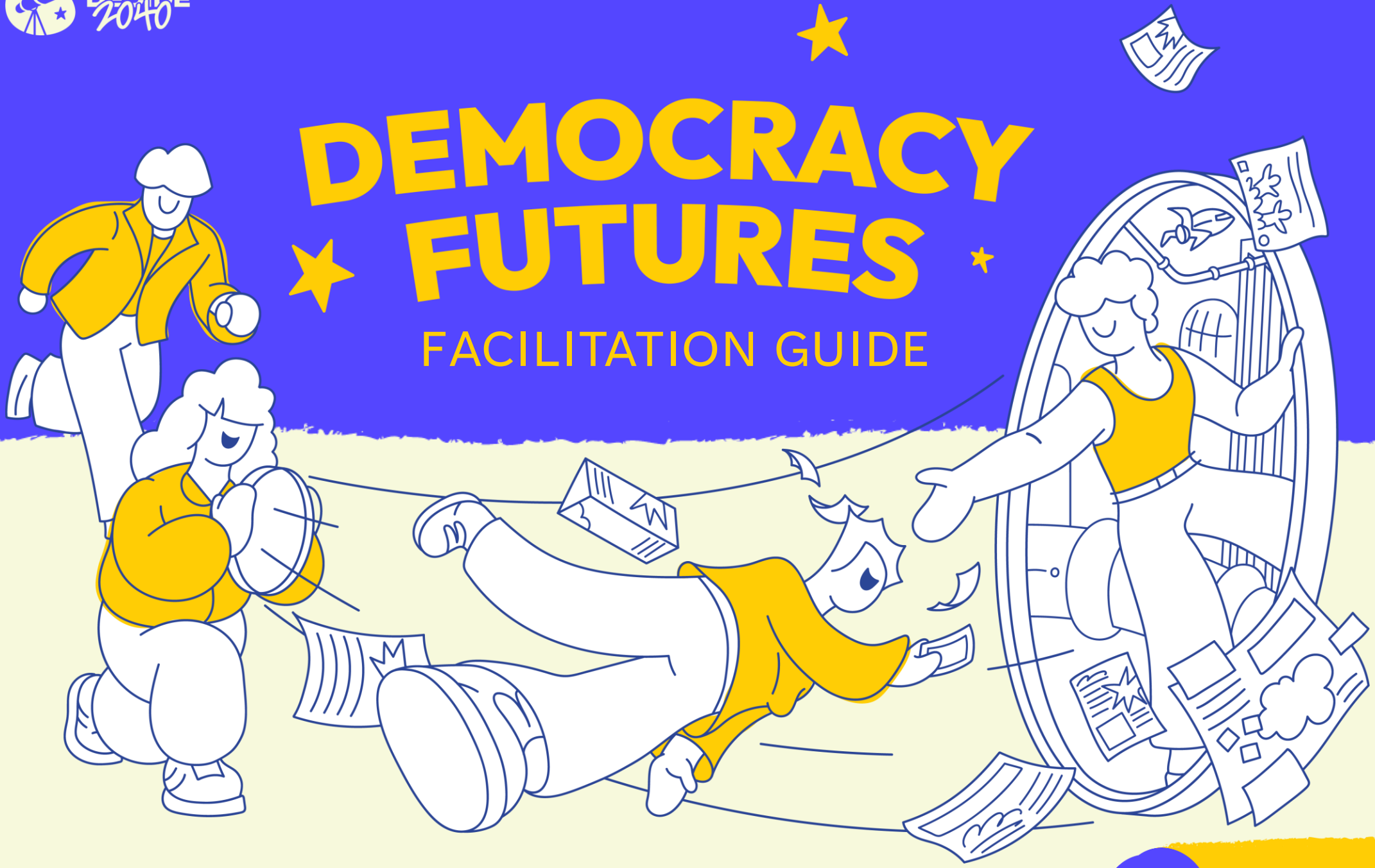
YOUTH DECIDE 2040

DEMOCRACY FUTURES

FACILITATION GUIDE



MINI

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

FACILITATION GUIDE: MINI ROUTE

A version of this guide was used by the YouthDecide 2040 research consortium to support the set up and facilitation of workshops on the future of democracy in Europe for the year 2040. It is part of the **DEMOCRACY FUTURES KIT.**

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With thanks to all participants
This material was shaped by the ideas, experiences, questions, and generosity of the people who took part in our workshops and conversations. We thank every participant of YouthDecide 2040 workshops for their time, openness, creativity, and trust. Your contributions are at the heart of this work, and we are grateful for the many perspectives you brought to it.



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DEMOCRACY FUTURES

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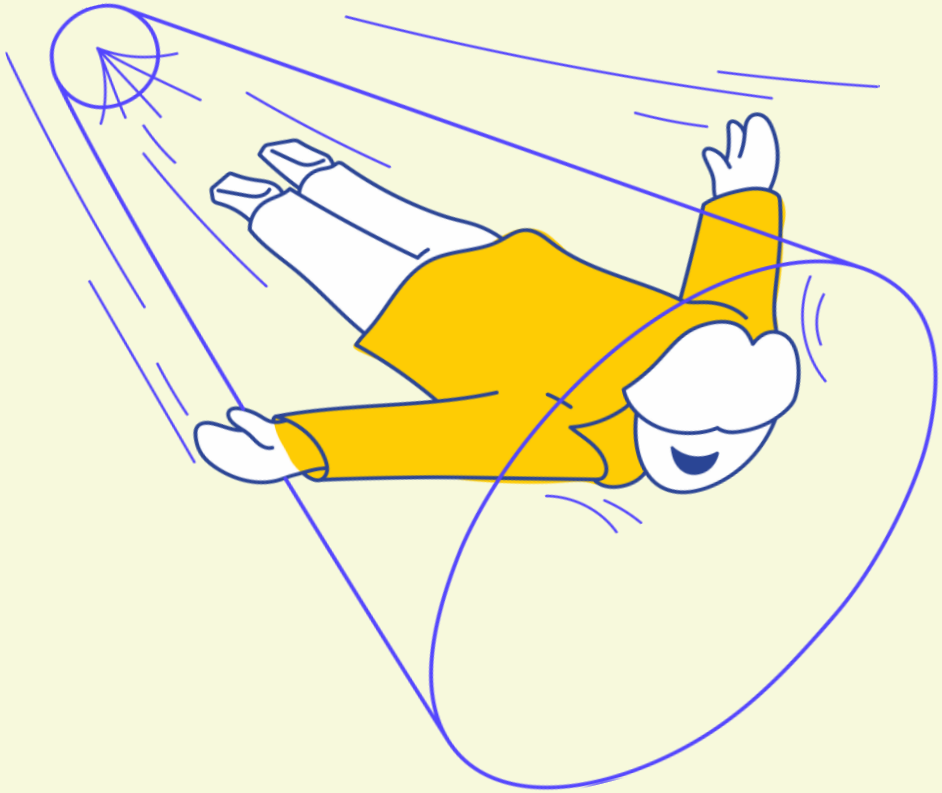

FOREWORD

DEMOCRACY FUTURES is a modular co-creation resource for exploring and shaping democratic futures in small to large groups. Developed and tested in workshops with young people across 19 European countries, **DEMOCRACY FUTURES** invites people to discuss factors that influence the directions of our democracies (***Influencing Factors*** card deck)**;** innovations that have historically or are currently changing how we think about and practice democracy (***Democratic Innovations*** card deck); and problems facing democratic societies across Europe (***Public Problems*** card deck).

Whether through short conversation prompts or full-day events, it helps groups gather, connect, reflect, and share novel conversations about strengthening democracy in Europe and beyond.

Users can adapt activities to their own setting, customizing for time, group size, and interests, or follow the proposed examples. Radically redesigned for public use and accessibility, this release of **DEMOCRACY FUTURES** is meant for wide use in education, civil society, and other participatory settings.

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BACKGROUND: FROM RESEARCH TO TOOLKIT

The **YouthDecide 2040** project developed this resource in fulfilment of its research obligations and for the express purpose of enabling more people from diverse backgrounds to participate in a foresight[1] process - the development of desirable futures for Democracy in Europe. This facilitation guide offers a general workflow that we in the **YouthDecide 2040** project think people might enjoy.

At the same time, this **MINI ROUTE** of the resource is not meant to be a static entity: it is designed to be augmented and updated by YOU. The toolkit's modular design allows for new configurations of creative exercises to emerge, as **DEMOCRACY FUTURES** takes on a life of its own. As a Creative Commons licensed document, we have taken steps to encourage this type of additive and creative use.

We hope **DEMOCRACY FUTURES**, which served us in the **YouthDecide 2040** project, helps YOU envision and take steps toward the future democracies you want to live in and pass on to future generations.



Watch the journey behind DEMOCRACY FUTURES and learn how the YouthDecide 2040 consortium co-created the workflow.

*[1]**foresight** (not to be confused with forecasting) is a forward-looking participatory practice that explores plausible and desirable futures to support policymaking and decision-making. It helps anticipate future challenges, consider a range of possible scenarios, and identify potential responses. Foresight is inclusive, creative, interdisciplinary, and participatory. It uses methods such as horizon scanning and scenario building to navigate complexity and uncertainty.*

YOUR JOURNEY

BEGINS!

MINI ROUTE

START IN THE PRESENT

During the workshop, reflect on what democracy means in your everyday lives today: moments that work well, moments that disappoint, and the hopes you carry for change.

ONE STEP FORWARD

As you move ahead, different forces shaping democracy come into view. Participants consider what kind of society they want to live in, how people might join voices, and how collective decisions can be made. Through these conversations, you begin to see how diverse experiences and perspectives can inform the imagined futures.

Depending on what is relevant to your context and group size, participants can work in small teams or reflect individually. By exchanging ideas, they not only imagine democracy's future but actively shape it.

ARRIVING IN 2040

From there, you jump into the near future. With this step, your journey through time begins. Participants step into year 2040 as an open space for experimentation. This future has no fixed form; it is a blank canvas. Together, they fill it with new ways of participating, making decisions, and living and acting together.

CONCLUSION

The workshop concludes with wishes for a democratic future they would want to inhabit. This brings shared visions, renewed perspectives, and insights into possible democratic futures, developed together back into the present.

ABOUT THE OTHER ROUTES

VISIT THE WEBSITE

MAXI

MIDI

FULL

SETTING UP THE

CREATIVE WORK



BE POSITIVE

This workshop should be an enjoyable experience for participants, so as facilitators you want to be friendly and positive. The energy in the room, in part, depends on the energy you bring to it.



IGNITE IMAGINATION

Invite participants to slow down, notice what matters, exchange perspectives, and imagine boldly. Your presence creates the safe, curious, and collaborative atmosphere needed for this journey.



ADAPT THE TOOLKIT TO YOUR CONTEXT

This toolkit is made to be modular, feel free to adjust to the needs of your activity and the group.



GUARANTEE INCLUSION

The workshop should be accessible for all people, of all abilities. Make sure you know the requirements of participants ahead of time, to adapt for accessibility measures as needed.

OFFER A SAFE & INCLUSIVE SPACE AND PLACE

A safe space is an environment, either online or in person, where everyone should be free from violence and discrimination – regardless of their characteristics or identities. **It's a place where participants feel emotionally and physically secure.**

Creating a safe space often requires proactive effort, such as fostering an atmosphere where people feel comfortable being themselves. **To encourage open discussion, it is important to recognize and address power imbalances in the group.**

It also means designating a quiet, comfortable area where participants can go if they need a break. During the preparation phase, take time to develop a safe space protocol and consider your role in responding to any situations that may arise.

As a facilitator, ensure anyone who needs support, whether it's food, accessibility, or simply a conversation, receives the care they require. For example: switching the workshop location to a wheelchair-accessible venue, providing support or accessible documents for blind people, or informing catering about food allergies.

An example of a Safety Protocol:
Feminist Safe Space Protocol, Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), used under CC BY-NC-SA.
Available at: https://www.wecf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/feminist-safe-space-protocol.pdf

THE MATERIALS

WHAT YOU NEED

These are the materials you will use for the **MINI route** of **DEMOCRACY FUTURES**. Some are entirely optional. Feel free to be creative and replace them with anything else that fits your needs.

PER WORKSHOP (1 SET)

- ❑ Some tables and chairs, and ideally natural light
- ❑ Workshop Journey Map

Optional:

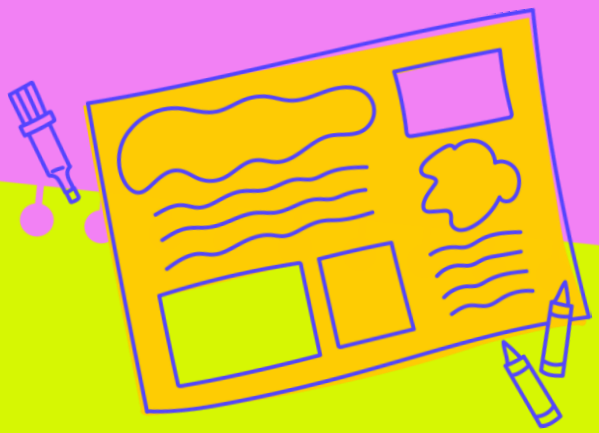
- ❑ ***'Time's up'*** sign* printed or written on an A4 sheet
- ❑ ***"I bring home..."*** sign* printed or written on an A4 sheet for the panel discussion.
- ❑ Attendance list or a sign-in sheet
- ❑ One or two Bluetooth speakers to play music during breaks

** You can also use any object as a 'talking element': for example, a ball or a mock microphone. Please feel free to use something that does not require additional printing.*

EQUIPMENT

For the workshop, besides the materials to be printed out and cut, you might (optionally) need:

- ❑ Post-it notes, flip chart, tape
- ❑ Smaller tape rolls, scissors, glue
- ❑ Pens (one per participant) and some coloured pencils and markers
- ❑ White A4 and A3 paper sheets



PER TABLE

- ❑ A set of ***Influencing Factors*** A6 cards (+Blank Cards)
- ❑ A set of ***Democratic Innovations*** A6 cards (+Blank Cards)

THE MINI ROUTE

WAYS OF USING

This guide comes with an example of a one-and-a-half-hour format. However, YOU can decide on other ways to run it. For example, you could run a **longer session** with the same time windows per activity. You could also run a **shorter activity** that focuses only on pulling a card from the *Card Decks* to spark a conversation.

This format fits easily into an **existing meeting,** a **class session,** or a **team event.** We recommend keeping the group small enough for everyone to participate in discussion and leaving a few minutes at the end for reflection.

Apart from this Facilitation Guide, other workshop materials can be downloaded via this link:

DOWNLOAD THE MATERIALS

We encourage you to adapt the materials to your context of use: for example, feel free to select or add other *Democratic Innovations* or *Influencing Factors*. You can also include relevant things your communities may currently be facing or are interested in as an Influencing Factor, Public Problem, or Democratic Innovation, these additional resource packs include blank cards which you can customize.

FACILITATION TOOLBOX (variable depending on the route)



Facilitation Guide
Facilitators support and workshop flow

Participant Booklet
Participants note-taking and support

CARD DECKS (fixed artifacts stay the same for all Routes)



INFLUENCING FACTORS
A collection of cards describing the phenomena affecting democracy

DEMOCRATIC INNOVATIONS
A collection of cards describing efforts and approaches to support democracy





PUBLIC PROBLEMS
A collection of cards describing efforts and approaches to support democracy

SUPPORTING MATERIALS (fixed artifacts, that can be used optionally)

Lab Sign, System Sketch, System Level Questions
Optional supportive materials

Scenario Canvas, Scenario Presentation Helper
Optional supportive materials

AGENDA EXAMPLE

1,5 HOUR WORKSHOP

MINI

TIME		ACTIVITY
(START IN THE MORNING OR AFTER LUNCH)		
9:00 – 9:05	13:00 – 13:05	Welcome and 1.1 - Presenting the Workshop Journey (± 5 min)
9:05– 9:15	13:05 – 13:15	1.2 - "What do I like and dislike about democracy?" (± 10 min) - *(Optional for larger groups: Team up while sharing)*
9:15 – 9:45	13:15 – 13:45	2.1 - Exploring Influencing Factors Cards (± 15 min) 2.2 - Exploring Democratic Innovations Cards (± 15 min)
9:45 – 10:00	13:45 – 14:00	Mix and match the cards and think about your 3.1 - Wishes for the Future (individually or within teams) (± 15 min)
10:00 – 10:30	14:00 – 14:30	3.1 Share your Wishes for the Future with the rest of the group or as a team (± 30 min)

Notes:

- Depending on your start time, the size of your group, and how well the participants know one another, you might have extra time towards the end of your session and use it for the activities that need it most. For example, *2.1 - Exploring the card sets* or *3.1 Wishes for the Future*. For larger groups, you might need to extend the last session.
- You can also use this MINI Route (or only the *Influencing Factors* or *Democratic Innovations* cards) to prepare participants for a longer workshop.

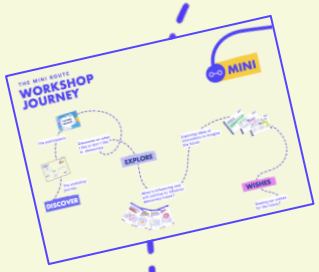
THE MINI ROUTE

WORKSHOP JOURNEY

⏱ ± 5 min

MINI

Discussion on what we like and dislike about democracy today



Introducing the workshop journey

DISCOVER

EXPLORE

What is influencing democratic futures today and will continue to shape them?



Exploring democratic innovations and imagining the future



WISHES

Sharing Wishes for the Future

PHASE 1

DISCOVER

GOALS

- Clarify the objectives and phases of the workshop

SET THE SCENE – read out loud:

Today is your space to imagine, discuss, and shape the future, and to explore what life could be like in 2040.

This workshop is a time-travel mission: you stay in the present but look ahead to your desirable future. What needs to happen to get there?

The aim is not to debate which political party or policy is right or wrong, but to reflect on democracy itself. How are decisions made? Who gets to have a say, and in what ways? Who holds power, and who does not? How could democratic processes work in ways that are fairer, more inclusive, and more transparent?

The future isn't fixed and your perspective helps to shape what comes next. Our focus is: What kind of democracy do young people wish for?

1.1 INTRODUCING THE WORKSHOP AND PARTICIPATORY FORESIGHT

⏱ ± 10 min

STEPS

EXPLORING POSSIBLE FUTURES

Explain what foresight means: exploring possible futures to imagine which ones we would like and what changes could help bring them about. Make it clear that futures are uncertain! The aim is not to predict what will happen, but to open up our imagination and explore possibilities for democracy, including ideas that may seem surprising or contradictory.

THE ACTIVITY AND MATERIALS

Introduce the participatory foresight activity as a journey from the present to 2040. Explain that the steps are connected: participants will start by reflecting on democracy today, explore factors and innovations, and finally develop wishes of these futures. Introduce the two card decks, which are based on the project's research.

PHASE 1

DISCOVER

GOALS

- Sharing our thoughts about democracy today
- Optional: getting to know one another and forming smaller teams



1.2 WHAT DO I LIKE AND DISLIKE ABOUT DEMOCRACY

⏱ ± 10 min

STEPS

Start with the present. Invite participants to share what they like and dislike about democracies today, and to listen to each other's perspectives. You can open the conversation with this question:

'Before travelling into the future, let's look at the present. What three things do you like about democracy today, and what three things would you like to change?'

Invite participants to make notes in writing.

PHASE 2

EXPLORE

GOALS

- Discovering and discussing what is influencing democratic futures and picking a factor or two that give hope or raise concern.

YOU'LL NEED

- ***Influencing Factors*** Deck.



Influencing Factors Card Deck

2.1 WHAT IS INFLUENCING DEMOCRATIC FUTURES?

⏱ ± 10 min

STEPS

Invite the group to explore the *Influencing Factors* card deck. Explain that they will find three symbols (+, -, =) on the backs of three cards. Ask them to place these on the table and to organise the rest of the cards with factors according to how concerned they feel about them:

Hope Concern Ambivalence

For groups working in smaller teams (max. 5-6): participants can sort the cards into these three categories through a brief discussion and a collective decision. If opinions differ, they can deliberate.

For groups working individually: ask each participant to choose one or two factors that shape the future of democracy. It could be a *Hope*, a *Concern*, and/or an *Ambivalence*. Participants may choose the same factors and write down notes if needed.

Finally, participants share with the whole group the factors that prompted the most concern or discussion (individually or as a team).

PHASE 2

EXPLORE

GOALS

- Exploring different ways of organizing a society and making decisions, using the ***Democratic Innovations*** card deck to inspire better futures.

YOU'LL NEED

- ***Democratic Innovations*** Deck.



Democratic Innovation Card Deck

2.2 EXPLORING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

⏱ ± 10 min

STEPS

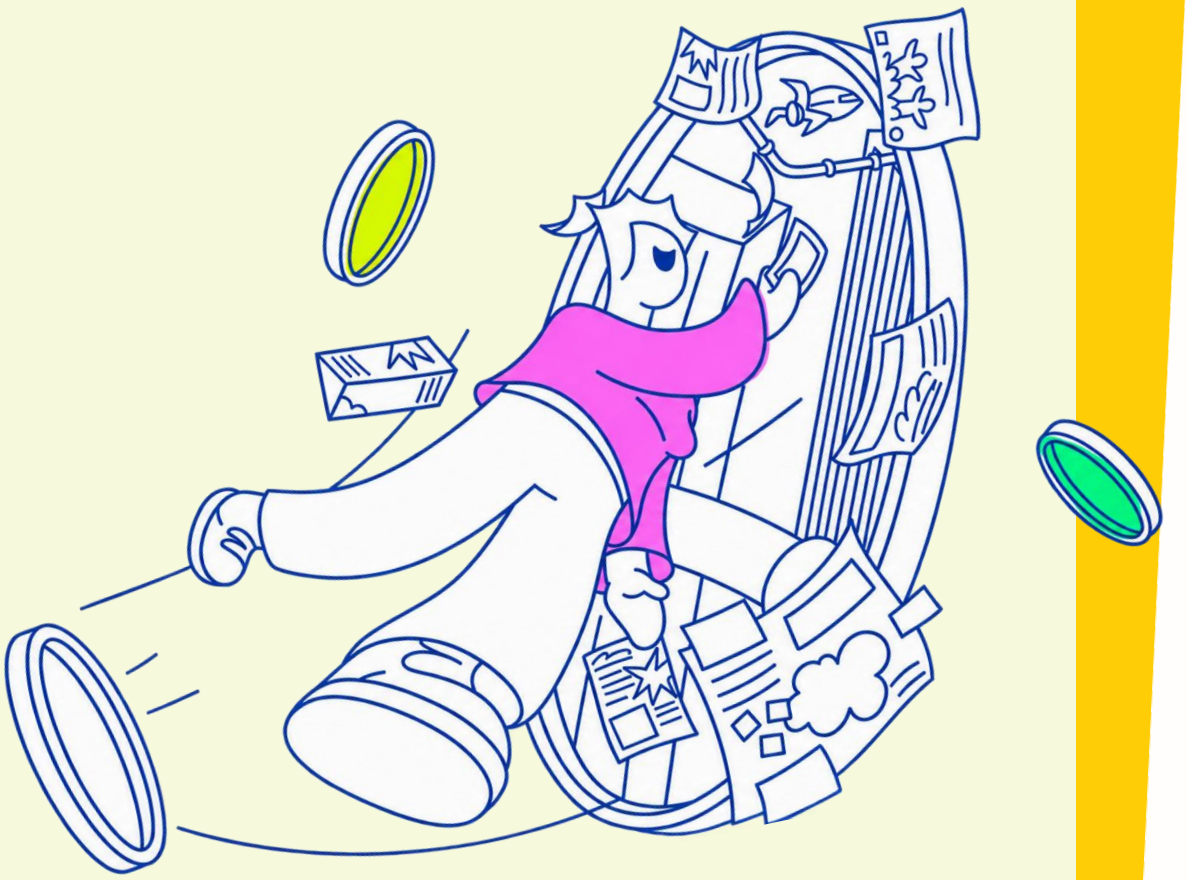
Introduce the second deck and explain that it brings together Democratic Innovations already used in different parts of the world. These offer ideas for rethinking and strengthening democratic participation in response to changes in society.

Ask each participant to choose one or two innovations and discuss them at their table or in smaller teams, if working in teams. Invite them to explore how these could address the factors they identified as *Hopes* or *Concerns* and how different innovations can be combined to form *participatory chains*.

The concept of participatory chains was developed during the YouthDecide 2040 project research. Encourage participants to combine different innovations and explore how they could complement one another.

TIME-BRIDGE

PRESENT TO FUTURES



SET THE SCENE — read aloud:

You have taken time to look at the world as it is today.

Now, it is time to move forward.

Imagine you are standing on a bridge between two moments in time. Behind you: the present. Ahead of you: the year 2040. You carry your observations with you as you cross this bridge. What you noticed, felt, and questioned will now help you imagine how things could be different.

Imagine how old you are in 2040. What makes you feel hopeful or concerned? How would you like society to work?

Let us cross the bridge together.

PHASE 3

WISHES

GOALS

- A moment of pause and reflection to think about what participants wish for: what feels important, what they want more of, and what they want to avoid or change.
- Sharing Wishes for the Future



3.1 WISHES FOR THE FUTURE

⏱ ± 30 min

STEPS

Invite the group to imagine they have arrived in 2040, the activity's time horizon. Ask each participant to formulate wishes for the future of democracy, connecting the factors they noted down with the innovations they have explored.

Read aloud: 'We are in 2040. What does democracy look and feel like? Express wishes or visions based on the themes we have explored.'

EXAMPLE AND DISCUSSION

Share your own three wishes as an example and briefly explain how they relate to the cards. Allow a few minutes for individual reflection and/or five minutes for participants to discuss their wishes at their tables if they are working in teams. Then invite participants to share their wishes with the whole group. Support the discussions as needed!

CLOSING

Conclude by highlighting some of the ideas shared and remind participants that imagining desirable futures helps us consider what changes in the present can help us to bring these futures about.

NEED SOME...

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

Get to know the **DEMOCRACY FUTURES** materials through this video tutorial, originally developed for facilitators of the YouthDecide 2040 National Workshops.

It introduces the materials used in the **FULL route**, alongside those included in the other routes, explaining their purpose and how to use them during your workshop.

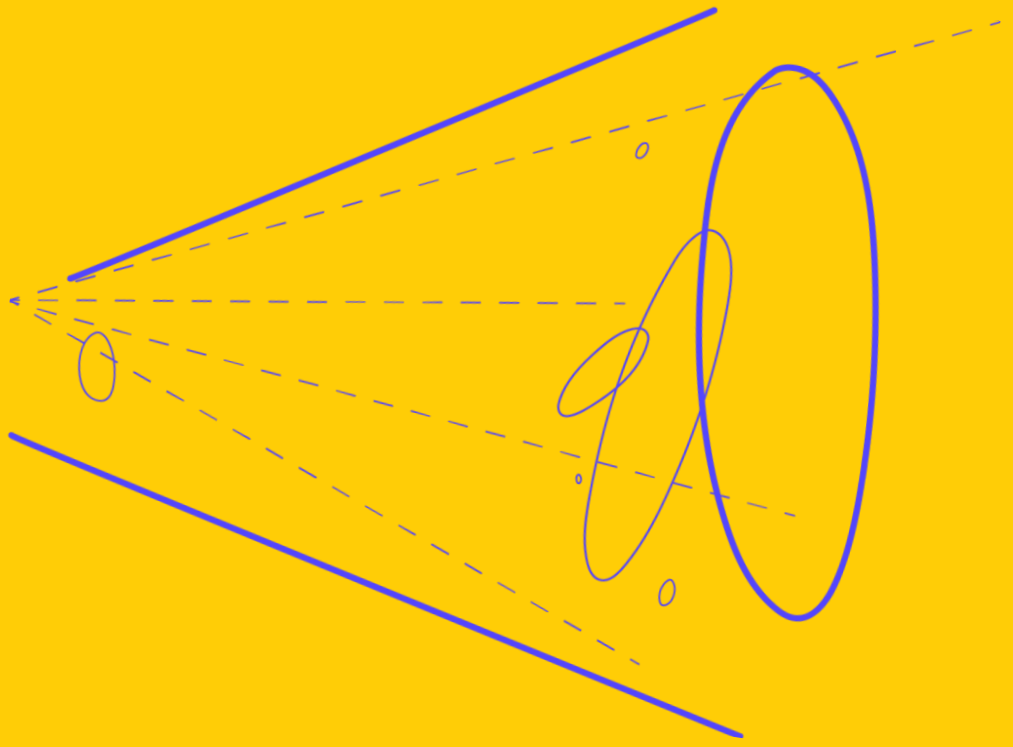
Watch it as you prepare your session to familiarise yourself with the resources and choose the materials that suit your group and chosen route.



Watch a practical walkthrough of the DEMOCRACY FUTURES workshop materials.

ENJOY FACILITATING!

THE YOUTH DECIDE 2040 CONSORTIUM



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