENDIX 9). Consider what you want to say and who the message is for. The post can inform, inspire thinking, or invite others to join the conversation.

The finished post can be shared on an agreed platform or reviewed together without publishing.

**Discuss:** What was your message? Who is it for? What thoughts or discussion do you want to spark?



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## Panel Discussion (Several hours)

Organize a panel discussion on elections or another important topic. Several people discuss the same topic and share their perspectives.

The panel can be held at a school, library, market square, or as part of an event. Plan the topic, participants, and main questions in advance. One or two people act as interviewers.

The goal is to share information, hear different opinions, and spark reflection.

**Discuss:** What topic should the discussion cover? What questions should be asked? Who can influence this issue and should be invited as panellists or audience?

What different viewpoints did you hear? What did you learn? How did the discussion affect your own thinking?



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## **Demonstration** (Several hours)

Organize a small public demonstration together. You can use signs, art, or other creative methods. The demonstration can also be a larger event with partner organizations.

Note: Remember to notify the police in advance. A demonstration is a way to express opinions and raise public awareness.

**Discuss:** What issue do you want to address? What change are you aiming for? Who should see the demonstration and where should it take place? Will it be communicated in advance or during the event? How will it be carried out? Will others be invited to join, or will it include shared activities?



## Safer Space Recipe (20 min)

Reflect on what makes a space or community feel safer. Together or individually, write into a “pot” (APPENDIX 10) actions or practices that create safety.

Examples:

- Physical safety: good lighting, clear routes, cleanliness, calm sound environment.
- Social safety: friendly atmosphere, considering others, clear ground rules, open discussion, being yourself, no fear of mistakes, support and encouragement.

**Discuss:** What makes a space or community feel good to be in? How could we improve safety? What kind of safer space guidelines could we create from these ingredients?

## Opinion Piece (30–120 min)

Write an opinion piece about an issue that matters to you (APPENDIX 9). You can publish it on your own or someone else's blog (school, organization, municipality, company, or other), send it to a newspaper, or write a short version for a text-message column.

In the text, share your view and explain why the issue is important. Consider who the audience is and what you want the reader to think or feel.

**Discuss:** What was the topic? What did you want to say? Who is it for? What kind of thoughts or discussion could it spark?



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## Shared Painting (60 min)

Create a shared painting together, with each participant adding a small part. Choose a theme everyone can contribute to, such as “our city,” “a good future,” or “building blocks of a good life.”

The painting can be made together on one large surface in turns, or as small 10×10 cm pieces that are later combined into one artwork. The finished piece can be displayed in a public space permanently or for a limited time, such as two weeks. Ask libraries, community spaces, or schools if they could display it.

**Discuss:** What thoughts did painting raise? What does the artwork tell or show? How does each person’s contribution appear in the whole?



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## Development Ideas Matrix (20–30 min)

Choose a topic, such as developing your local area, school community, or another group. Fill in the four-field matrix with your ideas, alone or in pairs. The matrix can be drawn on paper or printed (APPENDIX 11). Results can be shared with others.

Less of this	Should stop
More of this	Should start

**Discuss:** What ideas did you write down? Were there similar ones? Is there something you could influence? How? Who else might want to work on the same issue? Who has the power to influence or decide this?



## Impact Pathways (15–20 min)

The group chooses a topic they want to influence. Different change making methods (APPENDIX 6 OR 12) are placed on the table, and small groups select 2–4 methods that feel interesting or possible.

Based on the change making methods, the group briefly plans how to advance the issue: who the message is for and what concrete actions could be taken. The exercise shows that there are many ways to create change and that acting together lowers the threshold to participate.

**Discuss:** Which methods felt most natural? Did any new method feel interesting? Would you like to carry out one or more of these as a real change project?



## Your Own Change Project (Several hours)

Participants plan and carry out their own change action on a topic that matters to them (APPENDIX 13). The starting points are self-direction and youth-led action: young people decide what they want to change and how.

1. Choose a topic—what issue matters to the group and needs change?
2. Set a goal—what do you want to achieve?
3. Choose methods—decide how to create change (e.g. social media, art, discussion, event, everyday actions).
4. Plan and act—share tasks, consider resources, and carry out the project in your own way.

Make it visible—share, document, or communicate the project further.

**Discuss:** How did the project go? What did you learn? What worked well? How did it feel?

## Impacts and Experiences

In the purple activities, we look at where the information went and what kind of impact was created. What did we try to influence, and how? Did it create discussion, new ideas, or some kind of change? It is good to remember that not all impacts are visible right away. A change in thinking is also a form of influence.

Think about how your view of your own possibilities has changed. Could you influence things in some way in the future? What did influencing mean to you at the beginning, and what does it mean now? Which methods did you try, and which felt right for you? Did you learn something new, try something new, or notice your own strengths?



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## Reflection Discussion (15 min)

At the end, discuss the participants' thoughts on the activities or projects they completed. Also talk about their ideas on creating change.

Thoughts can first be written down individually or together, or the group can go straight into discussion. Participants can reflect on how their thinking has changed, and the facilitator gains insight into the impacts.

**Discuss:** How did it feel to try different ways of creating change? What did I learn about change making or myself? Can you express what matters to you? Do you know how to promote what is important to you? What other ways of influencing could I try? Do you want to continue making an impact in the future?



## Feelings as Colours (20 min)

Explore feelings related to creating change through colours. Participants can interpret colours in their own way or use a printable feelings colour chart (APPENDIX 14). Each participant colours their own paper or blank card to reflect how they feel about creating change. The drawings don't need to represent anything specific; the goal is to reflect on personal emotions. Afterwards, share the cards with the group, telling as much as you wish. This activity can be used as an introduction or for final reflection.

**Discuss:** What feelings does creating change bring up for you? What feelings did the group activity raise? What do you think these feelings indicate? How do you think about creating change now?



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## Self-Assessment of Impacts (15 min)

Participants fill out a self-assessment form (APPENDIX 15) with their own reflections.

Review the responses together and discuss. The goal is to make the impacts and achievements visible. Self-assessment also helps to consider whether this method suited the topic or if the issue could be advanced in other ways.

**Discuss:** What might we have achieved by trying these change making methods? Who may have seen or heard our message? What thoughts might it have sparked in the audience? Could others also be interested in this topic? Where else or in what other ways could we advance our cause?



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## Change Making Weather (15 min)

Place the printed weather icons (APPENDIX 16) under each statement (APPENDIX 17) to reflect your feelings: sunny, partly cloudy, rain, or stormy. Choose the one that best represents your mood or attitude toward the statement.

Statements:

- You can create change even without being visible.
- I want to take a stand on issues that matter to me.
- I know many ways to create change.
- Change making doesn't always require money or power.
- Failure is part of creating change.
- Creating change is a skill that can be learned.
- One action can be the start of a larger change.

**Discuss:** What thoughts does creating change bring up now? Have your thoughts changed during the activity?



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## Emoji Feedback (5 min)

Participants choose an emoji from printed images (APPENDIX 18) that represents their experience of creating change and place it on the table or stick it to the wall. This can be used as feedback or to show possible changes before and after exploring change making.

**Discuss:** What feeling do you have now? Are you interested in creating change? Do you know how you could make an impact if you wanted to?