CITIZENS XELERATOR

Contents

1.   Introduction

Background: What is a societal-local challenge and how to identify it

A societal challenge refers to a problem, issue, or obstacle that has an impact on a large group of people within a society. These challenges often have complex and multifaceted dimensions, affecting various aspects of individuals' lives, communities, or the entire society. Societal challenges can encompass a wide range of issues. Some societal challenges have been identified in the Strategy 21 of the Council of Europe and may be consulted here[1].

From a narrower perspective, a societal-local challenge, also known as a local social problem, refers to a specific issue or concern that affects a particular community or region within a larger society. These challenges are more focused and localised compared to broader societal challenges. They arise from unique circumstances, dynamics, and needs within a specific geographical area. Some examples of societal-local challenge may include:

● **Lack of Access to Fresh Food in a Neighborhood:** This might be a challenge specific to a particular urban or rural area where residents have limited access to affordable, fresh, and nutritious food.
● **High Youth Unemployment in a Region/City:** Unemployment rates among young people may be disproportionately high in a certain city/region due to factors such as limited job opportunities or a mismatch between skills and available positions.
● **Community Safety Concerns in a Neighborhood:** Specific neighbourhoods may face issues like higher crime rates, leading to safety concerns among residents.
● **Language Barrier for Immigrant Families:** A local challenge could involve providing support and resources for immigrant families who are facing language barriers when accessing services or integrating into the community.
● **Decline in Local Cultural Heritage:** A community might face challenges in preserving its cultural heritage due to modernisation, urbanisation, or lack of awareness about the importance of local traditions.
● **Lack of Public Transportation in a Rural Area:** A rural region might struggle with inadequate public transportation options, making it difficult for residents to access essential services and opportunities.
● **Environmental Pollution in a Specific Neighbourhood:** Certain neighbourhoods may experience higher levels of pollution due to factors like proximity to industrial areas or poor waste management practices.
● **Limited Educational Resources in an Underserved Community:** A particular community might lack access to quality education, with inadequate school facilities, outdated materials, and insufficient educational support, which are essential for improving literacy and employability.
● **Affordable Housing Shortage in a City:** Some cities may experience challenges related to the availability of affordable housing, leading to housing insecurity and homelessness among residents.

---

[1] https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/societal-challenges

Co-funded by
the European Union

● **Inadequate Healthcare Facilities in a Remote Area:** Remote or isolated areas might struggle with limited access to healthcare services, resulting in challenges for residents to receive timely medical care.

Societal-local challenges often require localised solutions that take into account the unique circumstances and needs of a specific community. Solutions may involve collaboration between local authorities, community organisations, residents, and other stakeholders to address the specific challenges faced by that particular area.

Identifying societal-local challenges requires a systematic approach that involves research, community engagement, and a deep understanding of the specific context. Begin by researching and identifying key challenges that affect the community. You can also engage with community members and stakeholders to understand the most pressing issues, ensuring they are relevant and relatable to participants' lives. To gain insights into local issues, you can attend local meetings, events and gatherings. To identify challenges it may also be useful to seek guidance and insights from local experts, educators, healthcare professionals, and community leaders who have in-depth knowledge of the area's challenges. You may also wish to collaborate with local non-profit organisations, civic groups, and community associations that may have already identified and worked on local challenges. These activities are examples of different ways to identify local challenges.

The facilitator can conduct this initial survey or even organise another session to enable adults identify these challenges for the first time as part of their preparation. After performing this work, it is important to prioritise the identified challenges based on their significance, urgency, and potential for positive impact. For this prioritisation and further selection, you can consider involving community members in the process.

Objective of the Think Tank Manual

The Think Tank Manual is part of the Citizens Xelerator Model and Kit, developed within the context of the Citizens Xelerator project.

The main objective of the Think Tank Manual is to offer facilitators a comprehensive guide to effectively supporting adults with unmet literacy needs in identifying, addressing, and developing solutions to societal-local challenges within their communities. By providing step-by-step instructions, methodologies and resources, this manual aims to empower facilitators to create an inclusive and engaging environment that encourages active participation and collaboration among participants, through the development of brainstorming sessions.

2.   Brainstorming sessions: general instructions

Introduction

The Brainstorming sessions aim to identify societal-local challenges and then generate ideas to address them. Brainstorming comprises collaborative gatherings where adults come together to discuss, analyse and prioritise the pressing issues facing their specific locality or community. These sessions provide a structured and creative environment for solving problems and generating ideas. The primary goals are to understand the challenges unique to the community and engage participants in solution-oriented thinking.

Here are the key components of the Brainstorming Sessions:

- **Group Facilitation:** A skilled facilitator guides the session, ensuring that it remains focused, respectful, and inclusive. The facilitator encourages active participation, maintains a positive atmosphere, and manages the flow of ideas.
- **Open Dialogue:** Participants are encouraged to openly share their thoughts, concerns and experiences related to the community's challenges. A non-judgmental atmosphere is fostered to promote calm and productive discussions.
- **Idea Generation:** Brainstorming sessions emphasise the generation of creative and practical ideas to address the identified challenges. Participants are encouraged to think outside the box, and no idea is initially deemed too unconventional or unfeasible.
- **Discussion and Clarification:** After generating ideas, participants engage in discussions to clarify, refine, and expand upon them. This dialogue allows for a deeper understanding of the proposed solutions.
- **Prioritisation:** Participants collectively evaluate and prioritise the identified challenges and potential solutions. This step helps in determining which issues are of the highest concern and which ideas are most feasible and impactful.

Target groups

The target groups of these Brainstorming sessions include adults with unmet literacy needs, which may comprise a broad group of people, including (but not limited to):

- Adults with low qualifications or expertise
- Adults with low soft or digital skills
- Adults with low employability
- Seniors with low digital or foreign language competences
- NEETs

- Long term unemployed
- Old learners in rural areas
- Roma people
- Early school leavers
- Single parents
- Community education participants
- Migrants

Partnerships

Implementing these brainstorming sessions demands a collective effort. Organisations can leverage partnerships with adult education providers, civic society organisations, and other relevant stakeholders to plan and execute brainstorming sessions that actively involve participants in identifying and addressing community issues. By implementing these collaborative strategies, organisations, educational providers, and civic society organisations can work together effectively to gather participants for brainstorming sessions. This collaborative approach harnesses diverse strengths, resources, and expertise, ultimately leading to more inclusive and impactful community engagement. Here are some strategies and recommendations for establishing effective partnerships:

● **Identify Synergies:** Begin by identifying adult education providers, civic society organisations, and local community centres that work with adults from the identified target groups—or that have easy access to them—and whose missions and expertise align with the goals of community engagement.

● **Share Vision and Objectives:** Establish a common vision and clearly defined objectives for the brainstorming sessions. Ensure that all organisations are on the same page regarding the challenges to be addressed and the desired outcomes.

● **Coordinate Planning:** Collaborate in the planning process. Each organisation can contribute with their unique strengths. The organisation can either support the identification of the participants, support the dissemination of the brainstorming sessions, mobilise community participation, or provide a venue for the sessions. Their local knowledge and networks can help reach a broader audience or provide a more suitable venue or location.

How to promote the brainstorming sessions

Promoting the brainstorming sessions to adults with unmet literacy needs requires thoughtful planning and effective communication strategies. It is vital to communicate the value of participation, create an inclusive and supportive environment, and show genuine interest in the participants' involvement. The key is to use appropriate language and channels to reach the target groups, communicate the value of their participation, and be clear on how they will benefit from this initiative. By effectively promoting the brainstorming sessions, you are enhancing the chances of engaging adults with unmet literacy needs and encouraging them to contribute their valuable insights. Here are some recommendations on how facilitators and organisations can reach and mobilse the target groups to participate:

● **Pre-session Communication:** Communicate the session details well in advance, including the date, time, location (for face-to-face sessions), or online meeting link (for virtual sessions).

● **Personal Invitations:** Reach out to participants individually or through personal invitations, making them feel valued and more likely to attend.

● **Use Multiple Communication Channels:** Use a combination of communication channels, such as phone calls, text messages, emails, social media, community notice boards, local newspapers, community events, and partners' networks, to reach a wider audience.

● **Plain Language:** Use clear and simple language in all communication to ensure that participants understand the purpose and details of the brainstorming session.

● **Explain Benefits:** Clearly outline the benefits of attending the session, such as contributing to their community, sharing their experiences, and working on solutions.

● **Highlight Inclusivity:** Emphasise that participants from all backgrounds, literacy levels and genders are welcome and that their insights and contributions are valued.

- **Visual Aids:** Include visual aids, such as posters, flyers, or digital graphics, that convey the session information in an engaging and visually appealing manner. To support the dissemination of the session, different editable materials are provided in the Citizens Xelerator Model and Kit. Please be sure that you adapt your materials to your sessions and your participants.
- **Storytelling Approach:** Share success stories or examples of how similar sessions have led to positive outcomes in other communities.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Ensure that the communication is culturally sensitive and non-discriminatory and resonates with the target audience. If appropriate, use intercultural mediators.
- **Friendly Reminders:** Send reminder messages a day or two before the session to ensure that participants will show up.
- **Provide Flexibility:** Offer flexibility in terms of timing, location, or accessibility, making it easier for participants to attend.
- **Peer Involvement:** Engage community influencers or leaders to promote the session and encourage participation.
- **Use Local Media:** If appropriate, use local radio, newspapers, or community bulletin boards to reach a wider audience.

Connection to the Create Your Action! Booklet

The outcome of these Brainstorming sessions comprises the identification of local challenges or problems and also the ideas and/or initiatives to address them. These ideas or initiatives, identified in the Brainstorming sessions, will be further organised by the adults during the Create Your Action! phase when an action plan will be prepared.

This means that the 'Think Tank Manual' and the 'Create Your Action!' Booklet documents are connected and should be used together.

> To kickstart the collaboration, consider beginning with small numbers of participants who will see tangible results from their involvement, fostering motivation for continued and more extensive participation in the future.

3.   Setting and Resources

Preferably, the Brainstorming sessions should be organised face-to-face, but online sessions are also possible. Whether face-to-face or online, creating a comfortable and well-organised session sets the tone for productive brainstorming. Adapting these suggestions to your specific context will help ensure a successful and engaging session for all participants.

Setting up Face-to-Face Brainstorming Sessions

- **Choose a Suitable Location:** Select a quiet and comfortable space where participants can freely share their ideas without distractions. Ensure there's enough seating for all participants, arranged in a circle to promote inclusivity.
- **Prepare Materials:** Set up a whiteboard, flipchart, or large paper sheets where ideas can be recorded and visible to everyone. Provide markers, sticky notes, or other writing tools for participants to contribute their ideas.
- **Create a Welcoming Atmosphere:** Arrange the seating in a way that encourages eye contact and engagement among participants. Use soft lighting and ensure the room is well-ventilated.
- **Technology Setup:** If using technology, ensure that any necessary equipment such as projectors, screens, or speakers are properly set up and functioning.
- **Refreshments:** Consider providing light refreshments like water, tea, or coffee to keep participants comfortable and energised.

Setting up Online Brainstorming Sessions

- **Choose a Suitable Platform:** Select a reliable video conferencing platform that supports brainstorming features like screen sharing, whiteboards, and breakout rooms. Make sure to match the platform to your audience and confirm that the participants are comfortable using the platform you've chosen. Make yourself available to support them in the use of the platform.
- **Send Invitations:** Send out invitations with clear instructions and the meeting link well in advance. Encourage participants to test their audio and video settings before the session. Make yourself available to support participants in testing the settings.
- **Set Up Virtual Materials:** Use a digital whiteboard for collaborative note-taking, or screen-sharing tools for displaying ideas. Prepare any visual aids or presentations in advance.
- **Establish Guidelines:** At the beginning of the session, lay out the ground rules for online participation, including muting when not speaking and using video to enhance engagement.
- **Breakout Rooms:** If possible, use breakout rooms to facilitate smaller group discussions and idea generation. Assign a facilitator or note-taker for each breakout group.
- **Time Management:** To keep the session on track, allocate specific time slots for different discussion segments.
- **Maintain Engagement:** Use features like polls, chat, and reactions to keep participants engaged and encourage interaction. Make sure that participants are comfortable using the selected features. Make yourself available to support them in their use. Periodically ask for verbal input from all participants to ensure everyone's voice is heard.

● **Follow-Up:** After the session finishes, share a summary of it and the ideas generated in it with all participants.
● **Feedback and Adaptation:** Gather feedback from participants about the online setup and experience to make improvements for future sessions.

Here is a list of platforms that can be used for conducting online sessions and performing interactive activities:

Zoom: A widely used video conferencing platform with features like breakout rooms, screen sharing, and chat.

Microsoft Teams: Offers video conferencing, file sharing, and collaboration tools, especially suitable for organisations using Microsoft 365.

Google Meet: Google's video conferencing solution, integrated with Google Workspace, allowing for easy collaboration on documents during meetings.

Cisco Webex: Provides video conferencing, online meetings, and webinars with additional features like breakout sessions.

Skype: A classic video calling platform with features for one-on-one and group calls.

GoToMeeting: Designed for online meetings, video conferencing, and webinars with features like screen sharing and recording.

BlueJeans: A platform for video conferencing and virtual events with features like breakout sessions and event analytics.

Adobe Connect: Offers virtual classrooms, webinars, and online meetings with interactive features.

Slack: While primarily a messaging app, Slack also supports video calls and integrations with various tools.

Jitsi Meet: An open-source platform for secure video conferencing with features like screen sharing and collaborative document editing.

Whereby: A simple and user-friendly video conferencing platform that doesn't require participants to download an app.

BigBlueButton: An open-source web conferencing system designed for online learning with features like whiteboard and breakout rooms.

Miro: A collaborative online whiteboard platform that can be used for brainstorming and visual collaboration.

Discord: Originally designed for gamers, Discord has evolved into a communication platform with voice and video chat capabilities.

Microsoft Whiteboard: A digital canvas for collaboration, ideal for visualising ideas and concepts.

Padlet: An online bulletin board that can be used for collaborative note-taking, brainstorming, and sharing resources.

Mentimeter: An interactive presentation platform that allows for real-time audience engagement through polls, quizzes, and surveys.

Resources for Brainstorming Sessions

- **Materials for Idea Generation:** Sticky notes, markers, pens, pencils, and paper for participants to jot down their ideas.
- **Visual Aids:** Whiteboards, flipcharts, or poster paper for recording and displaying ideas during the session.
- **Technology Setup:** Projectors, screens or monitors for sharing digital presentations or visual aids. If participants have access to smartphones or tablets, explore the use of simple communication apps for sharing resources, ideas, and progress updates.
- **Facilitation Materials:** Think tank manual, session agenda, and any handouts explaining the brainstorming process.
- **Reference Materials:** Charts, diagrams, or printed resources related to the challenges being discussed. For example, you can consider having recent local newspapers, reports or census data that can help participants in the identification of common local problems.

Here are some tips on materials that can enhance the effectiveness of your sessions:

Sticky Notes: Ideal for brainstorming sessions, quick idea generation, and organising thoughts. Different colors can represent various categories or themes, aiding visual organisation. Participants can easily move and share sticky notes during collaborative activities.

Flipchart: Perfect for displaying key points, charts, or diagrams for the entire group to see. It facilitates collaborative brainstorming and allows for real-time documentation of ideas.

Whiteboard and Markers: It allows people to visualise concepts, draw diagrams, or jot down key points during discussions.

Markers and Pens: Enhance visual appeal and facilitate color-coded organisation. Ensure markers are bold and visible, especially in larger spaces.

Projector and Screen: Display slides, videos, or important information to a larger audience. This is particularly suitable for formal presentations or workshops.

Name Tags: These help participants get to know each other and promote a sense of community.

Timer or Stopwatch: Keep sessions on track by setting time limits for activities. It helps participants manage their time during tasks or discussions.

Printed Handouts: Provide participants with supplementary information or resources. Remember to adapt your material choices based on the specific objectives of your session and the preferences of your participants. The right combination of materials can greatly enhance engagement, interaction, and overall session effectiveness.
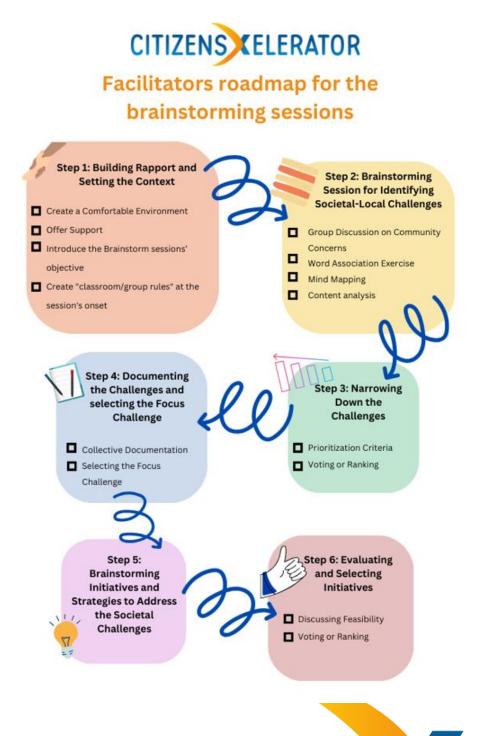
4.   Methodology

Participatory Learning Approach

The participatory learning approach is an educational philosophy and methodology that places learners at the centre of the learning process, actively involving them in decision-making, problem-solving, and knowledge construction. Adopting this approach ensures participants feel valued and motivated to contribute. As such, it is important to adopt a learner-centered approach that encourages active participation, collaboration, and experiential learning.

Step-by-Step Process for the Brainstorming sessions

Step 1: Building Rapport and Setting the Context

- **Create a Comfortable Environment:** Begin by creating a welcoming and non-judgmental atmosphere. Ensure that participants feel safe and respected.
- **Offer Support:** Mention that facilitators are available during the session to answer questions, provide support, or accommodate specific needs.
- **Introduce the Brainstorm sessions' objective:** Explain that the session aims to identify firstly, the challenges within the community that participants would like to address collaboratively, and secondly, to propose initiatives to address those challenges. Also, explain what is expected by all the involved participants.
- **Create "classroom/group rules" at the session's onset:** This ensures the establishment of a positive environment where every participant is valued, respected, and given a voice, aligning with both the facilitator's and participants' roles.

Step 2: Brainstorming Session for Identifying Societal-Local Challenges

Start the session with a simple icebreaker to ease participants into the session. This could be a round of introductions or a brief sharing of personal experiences. After the presentations, you can consider performing different interactive activities for the identification of the societal-local challenges, including:

- **Group Discussion on Community Concerns:** Engage participants in a guided discussion about their community. Ask open-ended questions such as:
    - ✓ What are some issues you've noticed in your neighborhood?
    - ✓ What challenges do you think the community faces?
    - ✓ What problems do you think the community has?
    - ✓ What is not working or is missing in your community?
    - ✓ What changes would you like to see?
- **Word Association Exercise:** Provide a list of common community challenges on a board or paper. Ask participants to share any associations or experiences they have with each challenge.
- **Mind Mapping:** Use simple visual aids like a mind map on a whiteboard. Start with a central theme (*e.g.*"Community Challenges") and encourage participants to add branches for different challenges they identify.
- **Content Analysis:** Provide some reference materials (recent local videos or newspapers, publication in social media of local organisations, data from census, reports…) and ask participants to read the materials carefully and make notes on any local challenges or issues mentioned. Encourage them to identify the main problem and consider its causes and potential impacts.

Step 3: Narrowing Down the Challenges

Consider each identified challenge and let participants discuss the relevance and potential impact of each one. Facilitate a group decision to narrow down the list to a few key challenges:

- **Prioritisation Criteria:** Introduce criteria for prioritisation, such as:
    - ✓ *How urgent is the challenge?*
    - ✓ *Can we make a meaningful impact on this challenge?*

✓ *Do we have the resources and support needed?*
● **Voting or Ranking:** Depending on the group size, use a voting or ranking system to collectively decide which are the top challenges to focus on. Incorporate interactive elements, such as polls or surveys, in your communication to engage participants and gather their input. Make sure you use elements that can be easily used by the participants.

Step 4: Documenting the Challenges and selecting the Focus Challenge

● **Collective Documentation:** As participants discuss and prioritise challenges, it is important to document key points on a flipchart or whiteboard. This could include short descriptions of each challenge and the reasons for their prioritisation.
● **Selecting the Focus Challenge:** Based on the additional insights, decide collectively which challenge the group will focus on addressing first.

Step 5: Brainstorming Initiatives and Strategies to Address the Societal Challenges

After selecting the focus challenge, engage participants in brainstorming sessions to generate potential initiatives and strategies for addressing it. Encourage creative thinking and ensure that all ideas are valued. As participants share their ideas, record them on a flipchart or whiteboard. Ensure that each idea is clear and understandable, even if they're not written by the participants themselves. Examples can be as follows:

Local challenge	Ideas/initiatives to address the challenge
Food Insecurity	Community Garden Initiative
Illiteracy	Mobile Literacy Library Idea Promoting adult literacy through Interactive Theater Family Literacy Programs
Environmental Pollution	Recycling and Upcycling Project Sustainable Living Workshops
Unemployment	Skill Development Workshops Functional Literacy for Occupational Skills Local Craft Entrepreneurship
Healthcare Access	Community Health Awareness Campaign Mobile Health Clinics with Audiovisual Resources
Elderly Isolation	Intergenerational Interaction Program Community Senior Centers Friendly Visitor Programmes
Youth Empowerment	Mentorship Programme Community-Sourced Digital Storytelling
Community Safety	Neighbourhood Watch Programme Neighborhood Safety and Disaster Preparedness Workshops
Gender Equality	Women's Empowerment Workshops
Education Access	Community Learning Centre
Lack of intercultural communication, knowledge and practices	Community Exchange Programmes Cross-Cultural Awareness Campaigns Community Cultural Festivals

TABLE 1 – EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS OF THE COMMUNITY

These are just examples, and the ideas and initiatives can be adapted to suit the specific challenges previously identified by the participants. The key is to encourage participants to brainstorm, collaborate, and take ownership of their initiatives to create meaningful positive change.

Step 6: Evaluating and Selecting Initiatives

- **Discussing Feasibility:** Guide a discussion around the feasibility of each proposed initiative. Discuss factors like available resources, time constraints, and potential impact.
- **Voting or Ranking:** Have participants vote or rank the proposed initiatives based on their perceived importance and feasibility.

5.   Facilitator's Role

The role of the facilitator in this context is crucial in guiding and supporting adults with unmet literacy needs to identify and address societal-local challenges. The facilitator serves as a bridge between participants and the process, ensuring that everyone can engage meaningfully and contribute to the discussions and initiatives. In essence, the facilitator plays a pivotal role in creating a supportive and empowering environment that enables adults with unmet literacy needs to actively take part, contribute their ideas, and collaboratively address societal-local challenges in a way that respects their unique perspectives and abilities.

Here is an overview of some strategies that facilitators can adopt to ensure the success of the sessions:

- **Create a Supportive Environment:** Establish a safe, respectful and inclusive atmosphere where participants feel comfortable sharing their ideas, even if they have limited literacy skills.
- **Adapt Communication:** Tailor your communication to the literacy levels of participants, using simple language, visual aids, and relatable examples. When discussing challenges, use simple and clear language to ensure that people with varying literacy levels can understand and engage with the debate.
- **Encourage Participation:** By fostering an environment that values every perspective, you can motivate all participants to actively participate. Gently encourage quieter participants to contribute while also managing more dominant voices to maintain balanced discussions.
- **Engage Through Conversations:** Engage in one-to-one conversations with adults with unmet literacy needs to hear directly their experiences, concerns and challenges.
- **Active Listening:** Listen attentively to participants, show empathy, and validate their contributions, promoting a sense of belonging.
- **Adapt Activities:** Design and adapt activities, discussions, and exercises that address participants' varying literacy levels and learning preferences. Use visual aids, pictures, and simple diagrams to help explain concepts and gather insights. Incorporate activities that involve drawing, crafting, or hands-on experiences to encourage participation and idea sharing.
- **Promote Critical Thinking and Empowerment:** Ask thought-provoking questions that encourage participants to think critically about the challenges and potential solutions. Encourage participants to reflect on their experiences and share their perspectives on challenges they see in their communities.

- **Foster Collaboration:** Create opportunities for participants to collaborate and build on each other's ideas, fostering a sense of shared ownership in the process. Moderate discussions to ensure they remain focused, respectful, and on track toward achieving the session's objectives.
- **Use Small Group Discussions:** Organise small group discussions where participants can comfortably share their thoughts and experiences.
- **Adopt a Storytelling Approach:** Encourage participants to share personal stories that highlight challenges they've faced in their daily lives, but always respect a participant's decision not to share their own experiences.
- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Ask open-ended questions that allow participants to express themselves without feeling pressured to provide specific answers.
- **Use Everyday Situations:** Frame discussions around familiar situations, such as challenges they might face while seeking employment, accessing healthcare, or managing finances.
- **Build Trust and Rapport:** Establish trust with participants over time, as they may initially be hesitant to share personal challenges due to their literacy needs.
- **Encourage Small Steps**: Whenever possible, break down the process of identifying challenges into smaller, manageable steps to prevent participants from feeling overwhelmed.
- **Promote Peer Support:** Facilitate discussions where participants can support each other and share insights based on their unique experiences.
- **Provide Written Options:** When applicable, offer written or visual prompts for those who are comfortable with reading and writing, allowing them to contribute in their preferred way.
- **Use a Patient and Respectful Approach:** Approach the process with patience, respect, and an understanding of participants' journeys and comfort levels.
- **Provide Guidance without Dominating**: Offer guidance and insights without overshadowing participants' contributions. Facilitate rather than lead the discussions.
- **Encourage Diverse Perspectives:** Promote an inclusive environment where everyone's ideas are valued, regardless of literacy levels.
- **Summarise and Clarify:** Periodically summarise the discussion points and clarify any misunderstandings to keep everyone on the same page.
- **Celebrate Achievements:** Recognise and celebrate participants' efforts, initiatives, and achievements. Highlight the positive impact they are making on their community.

6. Participants' Responsibilities

The success of the Brainstorming sessions largely depends on active and respectful participation from all participants. By fulfilling these roles and responsibilities, participants can ensure they make a valuable contribution to the collaborative effort to address societal-local challenges.

- **Engage:** Participants are expected to actively take part in the session by contributing ideas, insights and experiences. Their active engagement is crucial for the success of the session. Participants are expected to
- **Listen Actively:** Participants are expected to pay close attention to what others are saying and show respect for their perspectives and ideas by listening attentively before responding.
- **Contribute to setting the rules:** Participants are expected to actively contribute to the establishment of effective teamwork rules.

- **Share Experiences:** Participants are encouraged to share their personal experiences and stories related to the challenges being discussed. Their real-life experiences can provide valuable insights.
- **Be Open-Minded:** Participants are expected to keep an open mind and be willing to consider viewpoints that may differ from their own. A variety of perspectives can lead to innovative solutions.
- **Respect Others:** Participants are expected to treat all others in the room with respect and courtesy. Avoid interrupting or speaking over others, and maintain a positive and inclusive atmosphere.
- **Ask Questions:** Participants are encouraged to ask questions If they do not understand something or need clarification. Asking questions can lead to a deeper understanding of the issues.
- **Stay Focused:** Participants are encouraged to stay on topic and avoid drifting into unrelated discussions, thus focusing their contributions on the challenges and potential solutions being discussed.
- **Build on Ideas:** When someone presents an idea, participants are encouraged to build on it by offering additional insights or suggestions that can help refine and improve the idea.
- **Respect Time Limits:** Participants are expected to keep their comments concise and relevant to allow others the opportunity to speak, thus being mindful of time constraints during the session
- **Participate Actively in Group Activities:** Participants are encouraged to participate wholeheartedly and collaborate effectively with their group members during the group activities.
- **Offer Constructive Feedback:** Participants are encouraged to offer their feedback and suggestions in a constructive and supportive way.
- **Stay Solution-Oriented:** Participants are encouraged to focus on finding solutions and actionable steps to address the challenges at hand. Brainstorming sessions are ultimately about generating practical ideas.
- **Document Ideas:** If possible, participants are asked to help document the ideas and discussions during the session. This can include taking notes, using flipcharts, or recording key points.
- **Follow up:** After the session, participants are encouraged to consider their role in the implementation of any initiatives or solutions that arise from the brainstorming, thus being available to contribute to the next steps (Create Your Action!).

7. Timeline

The Brainstorming sessions will be developed during the implementation of the Citizens Xelerator Action Labs and may be further transferred to other contexts.

The idea is to have the Brainstorming Sessions interconnected with the Create Your Action! Initiatives, although several Brainstorming sessions can be implemented during the entire duration of the Action Labs, thus leading to the development of the respective Create Your Action! Initiatives.

8.   Expected Results/Impact

By engaging in brainstorming and idea development, participants will contribute to innovative solutions for local challenges. Participants will collaboratively identify and select initiatives that address local issues, fostering community growth and resilience that will be organised and implemented by themselves with the support of the Create Your Action! Booklet.

Outputs

In the process of addressing societal-local challenges through brainstorming sessions and community engagement, the ultimate goal is to identify local challenges and initiatives to tackle them. The final output is a **comprehensive list of prioritised challenges** and a corresponding **set of initiatives aimed to tackle these challenges effectively**.

Outcome/Impact

The final list of societal-local challenges and initiatives embodies the collective voice and aspirations of a community. It empowers the community to take charge of its future, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.

In the end, the journey from identifying local challenges to crafting initiatives is a transformative process. The main vision of the Brainstorming sessions is to empower individuals with unmet literacy needs to become catalysts for positive societal impact. In terms of impact, the Brainstorming sessions expect to:

- **Enhance participants' critical thinking**
- **Build resilience**
- **Empower citizens**
- **Strengthen community bonds**
- **Set a course for a brighter and more sustainable future**
- **Enhance community engagement and collective action in creating meaningful change.**

9.   Conclusion

This facilitator's guide provides a comprehensive framework for facilitators to support adults with unmet literacy needs in identifying ideas and initiatives to address societal-local challenges. By following this manual, facilitators can empower participants to become proactive problem-solvers and active contributors to their communities' well-being.

This manual can act as a roadmap for facilitators: it outlines a comprehensive approach to facilitating brainstorming sessions and community engagement to empower adults with unmet literacy needs to identify and address societal-local challenges. It also encourages all facilitators, participants, and stakeholders to carry the spirit of community engagement forward: continuing to identify local challenges, develop initiatives, and embark on the path of meaningful change.

In summary, it is important to emphasise that this manual is not a final destination but a stepping stone. The real work happens beyond these pages, in the conversations, collaborations and initiatives that will unfold within communities. It is a journey that calls for perseverance, adaptability, and continuous learning.

CITIZENS XELERATOR

actionaid
για έναν κόσμο πιο δίκαιο

vhs
Volkshochschule
im Landkreis Cham e.V.

AONTAS
The Voice of
Adult Learning

dante
USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH
ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION

AJP
CEP

cesie
the world is only one creature

acefir
associació catalana per l'educació, la formació i la recerca

Asociatia
EUR ADULT
EDUCATION

mentortec