



ACTIVITY TOOLKIT

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1. Introduction

BE WATER helps reducing the environmental impact of youth camps on water basins and empowering the participants and youth professionals as active players in the process and become active agents of change for the camps to maintain ecological balance and preserving biodiversity, providing habitat and sustenance for many species and ensure water resources and quality, through reduced pollution, reduced disruption of the natural water cycle, leave a positive legacy for the environment and society.

The BE WATER Activity Toolkit addresses the engagement of the participants in the camps in the effort to become more sustainable/circular, not having them as passive subjects, but as active agents in the change to bring about. The activity toolkit, through the organisers and those directly interacting with participants, addresses how to empower participants to take on a more active role, involving them in the development of strategies and ideas throughout the whole process from inception to the actual implementation.

While the BE WATER Workbook provides guidance on how to make the design, organization and implementation of camps and their activities more sustainable and reduce the environmental impact, the Activity Toolkit addresses the mobilization of young people as active agents in these processes. Using both results thus provide the highest impact on the sustainability of the involved camps.

The activity toolkit, based on an initial desk research into relevant literature, practices & experiences on youth engagement, developed a survey which aimed to identify the main barriers and challenges related to the envisaged type of participation of young people in all phases of the design and organisation of a (youth) camp. Both youth professionals as well as the young people themselves were surveyed on the topic. Annex I provides an overview of the analysis.

Based upon the identified barriers and challenges and research a set of activities were identified, which those that design, organise and implement (youth) camps, and in particular those in and around water, can use to mobilise and engage their participants. The identified activities are classified according to three types:

1. Goal-oriented engagement activities: How to support young people in setting goals and objectives for the more sustainable and circular camps;
2. Collaborative engagement activities: Empower young people work together and collaborate towards the achievement of the goals set (collaborative engagement);
3. Safe engagement environment related activities: How create the space in which young people feel respected and values and thus participate.

As an extra we also include two more activities which are versatile and can be used in all three settings, depending on the focus and selected topic or theme. These are included after the above three types of activities.

For each activity a short summary is provided on what the goal of the activity; how to prepare and implement the activity, and how to wrap up and/or debrief at the end of the activity. Also any materials that you might need are indicated.

The activities/exercises have a strong practical focus us with hands-on information and tips and tricks.

The Toolkit is available as full downloadable PDF, which includes an overview of the research results first and then outlines the activities, as well as an online resource base where the youth professional can search through the activities using a predetermined set of filters. The online resource base can be accessed through the BE WATER website: <https://2bewater.eu/>.

2. Activities for Goal-Oriented Engagement

The following activities are included:

| | |
|--|---|
| Anti-Pessimism Sheet | Identify pessimistic or negative thoughts that may arise in their daily lives |
| Community Water Mapping | Identify how water is used at camp and how practical improvements can be applied. |
| Futures Wheel | Critically analyse the possible outcomes of a change or decision, exploring both positive and negative effects |
| My Planet of Communication | Reflect on ways of communicating, what participants value in communicating with others, and how they feel when they communicate. |
| Solution Wheel | Reflect on the problem of excessive water use at camp and collectively generate practical ideas to reduce waste. |
| Transect Walk | To collectively observe how water is being used in different areas of the camp (kitchen, showers, wash stations, toilets, shared spaces), |
| Water Footprint Calculator and Action Plan | Raise awareness about daily water usage and to encourage to adopt more sustainable habits. |
| Water-Related Problem Tree | Help participants explore a real problem related to water use at camp or in their community. |

2.1 Anti-Pessimism Sheet

Activity Goal: Help participants identify pessimistic or negative thoughts that may arise in their daily lives (especially in group settings such as a camp) and learn how to reframe them in a more realistic, constructive, or optimistic way.

Preparation: Prepare and give each participant a sheet divided into three columns:

- Column 1: Negative Thought
- Column 2: Is it 100% true?
- Column 3: Realistic/Positive Reframing

You can also write the headers on a whiteboard or on several sheets of paper so everyone can see them while working.

Start of the activity: Explain to the participants that everyone, at some point, has thoughts that discourage them, make them doubt themselves, or prevent them from taking action. This activity aims to identify and transform those thoughts in order to handle them better and act in a more positive way.

An example: Have you ever thought something like "I'm not good at this" or "I'm sure I'll mess it up"? Today we're going to learn how to turn those thoughts around and see them from another, more useful and realistic perspective.

Implementation: Individual work: Hand out the worksheet to each participant. Ask them to think of at least three negative or pessimistic thoughts they've had recently (these can be related to the camp, the group, or something personal), and then write each one in the first column.

To help them, you can give some common examples:

- "I'm not good at this."
- "My opinion doesn't matter."
- "We're definitely going to lose the game."

- “This is never going to work.”
- “I’m just annoying the group.”

Then they have to ask themselves in the second column: Is what I’m thinking 100% true? Or is there another way to look at it?

Finally, in the third column, write a more realistic or constructive version of the thought. Example:

| Negative Thought | Is it 100% true? | Realistic/Positive Reframing |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| “I’m not good at this” | No, I’m just getting started | “I’m learning, and it’s normal to make mistakes.” |
| “No one listens to me” | Sometimes people do hear me | “I can try to find a better moment to speak.” |

Implementation: Group sharing: Invite participants (only if they feel comfortable) to share one example with the group. This helps everyone see that they have similar thoughts and that they can work through them together. You can use prompts like:

- “Would anyone like to share how they transformed one of their thoughts?”
- “Have you ever thought something like this before? What helped you see it differently?”

This builds empathy and normalizes the fact that we all face difficult thoughts sometimes.

Wrap up/debrief: Ask each participant to choose one of their reframed thoughts and commit to remembering and applying it for the rest of the day or the week. You can also invite them to write this positive thought on a card to carry with them or hang it on a group mural.

Here are some reflection questions you can ask them:

- Which thought was the hardest for you to reframe?
- How did it feel to realize you could change it into something more helpful?
- What helps you think more positively?
- What will you do the next time you have a negative thought?

Materials: Paper sheets and pens

2.2 Community Water Mapping

Activity Goal: Collectively identify how water is used at camp, where there are risks or unsustainable practices, and how practical improvements can be applied. The map will serve as a visual tool to help think about realistic actions that participants have already proposed or would like to implement.

Preparation:

- Base maps of the camp (you can use a printed plan or draw one on a poster board)
- Coloured markers
- Stickers, post-its, coloured tape
- Large sheets of paper if no base maps are available
- If no camp plan exists, sketch a basic layout together in 5 minutes

Start of the activity:

Explain to the group that they are going to create a map on which they will mark:

- Water sources: taps, showers, sinks, tanks
- Usage areas: kitchen, bathrooms, showers, common areas
- Risks or problem areas: places where water is wasted, leaks exist, or poor habits are observed
- Possible solutions or improvements: ideas for more sustainable water use



Implementation: Form small groups (3–5 people) and give each group a map or sheet of poster paper. Ask them to:

- Draw or mark water sources
- Use symbols or colours for different uses (e.g., blue for showers, green for kitchen)
- Use another colour to indicate risks or problem areas (e.g., leaks, long showers)
- Finally, place stickers or post-its where they think sustainable actions could be implemented (like shorter showers, turning off taps, etc.).

To help them on the way here are some questions you can use:

- Where do you think the most water is used?
- Are there places where water is being wasted without us realizing?
- Where could you apply your personal action to reduce water use?
- How could we redesign the space to save water?
- Who would need to be involved to make it work better (counsellors, kitchen staff, the group)?

Wrap up/ Debrief: Each group presents their map to the rest of the participants:

- What critical areas did you identify?
- What solutions did you suggest?
- Which action did you find most realistic to implement right away?

You can write down the common or most practical ideas on a large poster or whiteboard.

Individual closing and reflection, Ask each participant to answer in writing or aloud:

- “What water-saving action do I want to implement this week, and in which part of the camp will I do it?”
- “What obstacles might I face and how will I overcome them?”

Materials:

- Camp maps or poster boards,
- Coloured markers,
- Stickers or post-its,
- Tape or magnets to display the maps.

2.3 Futures Wheel

Activity goal: Help participants critically analyse the possible outcomes of a change or decision, exploring both positive and negative effects. This technique fosters systemic thinking, creativity, and collective awareness.

Preparation: The facilitator proposes a clear and realistic change, ideally related to the participants’ daily life (especially relevant in a camp setting).

Examples of camp-related changes:

- “During this camp, bottled water will not be used.”
- “Meat consumption will be reduced in meals.”
- “A non-violent communication policy will be implemented.”
- “Mobile phones will not be used during part of the day.”

Choose a realistic and meaningful change that can generate different opinions or emotions.

Start of the activity: Drawing the Wheel. Write the proposed change in the centre, inside a large circle. Then draw arrows extending from the centre, each pointing to a direct consequence (positive or negative). From those consequences, draw new arrows leading to possible secondary effects. You can go 2 to 3 levels deep, creating a chain of causes and effects like a visual web.

Implementation: This part can be done as a whole group or in smaller subgroups (each with a large sheet).

- a) Immediate Consequences: “What would happen right away if we made this change?”
- b) Second-Level Consequences: “What would happen as a result of those first consequences?”



- c) Future Projection: “How would the life of the group change in the medium or long term?”

Encourage thinking across different areas: environment, relationships, organization, emotions, habits, external impacts, etc.

To help them on the way here are some questions you can use:

- What would we gain from this change?
- What challenges or resistance might arise?
- What new decisions would need to be made?
- Would this change only affect the camp, or also have an impact beyond it?
- What emotions might arise (comfort, discomfort, motivation, resistance...)?

Wrap up/ Debrief: Invite the group to look at the entire consequences wheel and reflect:

- Are there more positive or negative consequences?
- Does this seem like a viable change?
- What would we need to implement it effectively?
- Does this inspire us to take any small real-life action within the group?

Optional individual reflection: Each participant can write down one idea or action they want to take away from this activity.

Materials:

- Large paper (e.g., flipchart), whiteboard, or poster board,
- Markers in various colours,
- Sticky notes (optional, if you want to move ideas around), (Optional)
- Individual sheets for personal reflection.

2.4 My Planet of Communication

Activity goal: Invite participants to reflect on their ways of communicating, what they value in communicating with others, and how they feel when they communicate. Through the drawing of a personal planet, they will be able to identify their communication strengths, limits and needs to improve coexistence and group work.

Preparation & start of the activity: Explain that everyone has a unique way of communicating and that sometimes differences can lead to misunderstandings. This activity invites them to imagine they live on their own “planet,” where communication rules align with their preferences and values.

Here is an example for an introduction: "Imagine that each of you has your own planet where you communicate in the way that feels most comfortable to you. On this planet are the things you value in a conversation, what bothers you, the ways you like to express yourself, and how you like to be listened to."

Implementation: Give each person a blank sheet of paper and drawing materials (markers, coloured pencils, crayons, etc.).

Ask them to draw their “Communication Planet,” representing, for example:

- Preferred languages or modes: (verbal, gestural, visual, artistic...)
- Ways of listening and being listened to
- Planet rules: What is allowed? What is avoided?
- Symbolic elements: walls if they have difficulty expressing themselves, bridges if they connect easily, radars if they're good at picking up others' emotions...
- Key places: listening zones, spaces for silence, corners for speaking without interruptions...

The drawing doesn't need to be “beautiful” or detailed, but it should represent how they feel about communication.

To help them on the way here are some questions you can use:

- How do you prefer to communicate with others?
- Is there something you don't like when talking to someone?



- What do you need to feel listened to?
- What do you do when you see someone is not feeling understood?
- What rules would exist on your planet to avoid conflicts?

Wrap up/ Debrief: Invite anyone who wants to share their planet with the group. Some ways to do this:

- Show the drawing and explain what it represents.
- Create a “gallery” display (everyone hangs up their planets and walks around to view them).
- In pairs: describe the planet to a partner.

To help them on the way here are some questions you can ask the following question: “What did you discover about your way of communicating while making the drawing?”

The reflection can also be done on individual level, in this case you ask each participant to write or say a sentence that summarizes what they discovered about themselves, for example:

- “I’ve realized I need more time to express my ideas.”
- “I really value not being interrupted when I speak.”
- “I want to try listening more without judging.”

Materials:

- Blank A4 sheets or cardstock,
- Coloured pencils, crayons, markers.
- Tape or pushpins to display the drawings (optional)

2.5 Solution Wheel

Activity goal: Invite participants to reflect on the problem of excessive water use at camp and collectively generate practical ideas to reduce waste. This exercise promotes creative thinking, teamwork, and commitment to sustainable habits.

Preparation: Create an open space for the group to gather in a circle or around the paper to be used for the activity.

Start of the activity: Explain the activity using simple words. For example: “Today we’re going to work on an important topic: at camp we use a lot of water — sometimes more than we really need. Together we’re going to think of ways to reduce that use and take care of this precious resource.” Or “We’ll use a visual tool called a solution wheel. In the centre, we’ll write down the problem, and around it, we’ll draw possible solutions.”

In the centre of the sheet, you can write a statement such as for example: “We use too much water at camp” You can add a simple drawing (e.g., a big water drop or a dripping faucet).

Implementation: Brainstorming to build the wheel. Ask participants to draw branches coming out from the central circle. On each one, write down possible solutions.

To help participants generate ideas, ask questions like:

- When do we use the most water here?
- What could we do differently in the showers, kitchen, or when washing things?
- Have you seen any good water-saving practices at home or elsewhere?

Examples of solutions they might suggest:

- Shower only once a day and for a shorter time
- Turn off the tap while soaping up or brushing teeth
- Reuse rinse water to water plants
- Use refillable bottles instead of washing cups constantly
- Report dripping faucets
- Put reminder signs near sinks and showers

Once there are enough ideas, read them all aloud with the group. Then discuss:





- Which ideas seem easiest to do?
- Which ones would save the most water?
- Is there one we could start today?

Wrap up/ Debrief: Each participant chooses **one concrete action** from the wheel to commit to over the next few days. Help them reflect with questions like:

- What idea can you try today?
- What would you need to stick to it?
- How can you encourage others to do the same?

(You can write all the commitments on a shared sheet, or let participants draw/write their own individually.)

Materials: Poster board or large sheet of paper, & coloured markers

2.6 Transect Walk

Activity goal: To collectively observe how water is being used in different areas of the camp (kitchen, showers, wash stations, toilets, shared spaces), identify areas of potential overuse or waste, and reflect on specific ways to improve and reduce unnecessary water consumption.

Preparation: Explain to the group that they will go on an observation walk around the camp to see how water is being used in various places. The goal is to identify practices that could be improved to better care for this valuable resource. You can say something like: “Sometimes we use water without realizing the impact it has. Today, we’re going to pay close attention to what’s happening in our own camp — where water is used, where it might be wasted, and how we can do better.”

Start of the activity: Give each group a sheet of paper or a notebook to take notes. If possible, provide a simple camp map so they can mark their observations. Then divide participants into small subgroups of 3 to 5 people. You can assign specific zones to each group (e.g., showers, kitchen, toilets, common areas) or allow everyone to walk freely through the camp.

Implementation: The ask them to walk around the camp and give them the following instructions:

- Observe where and how water is being used (showers, sinks, kitchen, etc.).
- Take note of places where water might be wasted.
- Identify positive practices that should be encouraged.
- Write down small suggestions for improvement.
- Note down concrete examples of what they see, not just general ideas.

Wrap up/ Debrief: After the walk, gather everyone together. Each subgroup shares their observations:

- What water uses seemed excessive or unnecessary?
- What good practices did you observe?
- What concrete changes would you propose to improve water use in the camp?

You can guide the discussion with questions like:

- Which camp area seems to use the most water?
- What solutions did your group suggest to save water?
- Did you see any ideas you’d like to try at home too?

Then ask each participant to choose one realistic and specific action they can commit to doing this week to help save water.

- Support this step with reflection questions like:
- What is one thing you can start doing today to use less water?
- What do you need to make sure you follow through on that commitment?

Materials: Paper sheets/Notebook and pens or pencils.





2.7 Water Footprint Calculator and Action Plan

Activity goal: It is crucial to raise awareness among young people about their daily water usage—both direct and indirect—and to encourage them to adopt more sustainable habits by creating a personalized action plan in collaboration with their camp organizers. In this activity, participants are invited to reflect on how they use water in their everyday lives, through imaginary scenarios that challenge them to make decisions in situations where water is limited.

Preparation: The activity should begin with an explanation of the water footprint concept: it describes what the water footprint represents and how it is calculated, taking into account both direct consumption (water used in daily activities) and indirect consumption (water used in the production of goods and services).

There are many online resources available to help explain the water footprint, which you can use during your sessions with young people. Here is an example considering both direct and indirect consumption:

- **Direct consumption:** This is the water we use visibly and regularly. For example: taking a shower, brushing our teeth, or washing dishes at camp.
- **Indirect consumption:** This is the water used to produce the things we consume, even if we don't see it. For example: the water used to produce the food we eat (like a hamburger), manufacture our clothes, or even make the plastic bottles we bring to camp.

You can prepare this part in advance using visual resources such as a PowerPoint presentation, an infographic, or a printed handout. Below are some resources you can consult if you'd like to support your explanation:

EN: <https://www.solucionesice.com/en/how-to-calculate-the-water-footprint/>

Start of the activity: Once the concept of the water footprint has been introduced, a discussion is held with the participants, asking them about their daily water habits to encourage reflection on their usage.

If the group has more than 5 people, it is recommended to divide them into smaller groups of 3 to 5 participants. Once the groups are formed, ask them to analyse the water footprint of the camp.

If there is no data available on the camp's water consumption, they can be asked to reflect on their home usage and then extrapolate it to the camp setting.

There are many online tools available to calculate water footprints. Here are a few examples that may be useful for this activity: <https://watercalculator.org/wfc2/>

Implementation: Once the current water footprint has been analysed, participants can be invited to reflect on what measures they would take at camp to reduce their water footprint. If needed, you can offer some examples to inspire them, such as:

- Showering only once a day and for less than 3 minutes.
- Reusing water (for example, to water plants or flush toilets).
- Eating less meat during the camp.

Then, each group selects three actions from the list that they would like to commit to implementing during the camp. They should discuss the potential impact each action could have on the camp's water footprint and prioritize the actions accordingly. Each group then shares their decisions and reflections with the rest of the participants.

Wrap up/ Debrief: A group reflection follows, involving all participants, where they are encouraged to think about:

1. Why did you prioritize some actions over others? Which one do you think would be most effective if everyone at camp did it?
2. What would happen if the entire camp committed to just one action?
3. What might make it difficult to carry out these actions?





4. What would you need in order to follow through?

At the end of the activity, each participant should reflect on their own decisions and express a personal commitment they want to take on. Each person is invited to commit to one specific, realistic, and achievable action related to water use that they will implement over the following week. To support this reflection, you can use guiding questions such as:

- What specific action can you take next week to save water?
- How can you make sure you stick to this commitment throughout the week?

Materials needed:

- Paper or notebooks for groups to write down their answers,
- Pens or pencils (at least one per group),
- Clock or stopwatch to keep track of the activity time.

2.8 Water-Related Problem Tree

Activity Goal: Help participants explore a real problem related to water use at camp or in their community. They'll identify the causes (roots) and effects (branches) of the issue. This activity encourages critical thinking and sets the stage for coming up with realistic solutions in future sessions.

Preparation: Draw a simple tree outline on each poster ahead of time, make sure to include a trunk, roots, and branches.

Start of the activity: You start with introducing the problem to the participants, an example could be "Too much water is being used at camp." The briefly explain what the problem is about by using examples such as long showers, dripping taps, washing dishes with the water running, etc.

You then explain the Tree Metaphor

- The trunk is the main problem.
- The roots are the causes of the problem.
- The branches are the effects of the problem if it continues.

Start of the activity: Split the group into smaller groups (3–5 people). And provide each group with large sheets of paper or poster board (one per group), on which you have already drawn the tree.

Implementation: As each group to analyse the problem and:

1. Write the pre-defined problem in the trunk: e.g. *"Too much water is being used at camp"*
2. Come up with at least 3 roots (causes)
3. Come up with at least 3 branches (consequences)
4. Indicate them to add their ideas to the tree and decorate it if they want

Here are some questions that might help you in case the groups are not advancing (based upon the example problem identified):

- Why do you think we're using more water than we need?
- What habits or rules aren't being followed?
- What could happen if this keeps going all week?
- Who is affected the most?

Wrap up/ Debrief: Each group presents their tree to the rest of the participants. You can hang the trees on the wall so everyone can see. During the presentations, guide them by asking questions like:

- Did any groups have the same roots?
- Were any of the consequences surprising?
- What are some things we could start doing differently?

Then ask everyone to take a moment to think about:



- Which root do you think is most important to change?
 - What's one thing you could personally do to help fix this problem?
- They can write down a short commitment statement or share it out loud.

Materials:

- Large sheets of paper/poster board (one per group),
- Coloured markers,
- Tape (optional).

3. Collaborative Engagement Activities

The following activities are included:

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Role-Play: Water Negotiation | To simulate a negotiation about the use of water resources, representing different interests. |
| Sparkling Moments | To foster self-esteem, group connection, and a positive outlook on personal experiences. |
| The Human Knot | To promote cooperation, non-verbal communication, group problem-solving, and trust. |
| The Marshmallow Challenge | To encourage teamwork, creativity, planning, experimentation, and communication. |

3.1 Role Play: Water Negotiation

Activity goal: To simulate a negotiation about the use of water resources, representing different interests (community members, companies, government, farmers, etc.). This activity helps develop skills in dialogue, empathy, critical thinking, cooperation, and conflict resolution.

Preparation: Prepare for each participant (or small group) a role sheet describing who they are, what they want to achieve in the negotiation, and what they might be willing to compromise on. Some possible roles are:

- Bottling company representative
- Rural area farmer
- Local town resident/family
- Local government representative
- Environmental activist
- Water resources technician
- Observing journalist (optional)

You will need to create a sheet for each role which should include:

- Name of the character or group
- Main goal
- Possible arguments
- Red lines (what they are not willing to compromise)

Start of the activity: Explain that participants will take part in a simulation representing a realistic conflict: how different actors negotiate access to and use of water, a limited resource. For instance, you can say: *"In many parts of the world, there are conflicts over water use. Not everyone has the same priorities: some need it to drink, others to irrigate crops or for factory production. Today, we're going to take on different roles in a negotiation where everyone has valid—but different—interests. The goal will be to find realistic and fair agreements."*

Then give each participant (or small group) their role sheet. Let participants prepare briefly or support them with a quick explanation of their roles.





Implementation: Initiate the negotiation simulation. Set up the space with participants in a circle or at tables, simulating a “community council.” Begin the role-play negotiation. You can act as a neutral facilitator or assign someone to that role.

Tips for facilitating:

- Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.
- Step in if one group dominates or someone is left out.
- Encourage the use of arguments, proposals, and counteroffers.
- Remind everyone that the goal is not to win, but to reach viable agreements.
- You may pause halfway through to allow groups to reassess their strategies.

Wrap up/Debrief End the negotiation with a symbolic vote (Was an agreement reached or not?) followed by a group reflection. Helpful questions for this:

- How did you feel representing your role?
- Was it easy or hard to defend that position? Why?
- Did you hear perspectives you hadn’t considered before?
- What strategies helped in reaching agreements?
- Does this negotiation remind you of any real-life conflict you know?

For a final Individual Reflection ask each participant to reflect on how they behave in conflict or disagreement. Invite them to write or think about these questions:

- What did I learn today about negotiating or talking with people who think differently?
- What can I apply from this experience in real-life situations where there’s a conflict of interests?

Materials:

- Printed role sheets (one per participant or group)
- Optional props to enhance the setting (name tags, signs, hats, etc.)
- Timer or clock

3.2 Sparkling Moments

Activity Goal: To foster self-esteem, group connection, and a positive outlook on personal experiences. Participants will identify and share personal moments when they felt good, useful, happy, or valued — helping reinforce self-confidence and build a climate of mutual appreciation.

Preparation Explain briefly: “We all have moments when we feel special, appreciated, or happy. Sometimes they’re small, but they leave a big impression. Today we’re going to remember and share some of those *bright moments* — situations where you felt proud of yourself, someone valued you, or you simply enjoyed something a lot.”

Start of the activity: Individual reflection: Give each participant a sheet of paper and a pen. Ask them to write down 1 to 3 of their *bright moments*. Here are some helpful guiding questions:

- ¿When was the last time you felt really proud?
- Do you remember a time when you helped someone and felt useful?
- Was there a time in camp (or elsewhere) when someone thanked you for something?
- What was something small that made you really happy recently?
- You can write in the form of a list, single sentences or even drawings if you prefer.

Implementation: Then gather participants in small groups where for about 10 to 15 minutes they share their individual reflections. Each person shares (if they want) one or more of their bright moments. Encourage the group to listen actively, without judgment or interruption. Emphasize that sharing is optional, but respectful listening is required.

Wrap up/Debrief: This can be done on group level or on individual level, or both. In the latter you start with the group reflection before you move on to the individual reflection.

Group Reflection: Come back together as a large group and invite reflection with questions like:

- What was it like to remember those moments?
- Did you learn something new about someone in the group?
- Why do you think it's important to recognize and share these kinds of moments?

Individual closure: Ask each participant to choose one of their bright moments and write it as a sentence they'd like to remember. They can decorate it and keep it as a personal reminder

Materials:

- Paper (one sheet per participant),
- Pens, pencils, or markers,
- Soft background music for the reflection phase (optional),
- Decorative cards or paper for the final sentence (optional).

3.3 The Human Knot

Activity Goal: To promote cooperation, non-verbal communication, group problem-solving, and trust among participants through a playful dynamic where they must work together to solve a physical challenge: untangling themselves without letting go of hands.

Preparation: Make sure that you are doing the activity in a large, safe space where the group can move freely without obstacles.

Start of the activity: Make them form a human knot:

1. All participants, ideally in groups of 6 to 12 people, form a circle.
2. Each person extends their right arm and grabs the hand of someone across the circle (not the person next to them).
3. Then, do the same with the left arm, holding a different person's hand (again, not someone adjacent, and not the same person they already grabbed).
4. Make sure no one holds both hands of the same person or of someone standing right next to them.

Note: It may be helpful to supervise this part to ensure the "knot" is complex enough but still possible to untangle. If the group is too large, divide into smaller subgroups so everyone can participate actively.

Implementation: Once everyone is connected:

- The group must work together to "untangle the knot" by moving, twisting, stepping over or under each other's arms.
- Important rule: No one can let go of the hands they are holding!
- If someone feels physical discomfort or the group gets stuck, allow for pauses or partial restarts if needed.

To make it more challenging, you can impose a no-talking rule during the activity (communication only through gestures).

Wrap up/ Debrief: After completing the challenge, take a few minutes to reflect. You can ask questions such as:

- What helped you solve the problem?
- What difficulties did you encounter?
- Did someone take on a leadership role? Was it helpful?
- How did it feel to work so closely together physically?
- What did you learn about cooperation or communication in the group?

Materials: None.

3.4 The Marshmallow Challenge

Activity Goal: To encourage teamwork, creativity, planning, experimentation, and communication among participants. Through a playful challenge, participants are observed as they collaborate, solve problems, and make decisions under pressure.

Preparation: Distribute the participants in smaller groups of 3 to 5 persons, the ideal number is 4 in a team. Do not create bigger subgroups, as this will not be effective for the exercise.

Start of the activity: Start by explaining that they are about to face a creative team challenge. They will have to build the tallest tower possible using only the materials provided. The marshmallow must go at the very top of the tower.

Here is an example of the explanation you can give: “Today we’re going to build something as a team. You’ll need to construct the tallest tower possible using only spaghetti, tape, string, and a marshmallow. It might sound easy, but there’s one condition: the marshmallow must be at the very top! This challenge will help us discover how we work as a team, whether we plan or improvise, and how we respond when things go wrong.”

Explain the clear rules of the challenge:

- Each group will receive the same materials (you can hand them out in envelopes or bags).
- The tower must stand on its own – it cannot be taped to the table or the floor.
- The marshmallow must be whole and placed at the very top of the tower.
- No other materials may be used apart from what has been provided.
- Teams have exactly 18 minutes to build. You can use a visible timer to keep track.

Make sure everyone understands that the marshmallow cannot be on the side or at the bottom – it must go on top of the tower.

Implementation:

Distribute the materials to each group and start the 18-minute timer.

You can play some background music if you want to create a focused or energetic atmosphere. You can walk around the room and observe how each group is organizing itself:

- Who is taking the lead?
- Are they talking a lot or just a little?
- Are they trying out different ideas or sticking to just one?
- Is anyone being left out?

Wrap up/Debrief: Once the time is up, go around group by group to measure each tower. Only measure towers that are standing on their own with the marshmallow on top. Hold a small symbolic celebration with applause for the tallest tower.

Then, invite the group to reflect with questions like:

- What worked well in your team?
- What do you wish you had done differently?
- Did someone suggest an idea that wasn’t tried? Why not?
- How did you handle mistakes or moments when something fell apart?
- Who planned before building? Who jumped right into it?

Then also ask each participant to reflect on how they worked within the group and what they learned about themselves or teamwork. You can give them these two questions to write about or discuss:

- What role do you usually take when working in a group? How did you feel about that role today?
- What could you try differently next time to collaborate more effectively?

Materials: (per group of 4 people):

- 20 pieces of uncooked spaghetti (unbroken),
- 1 meter of masking tape (uncut),

- 1 meter of string or tape (uncut),
- 1 marshmallow
- Scissors.

4. Safe engagement environment related activities

The following activities are included:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Empathic Listening | Foster active listening skills, empathy, and interpersonal connection. |
| Empathy Mapping | To put yourself in someone else's shoes (real or imaginary), reflecting on what that person might be feeling, thinking, saying, and doing. |
| Externalizing Problems | Create emotional distance from difficulties by separating one's identity from the problem. |
| Observing Body Language | To develop the ability to observe and understand body language, recognizing how emotions and attitudes are communicated without words. |
| The Elephant in the Room | To create a safe space where participants can anonymously express concerns, tensions, misunderstandings, or sensitive issues that are affecting the group. |
| What Can You Teach Me? | Fostering self-esteem, personal expression, and connection among young people through knowledge sharing. |

4.1 Empathic Listening

Activity Goal: Foster active listening skills, empathy, and interpersonal connection. Through this simple yet powerful activity, participants will learn to truly listen to others—without interrupting, judging, or giving advice—and to feel deeply heard themselves. This kind of attentive listening is something that's often missing in today's fast-paced society.

Preparation: Ask participants to pair up. If there's an odd number, someone can observe or help facilitate. They will take turns being the speaker and the listener.

Start of the Activity: We need to understand the difference between hearing and listening. Begin by explaining that many times we listen in order to reply, not to truly understand. This activity aims to change that.

Empathic listening means giving your full attention to what the other person is saying—without interrupting or judging. You can say something like: *"Sometimes, the most valuable thing we can offer someone is simply to listen. Not to interrupt, not to give advice—just to be present."*

Implementation: give the instructions for each turn:

- First, one person speaks for 2–3 minutes about a chosen or suggested topic.
- The other person listens without interrupting, giving advice, laughing or reacting negatively. The listener simply stays present, shows attention through body language, and listens actively.
- Then they switch roles.

Suggested topics to speak about:

- Something that made you happy recently
- Something that worries you or causes doubts
- A time you felt understood—or misunderstood
- What does a good friend mean to you?

Clarify: they don't need to share anything deeply personal. The key is to practice real, non-judgmental listening.

Wrap up/Debrief: Once everyone has had a turn, bring the whole group together for a guided reflection. Ask questions like:

- What was it like to speak without being interrupted?
- How did it feel to listen without giving your opinion?
- What was the hardest part of listening in this way?
- Did you feel understood?
- Do you think we normally listen like this in daily life?

You can write key words or feelings that come up on a board or poster: calm, nervous, surprise, connection, discomfort, etc.

The ask each participant to reflect individually:

- "What are you taking away from this experience?"
- "How could you apply empathic listening in your daily life this week?"

They can write it in their notebook or share it out loud if they prefer.

Materials: Timer or stopwatch (phone works fine)

4.2 Empathy Mapping

Activity goal: Help participants put themselves in someone else's shoes (real or imaginary), reflecting on what that person might be feeling, thinking, saying, and doing. This promotes empathy, active listening, and teamwork—no visual materials are needed.

Preparation: Choose a person or character to explore. You can choose a case yourself or ask the group to suggest one. Some ideas include:

- A classmate who doesn't participate much in group activities.
- Someone new to the group who doesn't know anyone yet.
- A person who broke a rule and got in trouble.
- Someone who seems upset or sad lately.
- An invented profile, like: "Martin, 15 years old, doesn't want to play with the others."

Start of the activity: Start by explaining that we often see what people do or say, but we don't always stop to wonder what they're feeling or thinking inside. This activity will help us imagine and understand different realities.

You can say: "Today we're going to imagine being someone else. We'll try to see the world from their perspective—understanding what they feel, think, say, and do. This is key to improving how we live together, how we support one another, and how we avoid judging without knowing."

Implementation: Work in small groups or as a whole group (depending on size). Ask them to answer these 4 guided questions, either out loud or by writing, one at a time. No visual aids are needed—just structured reflection. Ask one at a time and allow time to think or discuss):

1. What do you think this person is feeling? (e.g., nervous, sad, insecure, lonely, hopeful...)
2. What might this person be thinking on the inside, even if they don't say it? (e.g., "I don't fit in," "I wish someone would talk to me," "I don't know if I'm doing this right.")
3. What kinds of things do they usually say or how do they communicate with others? (e.g., "I don't want to play," "Leave me alone," silence, jokes...)
4. What do they do when they're with the group or during activities? (e.g., hang back, act out, help quietly without drawing attention...)

You can write ideas on a board if needed.

Wrap up/Debrief: Invite the groups (or individuals) to share what they came up with.

Ask questions like:

- Did anything surprise you when imagining their point of view?
- Did this make you think of a real person?
- What could we do as a group to help this person?
- Are we more alike than we think?

Then ask each participant to think of a real person in their life they'd like to be more empathetic or understanding toward.

You can offer these two reflection questions to write down or share out loud:

- What could I do this week to be kinder to someone who might be having a hard time?
- How would things change if, before judging, I tried to imagine how the other person feels?

Materials: None

4.3 Externalising problems

Activity goal: Help young people create emotional distance from their difficulties by separating their identity from the problem. The key idea is: *"You are not the problem; the problem is the problem."* Seeing the issue as something external makes it easier to analyse and face with new strategies.

Preparation & start of the activity: Start by explaining the concept in simple words. You can say something like: "Sometimes we say things like 'I'm a mess' or 'I'm no good at this,' and that makes us believe we are the problem. But a lot of the time, we're just dealing with something difficult. Today we're going to try a different way of looking at our problems: we're going to take them out of our heads and give them a name, so we can observe them better and figure out how to respond."

Ask everyone to think of a problem they've been facing lately. Some examples:

- "I can't concentrate."
- "It's hard for me to talk to others."
- "I always feel like I'm going to fail."

Make it clear that they don't have to share their problem with the group if they don't want to. Ask them to write it down, or make a drawing that represents the problem.

Implementation: Externalise the problem Now invite them to give the problem a creative name, like it's a character, a monster, a shadow, or a figure. Examples:

- "The Chattering Fear"
- "The Screaming Doubt"
- "Mr. You-Can't"

Ask questions like:

- If your problem were a character, what would its name be?
- What kinds of things does it say to you or make you feel?
- When does it usually show up?

They can write the name in big letters on their paper and, if they want, draw or visually represent it (drawing is optional).

Encourage them to describe the "problem-character" on their sheet:

- What does this problem want?
- When does it show up the most?
- How does it try to bother or block you?
- What does it try to stop you from doing?
- What gives it strength?
- What weakens it?

This helps the problem feel less like part of them, and more like *something they can interact with*.



Implementation: Find strategies: Once they've described the problem clearly, it's time to think about how to respond. Use guiding questions such as:

- What can you do when this problem shows up?
- Who could help you face it?
- What could you say or do to this character to take away its power?
- What are you already doing that makes it weaker?

Wrap up/ Debrief: You can share in a group reflection or on individual level. In a group reflection, invite anyone who feels comfortable to share their problem-character with the group, explain how it acts, and what they plan to do to face it. This often creates strong group empathy and a sense of community.

If you do the reflection on individual level, you should ask each participant to write in a corner of their page: *"One thing I can do this week to take power away from this problem is..."* Encourage them to commit to trying that action in the coming days.

Materials:

- Poster board or large sheets of paper,
- Markers, crayons or pens

4.4 Observing body language

Activity Goal: To develop participants' ability to observe and understand body language, recognizing how emotions and attitudes are communicated without words. This activity fosters empathy, active listening, and emotional awareness in everyday interactions.

Preparation: Begin by explaining what body language is and why it's important: Our body speaks too. Sometimes it says things we don't even say with words. In this activity, we're going to practice observing others' bodies to better understand how they feel and what they might be trying to say, even without speaking. Clarify that the goal is not to judge, but to observe with curiosity and respect.

Start of the activity: Divide participants into pairs or trios. One person will act, and the other will observe. If it's a large group, you can have two people act in front of the whole group while the others observe.

Implementation: Ask the "actors" to perform simple, everyday situations, such as:

- Someone upset because they're not being listened to
- A person who wants to join in but doesn't dare
- Someone who is happy because they were chosen for something
- A person who feels left out or insecure
- Two people arguing, but one is trying to calm things down

Then switch roles: those who observed now act, and the actors observe.

If you see the participants struggle, or think they will find it complicated to express a concrete idea, you can create some scenarios and use these.

The instruct the observers to consider the following items and take notes on:

- What is the person's posture like?
- How do they move their hands or arms?
- Where do they look? Do they avoid eye contact?
- What is their facial expression?
- How do they move: quickly, slowly, stiffly, relaxed?
- What emotions do you think they're expressing with their body?
- How did it make you feel to observe that scene?

Wrap up/ Debrief: Ask the group questions to encourage them to share what they noticed: Some helpful questions:

- What body signals caught your attention the most?
- Do you think it's easy to misinterpret how someone feels just by how they move?





- Has it ever happened to you that someone misunderstood how you felt because of your body language?
- How can we use this skill in daily life to improve communication?

The invite each participant to reflect on individual level:

- What could you do next time you think someone looks sad, upset, or uncomfortable just from their body language?
- And you—what does your body show when you're nervous, happy, or uncomfortable?

They can write a brief answer in their notebook or share it in a circle if they feel comfortable.

Materials:

- Observation sheets (plain or with the guiding questions),
- Pens or pencils,
- Timer or phone if you want to limit scenes to 2–3 minutes.

4.5 The Elephant in the Room

Activity goal: To create a safe space where participants can anonymously express concerns, tensions, misunderstandings, or sensitive issues that are affecting the group. This activity helps to identify the “elephants in the room” so they can later be discussed respectfully and constructively.

Preparation:

- Small pieces of paper or post-it notes (at least one per participant)
- Pens or pencils (one per participant)
- A closed box, jar, or container
- A quiet and calm space for the group discussion

Make sure everyone understands the papers are anonymous — this is key to building trust.

Start of the activity: Clearly explain the metaphor to the group: “Sometimes there are things that everyone notices but no one says out loud. It could be a conflict, an uncomfortable feeling, something that keeps happening, or just a worry. We call this ‘the elephant in the room’ — something big that’s clearly there, but everyone pretends not to see.”

Implementation: Anonymous writing: Ask each participant to think of an ‘elephant’ they perceive in the group, the camp, or the activity. It could be:

- An unresolved conflict or tension
- A recurring uncomfortable behaviour
- A situation people avoid talking about
- Something they feel is being left unsaid

Important: Remind them to write without naming individuals or offending anyone:

- “I feel like some people’s voices are not being heard.”
- “There’s tension between two people, and we don’t know how to act.”
- “There’s an issue with cleanliness that nobody talks about.”

Once they finish, they fold their paper and place it in the container.

Wrap up/Debrief: The facilitator (or a trusted person) opens the box and reads each note aloud, one at a time. After each reading, allow a brief group discussion with prompts such as:

- Does this ‘elephant’ feel familiar to us?
- How might we address this issue together?
- What can we do to help the group function better?

Remember: The goal is not to point fingers, but to find shared solutions. If there are many similar notes, you can group related topics and prioritize the most urgent ones.

Then ask the participants to reflect individual on the following:

- How did I feel hearing these ‘elephants’?
- Can I commit to something small to improve the group atmosphere?



You can close with a sharing round where each person offers one idea or action to improve coexistence — only if they feel comfortable doing so.

Materials:

- Small papers or post-its (at least one per person),
- Pens or pencils,
- A closed box, jar, or container,
- A calm space for group discussion.

4.6 What can you teach me?

Activity goal: Fostering self-esteem, personal expression, and connection among young people through knowledge sharing. Each participant teaches the group a simple skill they know and can explain or practice in just a few minutes. This activity reinforces the idea that we all know something valuable and that we can learn from one another, regardless of age, experience, or educational level.

Preparation: Explain to the group that everyone will have the opportunity to **teach a simple tip or skill** to the others. It doesn't have to be anything elaborate—just something practical or interesting that they enjoy or know how to do well.

You can say: Do you remember the saying “you learn something new every day”? We all know something that someone else doesn't. It could be a trick, a game, a craft, a recipe, a breathing technique, a word in another language... Today, we're going to share those things.

Here are some examples which can help you spark the reflection of the participants:

- How to make a paper figure (basic origami)
- A greeting in sign language
- A short song or a popular trend
- A creative way to tie your shoelaces
- How to give a hand massage
- A card or coin trick
- How to introduce yourself in another language
- How to relax your mind in 30 seconds

Important: Emphasize that they don't need to be experts—just share something they know and would like to teach.

Start of the activity:

- If the group is large, divide them into smaller groups of 4 to 6 people.
- Give them about 5 minutes to think about what they'll teach and prepare if needed.
- Each person will have 2–5 minutes to explain their skill to the group.
- Let them know that some skills may require materials (if applicable), but the focus is on sharing—not on a perfect demonstration.

Implementation: Each participant briefly introduces themselves and explains or demonstrates their skill. The rest of the group tries it out, repeats and/or asks questions. If time allows, groups can rotate or do a round of “surprise skills” to share something improvised.

Wrap up/ Debrief: After the presentations, hold a group discussion to share insights and experiences. Some questions that might help the reflection are:

- What skill did you learn today that you liked?
- Did you realize you know more than you thought?
- How did it feel to teach something to others?
- What did you learn about the people in your group?
- Do you think you could use any of these skills again?



Materials: None specifically. Optional materials may come up depending on the skills (paper, cards, music, small objects...), paper and pens in case someone wants to write down what they learned.

5. Two more activities

The following activities are included:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Brainwriting | Encourage collective creativity and equitable participation among all young people, while avoiding the pressure of speaking out loud |
| Five Minutes Writing | Encourage free and spontaneous expression of ideas, thoughts, or emotions without worrying about spelling or structure. |

5.1 Brainwriting

Activity goal: Encourage collective creativity and equitable participation among all young people, while avoiding the pressure of speaking out loud. Through silent writing and collaborative work, multiple ideas are generated, participants build on each other's contributions and listening and cooperation skills are strengthened..

Preparation: Explain to the group what brainwriting is. You can use this explanation: "Sometimes, in a brainstorming session, some people talk more while others don't feel confident enough to participate. Today we're going to do something different: we'll write our ideas in silence, and then pass them to someone else to continue or improve them. This way, every voice matters, and together we can build much richer ideas."

Then give each participant a blank sheet of paper and a pen or pencil.

If you prefer, you can use a template with three columns:

Column 1: Initial idea

Column 2: What would you add?

Column 3: Final comments

Start of the activity: Present the question or challenge. Pose a clear question or challenge that is relevant to the group. Examples:

- What could we do to use less water at camp?
- What ideas do we have to improve group harmony?
- What new activities could we propose for the next group day?

It's essential that everyone works on the same topic.

Implementation: First round – Silent writing: Each person writes 1 or 2 ideas on their sheet. It can be a solution, a proposal, an improvement, etc. There are no wrong answers. Important: Emphasize that it's not about writing "perfectly," but about freely expressing ideas.

Second round: Exchange of sheets: After a few minutes, everyone passes their sheet to someone else (this can be done in a circle or randomly). The new person reads the written idea and adds something new:

Improve the proposal

- Make a variation
- Add a benefit or precaution
- Ask a question to help refine it

Repeat the process about 3 times, until each sheet has been through several hands.



Wrap-up/Debrief: Each participant gets back their original sheet, now enriched with others' input. Ask them to read what others have written and choose the idea they find most useful or creative. Then, you can invite volunteers to share some of these ideas with the group.

- Close with a short group conversation using questions such as:
- What did you think about writing instead of speaking?
- Were you surprised by what others added to your idea?
- What did we learn about working as a team without talking?
- What could we do with all these ideas? How can we turn them into action?

Materials:

- Sheets of paper (1 per participant)
- Pens or pencils
- Timer or clock to manage the time (optional)

5.2 Five Minutes Writing

Activity goal: Encourage free and spontaneous expression of ideas, thoughts, or emotions without worrying about spelling or structure. This technique helps unlock creativity, identify key ideas, hidden emotions, or personal perspectives on a specific topic. It can also serve as a starting point for discussions, group activities, or deeper reflection processes.

Preparation Assign a specific topic depending on the group's context. Here are three ready-to-use examples (choose one per session):

- "How do we use water at camp and what could we do better?"
- "A moment when I felt heard or ignored in a group"
- "What small change can I make to take better care of the planet?"

You can also adapt the topic to an emotion, a lived experience, or a group reflection.

Start of the activity: Explain the instructions in a simple way: *"We're going to write nonstop for 5 minutes. The most important thing is not to make it perfect or pretty. What matters is that you don't stop writing, even if you're not sure what to say. If you feel stuck, write about that. The key is to let your thoughts flow, without censorship."*

Remind them:

- Don't lift your pen for 5 minutes.
- It doesn't matter if words are repeated, if it doesn't make sense, or if you go off-topic.
- You can write in full sentences, lists, random phrases—whatever comes out.
- Don't worry about spelling or being "correct."

Implementation: Read the chosen topic aloud and start the timer and let them know when to begin and when to stop. Create a calm, interruption-free environment.

Wrap-up/debrief: After these 5 minutes, you can suggest that they:

- Share a sentence or idea if they feel comfortable.
- Underline what surprised them most or what made them think.

Reflect as a group with questions like:

- How did it feel to write nonstop?
- Did any unexpected ideas come up?
- What did you discover about yourself or the topic?

You can use this reflection as a stepping stone for a deeper activity, such as a discussion, a creative exercise, or a group commitment.

Materials:

- Paper or notebooks (one per participant)
- Pen or pencil
- Timer or stopwatch (a phone works fine)



6. Some reflections on how to use the toolkit

The activities included in the toolkit can be used at different stages in the design, preparation and implementation of the camps.

6.1 Getting Started

By combining the present toolkit with the BE WATER workbook, the impact is multiplied. The Workbook helps in designing the sustainable camp framework, while the toolkit provides the activities to mobilise participants within that framework.

Be reminded that the core goal of the toolkit is to empower young people as active agents of change rather than just passive participants. This mindset is crucial and having it present at all times will help you select and facilitate the activities.

6.2 Selecting the right activity

The BE WATER toolkit's structure is intentional, designed to address specific barriers to youth engagement. The three types of activities can be combined in different ways, to think carefully about what type of activities are needed based upon the reality and characteristics of the camp and the young people involved. Choose with intent.

- **Goal-Oriented Engagement Activities:** These are best used in a context where the support of the group is needed to analyse a problem, set objectives, and envision solutions.
- **Collaborative Engagement Activities:** Are the most appropriate ones if building teamwork, communication, and collective problem-solving skills are key in a specific setting.
- **Safe Engagement Environment Activities:** Start with these if the group is new or needs to build trust and mutual respect.

For a deeper impact, sequence activities logically. A good option is to start with a Safe Environment activity to build trust, move to a Goal-Oriented activity like the Water-Related Problem Tree to define a challenge, and then use a Collaborative activity to work on the solutions identified.

The two "extra" activities, Brainwriting and Five Minutes Writing, are highly versatile. Keep these in your back pocket to spark creativity, gather quick feedback, or fill a spare moment productively.

6.3 Maximise impact

Each of the included activities includes a section on "Debriefing and Questions". This is one of the most critical steps. It allows participants to reflect on the experience, connect it to real-world issues, and internalise the key learnings.

The ultimate goal of the BE WATER Activity Toolkit is to empower young people. As an advanced trick, after participants become familiar with the toolkit's structure, they can be trained to facilitate some of the simpler activities themselves, truly shifting them into the role of active leaders.

7. Concluding remarks

The BE WATER Activity Toolkit has been developed to empower youth camp participants, transforming them from passive subjects into active agents of change for environmental sustainability. While the accompanying BE WATER Workbook guides the sustainable design of camps, this toolkit focuses specifically on mobilising young people in those efforts. The combined use of these resources is intended to create the highest possible impact on camp sustainability.

Based on research into the barriers and challenges of youth engagement, the toolkit is structured around three core types of activities:

- **Goal-Oriented Engagement Activities:** These help young people set sustainability goals and objectives, using tools like the Community Water Mapping, Futures Wheel, and Water-Related Problem Tree to analyse water use and envision solutions.
- **Collaborative Engagement Activities:** These empower participants to work together through exercises such as the Role Play: Water Negotiation, The Human Knot, and The Marshmallow Challenge, which foster teamwork, communication, and collective problem-solving skills.
- **Safe Engagement Environment Activities:** These focus on creating a space where young people feel respected and valued, using methods like Empathic Listening, Empathy Mapping, and The Elephant in the Room to build trust and mutual understanding. Additionally, two versatile activities, Brainwriting and Five Minutes Writing, are included to foster creativity and expression across different contexts.

Each activity is presented with a practical, hands-on focus, outlining its goal, preparation, implementation steps, and debriefing questions, along with a list of any required materials.

In conclusion, this toolkit provides a curated collection of practical, user-friendly activities designed to effectively engage and empower young people, helping them take an active and collaborative role in making their camps more sustainable and environmentally conscious.

8. Annex I: Research results

A total of 11 publications and 11 practices or practical cases which focussed on mobilising and engaging young people in activities related to empowering youth for sustainability, were analysed during the desk research phase. These gave valuable insights and input for the development of the field work, which drilled into the barriers and challenges the organisers and youth professionals involved in (youth) camps face when engaging and empowering young people to be an active part in all phases related to the design, organisation and implementation of camps (and their activities).

The main insights from the desk research phase were:

Supporting factors:

- Holistic approach to engagement & empowerment for sustainability across the whole organisation in charge of the camp.
- Good knowledge about the young people/participants to be involved in the process and taking into account their ages and levels of maturity.
- Community-oriented and constructive, active-learning approach.
- Place-based approach & action oriented strategies.
- Address leadership roles & capabilities.
- Importance of the role of mentors & role models.
- Self-esteem & self-belief among the young people to be involved.
- Ensure the young people have the knowledge and skills needed to be active agents and cooperate with peers and the camp organisers.
- Engagement & involvements as part of personal & collective well-being.

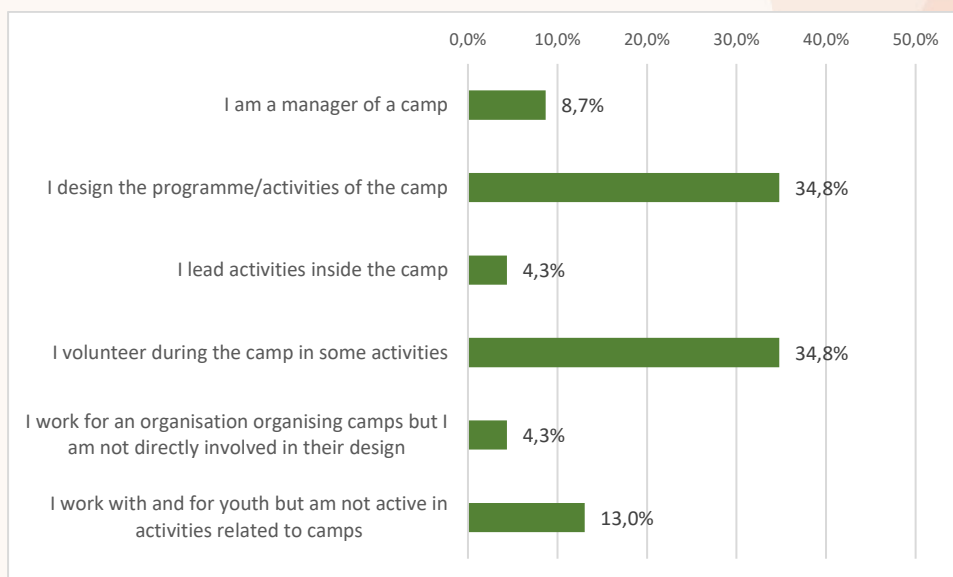
Hindering factors:

- Lack of knowledge among youth professionals.
- Limited resources.
- Insufficient support from institutions both on the side of making the camps more sustainable as well as involving young people in all phases,
- Financial constraints,
- Cultural and social barriers to youth participation and engagement.
- Insufficient training for professionals on youth engagement.
- Limited program time.
- Resistance to change.
- Insufficient support from parents.

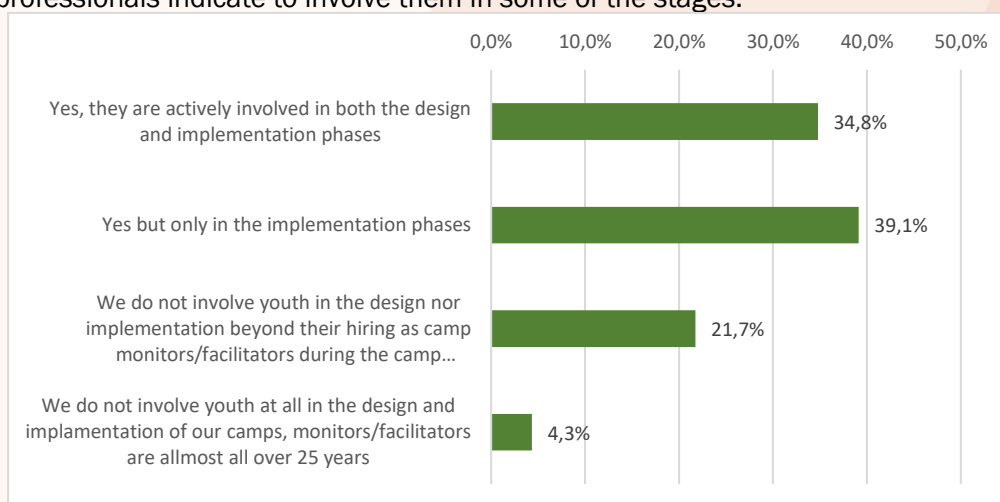
The survey questions were designed bearing in mind the input and outcomes from the desk research, and asked similar questions to both the youth professionals as well as the young people themselves with the aim to identify specific gaps or different views and perceptions with regards to the barriers and challenges for youth engagement in the domain.

Survey with youth professionals

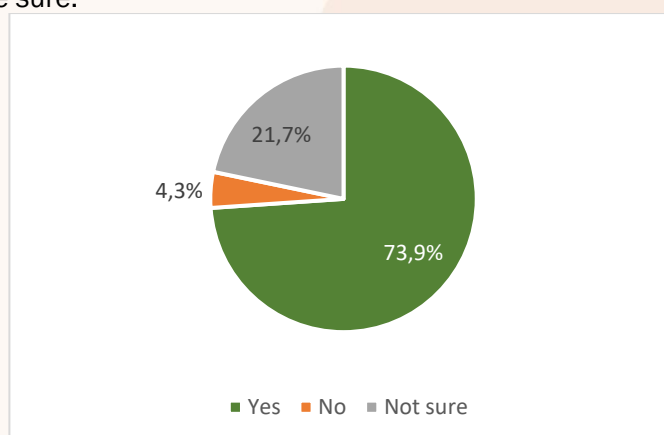
A total of 23 professionals participated in the survey, with mixing roles within the design and organisations of camps. This mix ensures that the different perspectives from the different roles are properly reflected in the outcomes.



When asked about the level of engagement and involvement of young people directly in the design and implementation/execution of the camp and its activities, most of the professionals indicate to involve them in some of the stages.

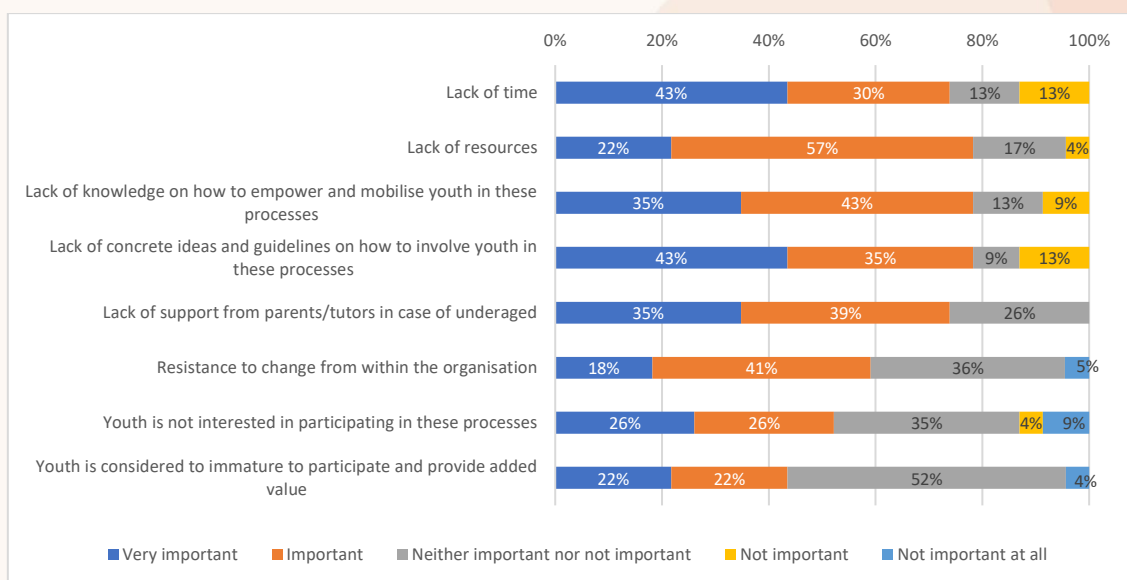


A majority of the surveyed professionals considers it important to involve young people in the planning and implementation of the camps and their activities, but an important number indicates not to be sure.



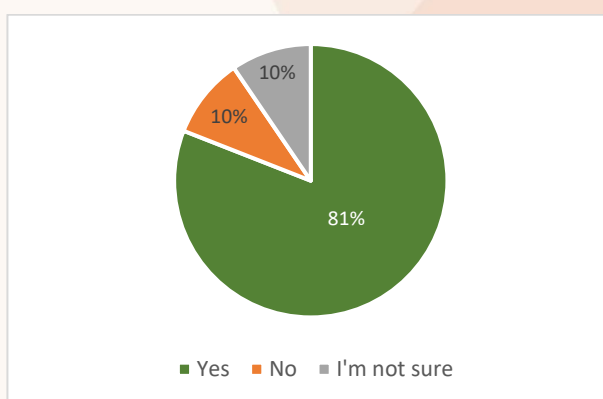
What calls the attention is the fact that the professionals who consider that young people should not be involved is lower than the one from the young people themselves who consider they should not be involved: 4,3% of the professionals against 10% of the young people themselves (see below).

When asking about the challenges and barriers the professionals perceive with regards to the engagement and involvement of young people in the different stages of design, organisation and implementation of camps, highlights that the ones perceived as (very) important are in first place, the lack of concrete guidelines, the lack of knowledge on how to empower and the lack of recourse, followed by a lack of time and perceived support from parents.

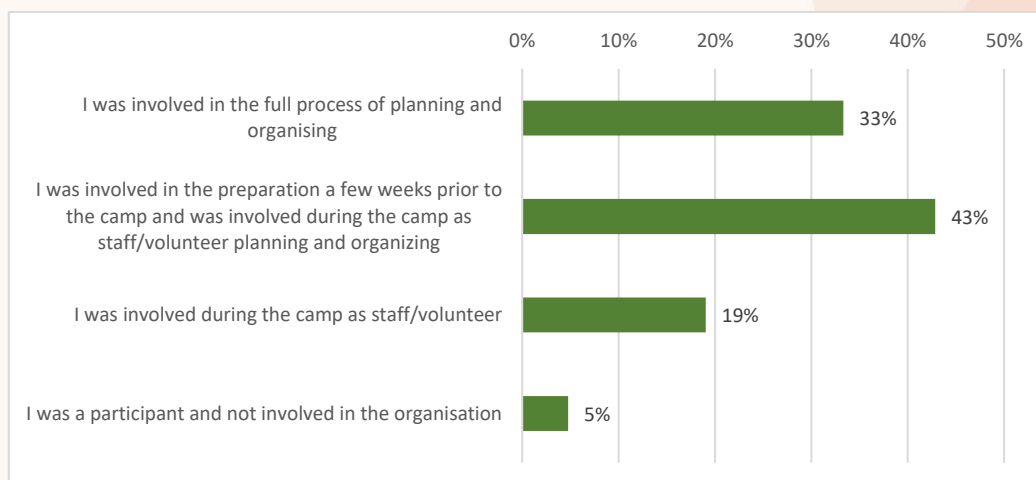


Survey with youth

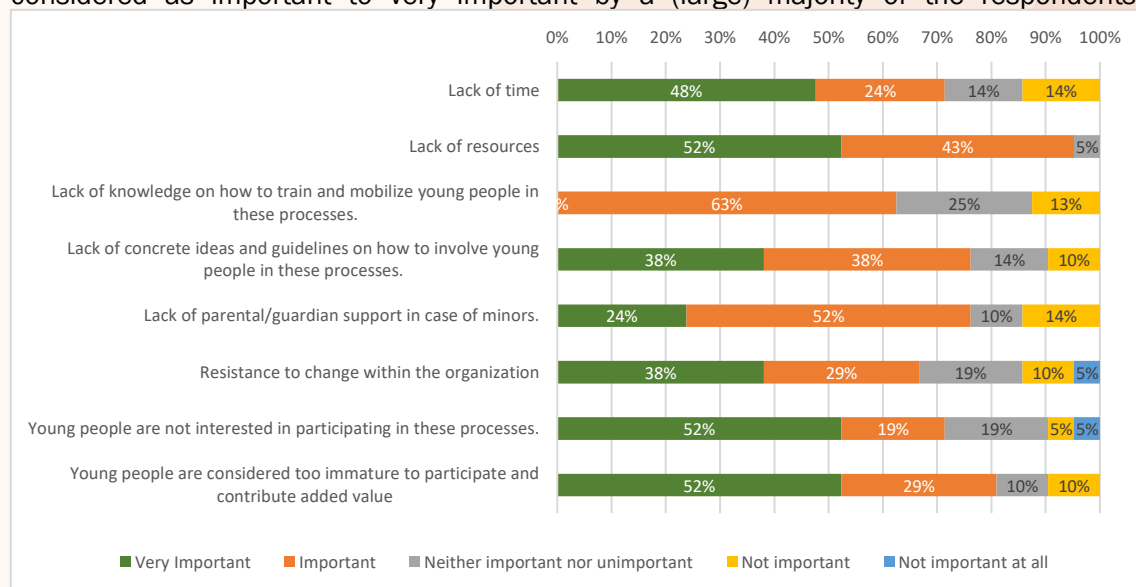
A total of 21 young people participants in the survey. The large majority of young people consider it important to involve young people in planning and implementing camps and its activities.



From the surveyed youth the majority indicated to have been involved to some level in the preparation stages, either in the full process or at least some weeks prior to the celebration of the camp. This adds on validity to the replies on what they feel are the barriers and challenges as these are based upon their own experience.



When looking at the perceptions regarding the importance of the challenges or barriers related to involving youth (more) in the design and implementation of youth camps and their activities, it is clear that in the perception of young people themselves the main barriers and challenges are related to the lack of knowledge of the professionals/camp organisers followed by the lack of resources and the consideration that young people are too immature or are not interested (in the perception of the professionals and camp organisers). Barriers considered as important to very important by a (large) majority of the respondents.



Conclusions

When looking at the most important barriers and challenges as perceived by both the youth professionals and the young people themselves, it calls the attention there is an agreement with regards to the lack of knowledge of the professionals/camp organisers followed by the lack of resources, which confirms the need for providing proper resources on how to involve, engage and empower young people.

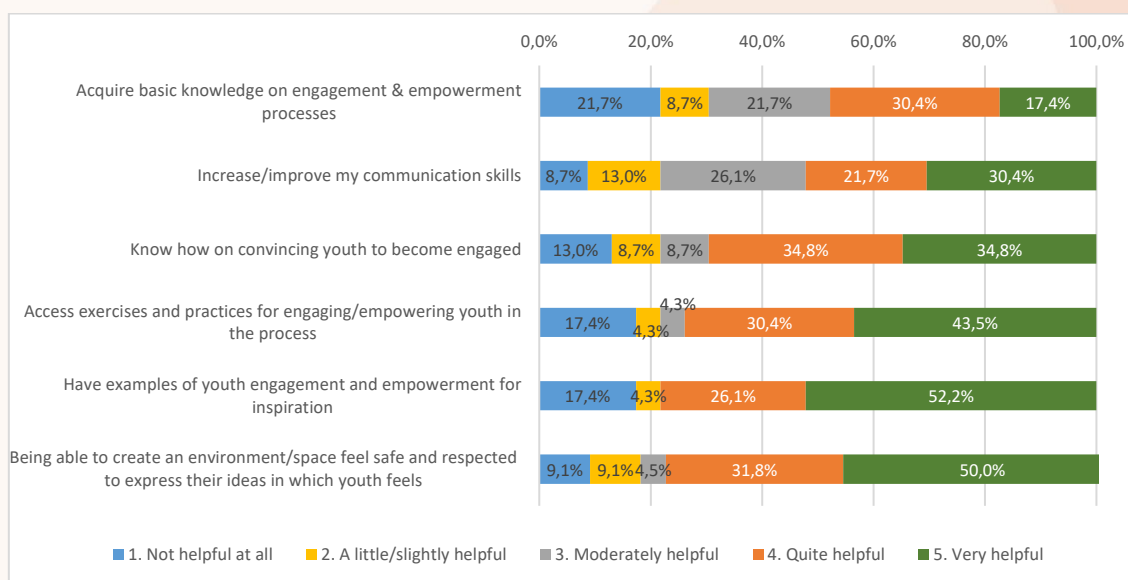
The youth professionals are more concrete in this regards and further indicate the lack of concrete guidelines, which confirms that a focussed approach as proposed in the Activity Toolkit is the most adequate one.

What is relevant to highlight is the fact that the professionals do not consider that young people are not interested or are too immature or consider that this is not a barrier for engagement, while young people think that the professionals consider them to be not

interested or too immature. Expectations are that through collaboration and working together to make the camps more sustainable this perception might change, still it is important to include activities that generate mutual understanding as part of the engagement efforts.

To know what kind of resources youth professionals consider helpful in engaging and empowering young people and overcome the barriers identified, some of the resources stand out as considered quite of very helpful by the professionals (close to or over 70%):

1. Being able to create an environment/space feel safe and respected to express their ideas in which they feel;
2. Examples of youth engagement and empowerment for inspiration;
3. Access exercises and practices for engaging/empowering youth in the process.
4. Know how on convincing youth to become engaged.



Based upon the above analysis, the proposed approach for the Activity Toolkit is not put the emphasis on the resources as per design and development stage of the camp (i.e. ideation; implementation & closure), as initially planned in the proposal, but put the focus on

4. How to support young people in setting goals and objectives for the more sustainable and circular camps (goal-oriented engagement);
5. Empower young people work together and collaborate towards the achievement of the goals set (collaborative engagement);
6. How create the space in which young people feel respected and values and thus participate actively (safe engagement environment);

The activities/exercises have a strong practical focus us with hands-on information and topics and tricks.