



YOU PART

Engage. Connect. Empower

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ROLE-PLAYING

FACTS

Age of participants: 15+

Number of participants: 6 - 15

Duration: 120 minutes

GOALS

Role-playing is a participatory method that encourages the engagement and active involvement of the participants. In this method, the participants take on different roles in specific scenarios, such as a dialogue between youth and representatives of local authorities, pitching an idea to sponsors, a press conference, etc. This promotes a deeper understanding of different perspectives, empathy and critical thinking.

- Encourage participants to understand different perspectives by immersing themselves in the assigned roles.
- Stimulate active thinking and problem-solving as participants go through the scenario in their roles.
- Foster an engaging and dynamic environment that complements other participatory methods used.
- Help the participants to prepare for the real situation with different actors whose roles are taken; e.g. presentations and discussions with politicians.

TOPICS

Role-playing can be adapted to various topics, such as community issues, social or environmental challenges or decision-making scenarios.

MATERIALS

- Character briefs: detailed information on the roles participants will take on.
- Scenario outline: a comprehensive overview of the situation or issue being presented.
- Props and visual aids: provide relevant materials that can be helpful in the role-playing process.
- Projector and laptop: only in case there will be a presentation in the role-playing process.

PREPARATIONS

- Prepare **character briefs**, which will serve as a guide for participants taking on different roles. In the character brief, include the (professional) position of the persons that participants will play, e.g. politicians (Members of Parliament, mayor, etc.), teacher, journalist, lobbyist, activists, other stakeholders. Describe them in short: their age, how long have they been in this position, what are their interests and hobbies, what are their goals and motivations, how much do they know about the topic you will be covering, etc. You can use your imagination and invent the characters – you don't need to use information of real people from your community.
- Create a realistic and challenging **scenario** that aligns with your project's goals. For example, if you and the participants are in the process of presenting young people's ideas and demands to the local authorities, prepare a scenario in which the group visits the mayor's office. In that case, one person will play "the mayor", the rest will play the "young activists" and, if needed, other persons that will be involved in the process. Depending on the scenario, one or two roles can also be played by adults (project and/or youth workers).
- Materials set-up: Arrange necessary props and visual aids for an in-depth experience.
- Facilitator training: Ensure that you as facilitator(s) are well-trained in the role-playing process and can guide participants effectively.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1

Briefly explain the purpose of the role-playing scenario and its relevance to your project or activity.

Step 2

Hand out character briefs to participants and allow them time to familiarise themselves with their roles. The participants can either choose the roles themselves or they can do a “lottery draw” of who takes on which role. The roles can also be reversed after a first role-playing round.

Step 3

Introduce the scenario that you have prepared to the participants. Emphasise key challenges and decision points. Encourage participants to actively engage with their roles, interact with others, and make decisions that align with their assigned characters.

Step 4

Observe the participants during their role-playing. If necessary, take notes for the subsequent reflection.

Step 5

Reflection: Conclude the role-playing with a debriefing session. Promote the discussion on the experience, feelings, decisions made and lessons learnt. If there were any challenges that arose during the role-playing, address them and adapt the scenario/roles for a next round. Relate the role-playing experiences to the broader objectives of your project(s). Emphasise the importance of active participation and understanding diverse perspectives.

Step 6

Conduct an evaluation with the participants to get their feedback on how to improve the activity/process.

TIP: *Also possible at a later time after the activity.*

EXAMPLE

Character Brief: Mayor of Flower Valley

- **Name:** Mayor Rose Bloom
- **Age:** 52
- **Position:** Mayor of Flower Valley
- **Experience:** Mayor for 8 years, previously served as a city council member for 12 years.
- **Interests and Hobbies:** Community gardening, hiking, attending local theatre productions.
- **Goals and Motivations:** Mayor Bloom is deeply committed to the well-being and prosperity of Flower Valley. She aims to create a vibrant and inclusive community where all residents feel heard and supported. She prioritises sustainability, youth empowerment, and economic development.
- **Knowledge about the Topic:** Mayor Bloom is well-informed about the challenges facing the youth in Flower Valley, including access to recreational activities, educational opportunities, and employment prospects. She has been actively involved in initiatives to address these issues, including the establishment of the youth centre.
- **Additional Notes:** Mayor Bloom is known for her approachability and willingness to listen to the concerns of her community. She values collaboration and seeks to work closely with community members to find solutions to pressing issues.

Scenario Outline

The scenario takes place during a community meeting at Flower Valley's youth centre. Mayor Bloom has been invited to hear directly from young activists about their ideas and concerns regarding youth services in the town. The meeting will provide an opportunity for the mayor to engage with the youth, listen to their perspectives, and discuss potential initiatives to support them. Mayor Bloom is available for 45 minutes, after that she has an urgent meeting at the municipality to attend to.



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