

ActionPlan

Citizens Xelerator Days

# CITIZENS XELERATOR

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## Introduction

Participation in democratic and civic life is seen as a catalyst to build an open, fair, balanced and just society and as a key ingredient for the promotion of inclusion and empowerment of people at risk of exclusion. It is also seen as a fundamental right and responsibility of European citizens of all ages, social backgrounds, levels of education and country of origin. As such, it is crucial to invest in initiatives to strengthen European citizens' literacy, empowerment and opportunities to enhance their democratic and civic engagement (EU Citizenship Report; COM(2020) 730).

Within this context, Citizens Xelerator Days is an initiative aimed at mobilising citizens to co-organise and participate at events on issues related to democratic participation and create positive change in their communities. The Citizens Xelerator project aims to engage people with unmet literacy needs in the organisation of events and, through this process, empower them and develop their organisational and life skills.

This 'Citizens Xelerator Planning Guide' is a resource that can be used by all organisations arranging public activities to raise awareness of important topics related to democratic and civic engagement and the empowerment of people. This will be done by celebrating days with activities—face-to-face, online or hybrid—involving all communities.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Define the Citizen Xelerator Days project
- Define target groups
- Provide support for the communication/promotion of events
- Give a step-by-step guide on how to implement events
- Provide a list of relevant dates on which it might be appropriate to implement Xelerator Days

## Purpose of the Citizens Xelerator Days

The Citizens Xelerator Days encompass events and activities organised to mark significant dates associated with the project's core themes throughout the pilot action phase, strengthening the democratic and civic literacy and social empathy of adults with unmet literacy needs and so contribute to a systemic change in the regional/national/European approach and strategies fostering adults' participation in democratic life.

The purpose of the Citizens Xelerator Days events is to:

- a) Raise awareness of important topics related to democratic and civic engagement and the empowerment of people; embrace common values and civic engagement  
Present the Citizens Xelerator project and how it can be used by target groups to systematically motivate and encourage adults with unmet literacy needs to participate in civic matters
- b) Foster networking with stakeholders, motivating target groups to get involved in the Citizens Xelerator project and the collaboration to be created during the project pilot testing phase (WP3).
- c) Encourage adults with unmet literacy needs to participate in the organisation of events



## Target Groups

### Organising Party

This resource is designed for those will organise and implement events to engage adults with unmet literacy needs, for example:.

- **Staff in Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)** who work with adults with unmet literacy needs (employment counselors, managers, trainers, social workers)
- **Adult training providers and national authorities** in the field of social inclusion, employment, education and training

### Co-Organiser/Participants/End Users

The Citizens Xelerator Days will be addressed to all potential end users of Citizens Xelerator Lab, which include:.

- Local communities
- Adults with unmet literacy needs, low qualifications, or obsolete skills
- Adults with technical competencies but who lack soft or employability skills
- Seniors with low competencies in digital skills and/or foreign languages
- Young adults with no professional experience
- NEETs
- Long-term unemployed
- Roma people
- Migrants and people seeking refuge
- Adults trying to re-integrate into the labour market
- Lone parents

### Invited Speakers

These are people who will be invited to take part in the facilitation of the event. They include guests and experts who will give added value to the event and who may be involved actively in the choice and implementation of activities on the day.

- **Facilitators to present the Citizens Xelerator project** could be the project managers who have the knowledge to present and disseminate the project during the Xelerator Day event
- **Facilitators/Presenters on the specific topic of the Day** could be experts, academics, activists or influencers who have deep knowledge of the topic either because it's their field of research or through personal experience. These people will set the context, present the topic of the Day, and provide content and specific information about the topic.
- **Facilitators of the mini workshops**, could be project team members who know the project well enough to present it and at the same time are able to organise and facilitate workshops on the Citizens Xelerator Lifecomp cards or Model and Kit . These may include adults with unmet literacy needs.



## Promotional Contexts



### Creating Synergies with Others

Citizens Xelerator values collaboration with other organisations, institutions, CSOs and policy makers. Citizens Xelerator Days can provide the perfect opportunity to collaborate with such stakeholders. Many of them work with people with unmet literacy needs and include in their organisational strategies activities that could be combined with or complement Citizens Xelerator Days.

A great opportunity to introduce the idea of partnerships is to create a focus group—or use an existing channel of communication—with colleagues from different organisations and present the possibility of co-organising an Xelerator Days initiative or promoting the event to others. We suggest creating a list of key stakeholders that would be useful to contact in this context.

### Engaging Adults with Unmet Literacy Needs

It is also vital to promote the initiative within the local community and to the wider area. Flyers and posters could be printed and be available to beneficiaries of every organising party. Posters should also be displayed in the facilities of each organising party. During the daily and usual activities organised for the beneficiaries, professionals should integrate the information concerning the Citizens Xelerator project and its initiatives.

A possible strategy could be to create a list of possible interested adults to communicate the events through personal invitations. Google forms can be used to encourage stakeholders to enrol in the event. Also, each organising party should assign someone as point of contact and make a landline available so that people with low digital skills or with no access to the internet can enrol.

During the implementation of the project, and especially during the Brainstorming or Microlearning sessions, the organising party can inform the participants about the Xelerator Days initiative. Resources such as the Create your Action! Booklet should be very useful for the participation and engagement of adults with unmet literacy needs in the organisation of Citizens Xelerator Days. The greater the level of personal involvement in the process, the more likely someone is to show interest in participating in such initiatives. Organising parties should ensure that they provide opportunities for adults with unmet literacy skills to engage in both the planning and execution of the project.



# Step by Step Guide

Here is a systematic guide to help you prepare and carry out your event, offering step-by-step instructions for a smooth process.



## Before the event:

### 1. Define the goal and objectives

What do you want to achieve? To effectively outline your objectives, we recommend that you initially concentrate on the challenges and requirements of the local community.

1. What current problems is the community facing?
2. What organisational, political or other barriers do you need to be aware of?
3. What are the objectives for the project?
4. What questions does the Citizens Xelerator have to answer?
5. What are we trying to learn?
6. What should the event achieve?
7. Do other organisations do something similar?
8. What has prior research told us?

### 2. Identify the key issues/challenges

Examples of these might include access to education, issues around the environment, social justice *etc.*

You could talk about these during the Brainstorming sessions. .

The Think Tank Manual offers facilitators a comprehensive guide for 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, the 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.



### 3. Identify relevant dates

Here is a list of commemorative days that might be used as a focus for Citizens Xelerator Days. Each partner organisation can select from these examples or opt for another significant date of their preference, as long as it aligns with the project's core themes.

Europe Day – 9 May

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development – 21 May

World Refugee Day – 20 June

International Literacy Day – 8 September

International Day of Democracy – 15 September

European Cooperation Day – 21 September

European Local Democracy Week – 15 October

United Nations Day – 24 October

Erasmus+ Days – October

European Vocational Skills Week – October

Civic Pride Week – December

Regional/national events promoted in each country





## 4. Create a timeline

Creating a timeline is necessary in order to better organise your events. To create a timeline you have to follow certain steps:

# CREATE A TIMELINE

- DEFINE PURPOSE & SCOPE**
  - Define events objectives and scope.
  - Assemble project team and assign roles.
  - Conduct initial research and gather requirements.
- PLANNING PHASE**
  - Gather information (nb of activities)
  - Identify and allocate resources.
  - Set project milestones and deadlines.
- DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**
  - Choose format
  - Choose tools and application to build the timeline
  - Give a name
  - Create graphics
- DETERMINE TIME METRICS & CREATE CONTENT**
  - Determine time metrics
  - Add milestones and activities
- EDIT & REVIEW**
  - Cross check and edit
  - Gather feedback from users and stakeholders.
  - Update if necessary

## 5. Build a Team

After identifying those who will be in charge of organising the event, build a team to work on it and make sure that everyone knows their responsibilities, and that the workload is shared in a balanced way. Try to keep everyone engaged and make time for regular meetings so you can monitor progress and communicate this to everyone. This will make it easier to identify risks early, be proactive, and find solutions to possible challenges.

## 6. Establish partnerships

It will be important to establish partnerships with other organisations and the local community.

### Tool 1. How to engage representatives from CSOs and the VET field

#### Know your allies

After categorising your stakeholders, you can answer the following questions in order to build a personalised strategy for every stakeholder or category of stakeholders

#### Who to contact?

- Community centres
- Education and training agencies
- Schools, universities, second-chance schools
- Public centres for upskilling
- NGOs
- Civic society organisations
- Refugee support organisations
- Unions
- Private education and training centres
- Youthwork agencies and youth centres



## Which method to choose?

Who will need a quick call or email and who will need more of a plan and time to engage?

Telephone, email or use social media *e.g.* websites, Instagram, LinkedIn

Your contacts' network

Post an article or blog in local news through local pages or newspapers, free magazines, organisations' newsletters, social media.

Attend local job fairs, business events

## When to contact?

Morning, evening? During their working hours? During another event?

## How to make the first steps in communicating with potential partners

CSOs and VET providers can be open to new collaborations and projects but very often they lack time and don't know exactly how to take on new endeavours. So it is very important to be clear and accurate on what you're asking of them and how they can participate. Also, the benefits for them should be well defined. Avoid using acronyms, technical, educational or counseling vocabulary.

We suggest the following questions to help you build your presentation and pitch. You can either prepare all of them or maybe choose just two to three to better prepare your pitch. Remember your pitch has to be concise, relevant, and focused.

What is the project about?

What do you want to achieve?

By when do you need to achieve it?

Who will participate? What kind of stakeholder? Which sectors of activity?

What do you ask from them?

How much time do you think it will take?

What is the benefit for them?

What are the challenges and opportunities of the project?

Are there any other possible opportunities for collaboration in the future?



While addressing the questions above, you can craft your pitch and perhaps practise it with a coworker. This exercise is valuable for structuring your thoughts, readying yourself for challenging inquiries, and predicting potential resistance. Try to be creative in coming up with innovative solutions to the identified challenges. Also, keep in mind the importance of keenly observing both verbal and nonverbal cues, and remain receptive to them. Your objective is to avoid causing any inconvenience to the people you're pitching to. If they appear hesitant about your proposal, don't be too insistent and aim to keep the door open for potential future opportunities.

Within the organisation, it is crucial for professionals and team members to inform and present the project and its initiatives to potentially interested individuals. To do this, it is best that each organisation arranges a presentation on the project to all its staff members. Providing a dedicated presentation within a regular staff meeting or organising a special event for the staff members can be highly beneficial in engaging colleagues and ensuring the widespread dissemination of the initiative.

## 7. Prepare an Action

You can consult the Create your Action! Booklet for ideas on how to create an action.

The Create your Action! Booklet, available as part of the Model and Kit, is a step-by-step guide that will support adults in preparing and promoting local actions. From planning to implementation, adults will go through four main steps within three different phases (before, during and after the action).

## 8. Define the Resources

During the organisation phase it is critical to be aware of your resources (financial, human, and material) in order to be able to implement the event successfully.

- What is my budget?
- Who is in the project team?
- What materials are available to use?
- What do I need to implement the project?
- Who can help me?
- How will I spread the news about the event?

## 9. Discuss and prepare the agenda for the event

Together, your team should discuss and prepare a programme or agenda for your event. If it's part of another event, make sure your agenda fits in with the main event.

### PROPOSED AGENDA EXAMPLE

a) **Welcome and Brief presentation** on the Citizens Xelerator project.

b) **Presentations** from external speakers about the specific topic of the Day and/or presentations from adults with unmet literacy needs (play, song, poem).

c) **Mini-workshops** on the Citizens Xelerator Model and Kit, Lifecomp, Entrecomp, Digicomp, Greencomp, and their relevance to different areas of civil society, the labour market, lifelong learning, policy-making, and advocacy

d) **interactive round tables**, with different stakeholder representatives presenting best practices related to the specific topic of the day

Please also consult Annexe 1, Agenda



## 10. Create visual representations

It could be a creative idea to get adults with unmet literacy needs to take part in creating visuals for an online post. This activity is fun and can help develop different literacy and life skills such as team work, critical thinking, creativity and communication.

### Tool 2. How to create a visual post

**Define your objective.** Is your post a call for action? Is it a call for participation? Do you want to raise awareness on an issue? The objective will help the team decide on the content and the style of the post.

**Choose your platform.** Which type of platform is most suitable for your post? Who is the target group? On which platform can you reach them? Remember, each platform has different format and size requirements.

**Choose and work on the content** What type of visual content would be best for the post (photo, meme, GIF, illustration, video, graphic)? What tools can team members use to create content?

**Photos** Check out resources online about how to take good photos with your smartphone or camera. Ensure good lighting and composition.

**Graphics** Canva or Adobe Spark can be useful for generating appealing images and graphics.

**Memes** Many online meme generators are available.

**Videos** Shoot a short video clip with your phone or use video editing software for more complex edits. Many are available online.

**Create a headline to accompany your post, if necessary** Make sure to use simple language and be concise. Use relevant hashtags to increase visibility on social media platforms.

**Edit and layout** Editing the content can be a very artistic process. Adobe Photoshop, free alternatives like GIMP, or features on your smartphone can be valuable in this process. Keep a clean and simple design.

**Branding and logos** It is very important to use the logos and the branding of the project as well as of the funding authority (EU) and try to align the content with the branding. Make sure the final result is appealing and catches the eye.

**Preview before posting** Reviewing the final outcome is always a good idea! A team member or the facilitator can cross check for errors and typos before posting online.

**Schedule the post** When is the right time to publish and have the maximum reach? When is your target group most likely to check your post?

**Engage with your audience** After posting you can answer/react to comments and interact with the audience.

**Analyse** After posting you can use analytics tools to monitor your outreach. These tools can help you understand what went well and what didn't.



## 11. Promoting the event

- Use social media post of the organising parties
- Use paid promotion on social media
- Share the info on personal social media (project team)
- Newsletters
- Press releases
- Photos and videos
- Local press and radio

## 12. Prepare for the event

- Prepare and share the consent form in advance
- Appoint notetaker(s) for the event
- Make sure you have all materials you might need for the planned activities (paper boards, markers, scissors, post-its, *etc.*)
- Be sure to book a meeting room that's appropriate for the planned activities
- Make sure you have prepared some coffee breaks (coffee, tea, water, juice) and include some cookies to sweeten the participants.



## During the event

### Present/facilitate the event

#### Tool 3 How to facilitate an event

Welcome and thank the group for coming, introductions are important because they help people feel comfortable around each other.

Present the agenda again and emphasise the objectives of the event, the expected outcomes, and the timelines for the day.

Ask permission to record if you need to; it is your own choice. If you decide to record, let the group know why and make sure to keep it internal. Avoid any possible misuse of the record.

Remember that external stakeholders may want to be recognised: it may be a good idea to invite your manager or even the director of your organisation to welcome them and say a few words or even to stay for the whole meeting.

Stay focused and concise and at the same time listen to stakeholders' needs. The objective of the meeting is to agree on realistic solutions and engage them as key actors in these solutions.

If you're running interactive round tables, prepare some questions in advance to facilitate the discussion; start with a neutral question to set off a free flow of information.

During the workshops, consider starting out with an icebreaker, aimed to encourage participants to relax and settle into the space a bit.

Respect the participants and yourself. Do not force anybody to speak if you feel that the person is uncomfortable.

Allow the conversation to happen naturally; use open-ended questions so people can choose how to answer

Try to avoid yes/no questions as this limits the information you'll get in response

Do not influence the respondent; do not assume answers; do not pass judgments.

Treat everyone's ideas with respect—don't criticise;

Refrain from reacting to responses, and be aware of your own body language.



## After the event:

Thank participants for their engagement and commitment to the project

Send or hand over the evaluation document (if applicable)

Measure impact (feedback to evaluate the success of the Citizen Xelerator Days and make improvements for future events)

Celebrate (a closing ceremony with the low skilled adults, volunteers and partners to celebrate their contributions to the event)

## Expected Impact

### Impact

We expect that these events contribute actively to the objectives of the project. More specifically, here are expected outcomes for the organising parties, the professionals, and the people with unmet literacy needs.

### For the organisations

- ✓ Expand and strengthen partnerships at the local and regional levels, both strategically and cooperatively, with the aim of enhancing the capacity, empowerment, civic participation, and social inclusion of adults with unmet literacy needs
- ✓ Participate in local and regional partnerships aimed at providing additional services and guidance to adults with unmet literacy needs.
- ✓ Expand the range of upskilling opportunities to empower, guide, and support adults with unmet literacy needs in formulating, preparing, and initiating democratic and civic initiatives.
- ✓ Advocate for and initiate opportunities to mobilise and involve a wide range of stakeholders in the implementation of upskilling programmes.
- ✓ Contribute to the success of the European democracy action plan by providing guidance, space and resources to low-skilled adults to think, plan and launch local, civic and democratic initiatives, empowering them and increasing their self-efficacy and their civic and democratic engagement.

### For the professionals

- ✓ Collaboratively create and develop a set of resources aimed at advancing literacy, building skills, empowering individuals, and encouraging civic engagement and participation among adults with unmet literacy needs.





✓ Acquire the skills to effectively implement a holistic approach that fosters competence development, democratic participation, and civic engagement among adults with unmet literacy needs in local and regional communities.

### For the adults with unmet literacy needs

✓ Enhance personal, social, and learning skills in order to actively participate in democracy, engage with civic matters, and embrace shared values.

✓ Reinforce core competencies and the capacity to be socially inclusive, participate in a global, democratic and digital society, and thrive in a competitive job market.

✓ Gain access to a platform for brainstorming, innovation, and the initiation of social and democratic projects aimed at addressing social and sustainable challenges.

## Conclusion

The Citizens Xelerator Days consist of a series of events and activities designed to mark important dates related to the project's central themes during the pilot action phase. These initiatives aim to enhance the understanding of democracy and civic engagement among adults who have literacy needs that haven't been addressed. As a result, they play a role in ultimately bringing about systemic changes in how regional, national and European strategies promote adult participation in democratic activities.

This Action Plan aims to guide professionals in organising these events which in turn provide practical tools for adults with unmet literacy skills to participate actively in organisation processes. Throughout this Action Plan we keep in mind that the goal is to empower adults with unmet literacy needs and give them the opportunity to learn, develop skills and participate in democratic and civic actions.



# Annexes

## Annexe 1 Proposed agenda

Citizens Xelerator Xelerator Days

Location:

Date: XX/XX/2024

Time: XX:00-XX:00

### AGENDA

<b>Time</b>	<b>Session</b>
XX.00-XX.15	Welcome
XX.15-XX.30	Presentations of the Citizens Xelerator project
XX.30-XX.00	Presentations Citizens Xelerator Model and Kit
XX.00-XX.00	Implementation Possibilities and Discussion
XX.00-XX.00	Interactive Round Tables



## Annexe 2 Activities Checklist

Activities	Done
Define goals and objectives	•
Identify key issues/challenges	•
Identify relevant dates	•
Design a timeline	•
Build a team	•
Establish partnerships	•
Define resources	•
Prepare the agenda	•
Create visual media for invitations	•
Promote the event	•
Prepare for the event	•
Facilitate the event	•
Evaluate and give feedback	•



# CITIZENS ACCELERATOR

**act:onaid**  
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

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

Asociatia  
**EUR** ADULT  
EDUCATION



  
**cesie**  
the world is only one creature

 **mentortec**

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