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Participatory learning of students on their involvement in civil society development – a case study of the HEIsCITI project

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1. Theoretical background
2. Case study
3. Main findings
4. Preliminary conclusions



HEIsCITI - HEIs as Innovative Triggers of Sustainable Development in European Cities in Post Covid-19 era



HEIsCITI

HEIs as Innovative Triggers
of Sustainable Development
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participatory learning

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-glossary/glossary/participative-learning-participatory-learning>

Principles

- Collaboration
- Engagement
- Shared Responsibility

Benefits

- Enhancing Engagement and Motivation
- Improving Knowledge Retention
- Fostering Collaborative Skills

Challenges

- Navigating Resistance to Change
- Ensuring Inclusivity and Equity
- Varying learning paces

Theoretical Background / Practical Approach

instructional model promoting the active engagement of participants in the learning process, using various didactic strategies and techniques, such as group discussions, peer learning, role-playing games, observation of the learning object, use of learning outcomes in daily and professional life, evaluation of the learning action.



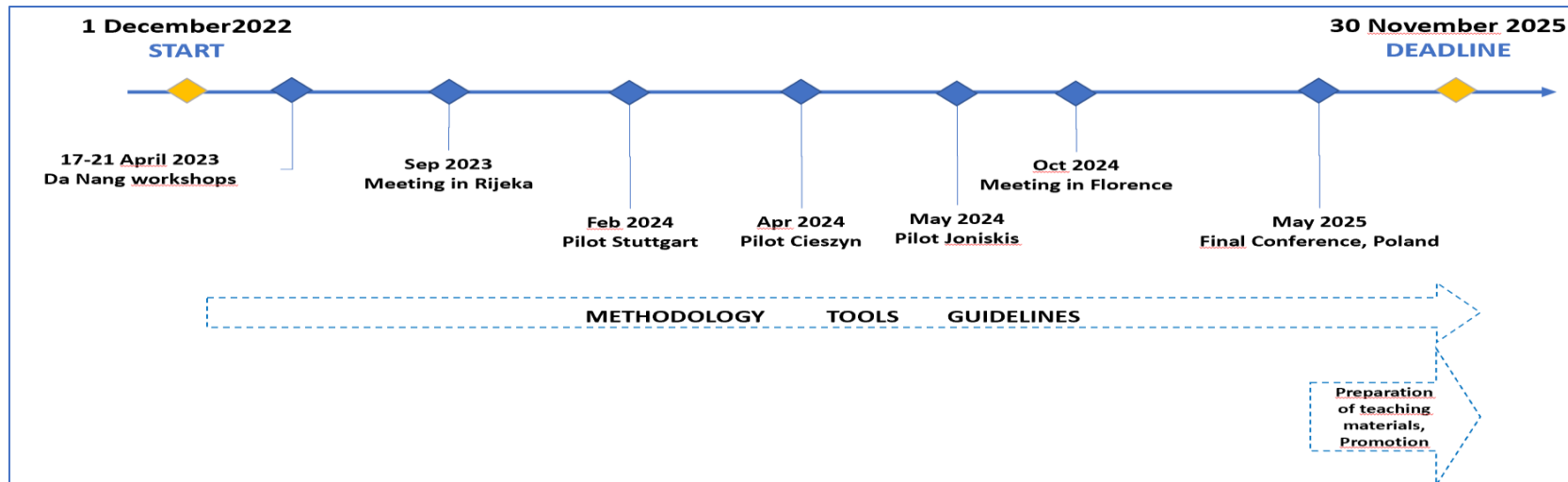
<https://advancetitan.com/spotlight/2023/10/04/uw-system-calls-for-civic-engagement-among-students>

Key Message:

Both participatory learning and civic engagement are crucial for transition of young people into active citizens equipped to contribute positively to their communities.

The HEIsCITI project focuses on designing, testing and validating universal curricula (methodology and teaching tools) for academic and secondary school courses to teach students how to animate, coordinate, and contribute to communication between citizens and local authorities for inclusive and sustainable urban development in the post-COVID-19 era.

- Program: Erasmus+Cooperation partnerships in higher education
- Project ID: KA220-HED-96EB51E1



Project Methodological Approach

1. Diagnosis

Social trends after the COVID-19 pandemic - youth

- social isolation (real world replaced by virtual world)
- little interest in local affairs
- lack of motivation for social involvement
- lack of knowledge and skills facilitating social participation



Challenges for local governments involving youth in action

- identifying the need for dialogue with young people;
- finding common language with young people;
- encouraging young people to get involved in participatory activities
- preparing local government employees for dialogue with young people



2. Designing solutions

- a set of activities and participation tools for students and pupils
- guidelines for local governments establishing dialogue with young people using selected participatory tools



3. Testing and validating solutions

- piloting participatory learning of students at universities in Poland, Lithuania and Germany
- further optimisation of solutions in cooperation with non-academic partners from Croatia, Italy and Vietnam



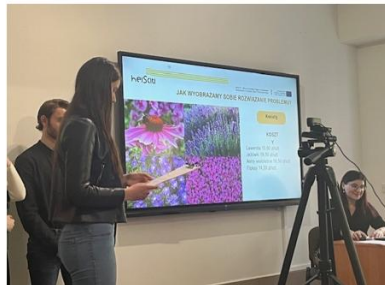
4. Project Results – November 2025

- secondary schools and universities – tools for effectively participatory learning of students to engage in local affairs effectively
- local governments – tools for building dialogue and participatory approach of young people in local affairs

Problem Based Learning Model



Pilot action / WSB University, Cieszyn, Poland (II-V 2024)



Case Study

Educational approach:

Problem based learning

**40-hour course: 15-h lecture and 25-hour workshop;
plus 10-hour of individual students work – 2 ECTS**

Educational method: **Problem Based Learning**

Participatory tools:

**walk&talk,
observations,
interviews,
brainstorming,
Charette workshop**

Problem:

***Boosting abandoned areas – co-creation of
revitalization projects***

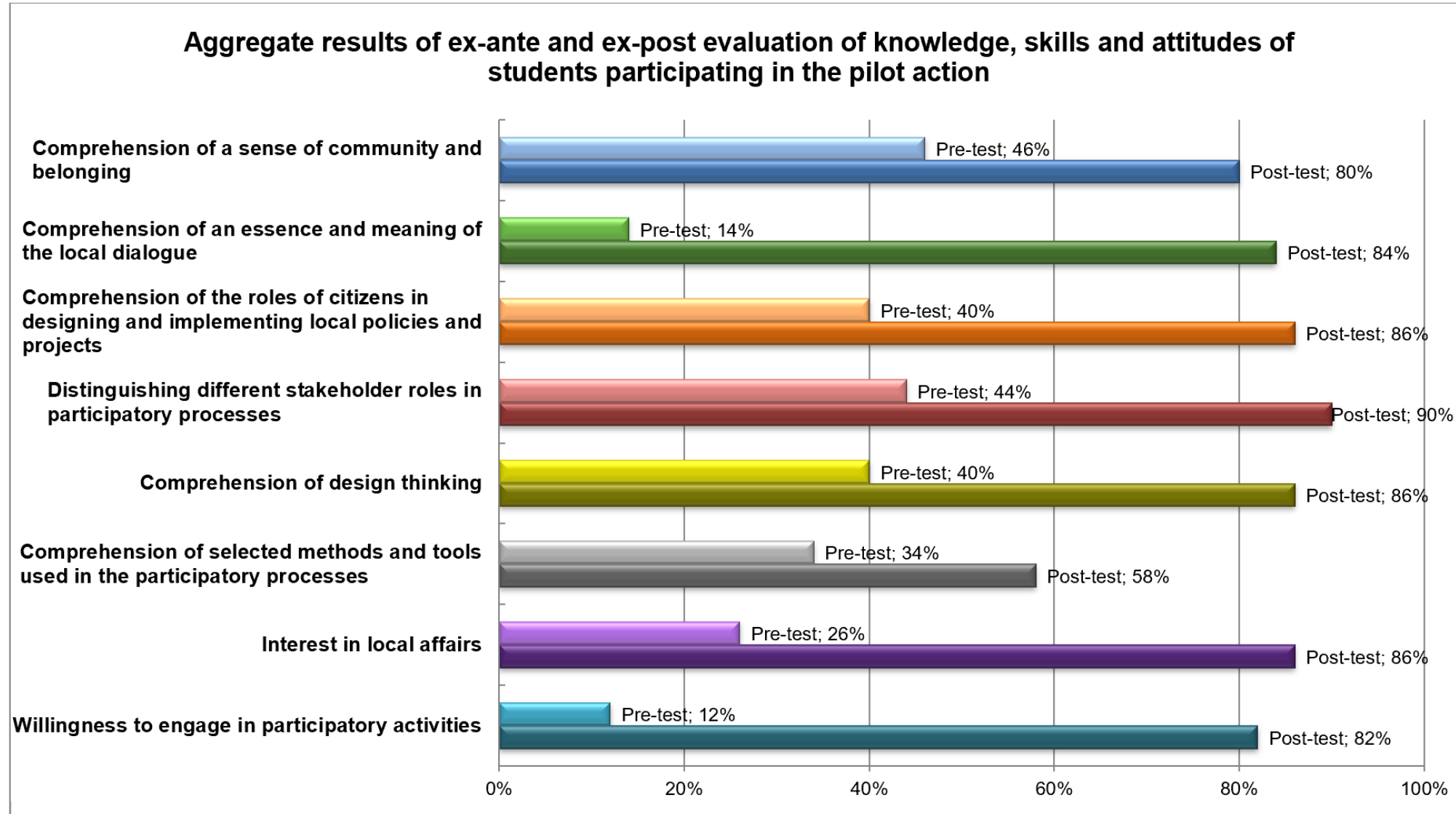
Process:

**50 students, 2 teachers,
10 external stakeholders** – representatives of self-
government, SMEs, NGOs, local community

– correlations among topics & educational/participatory tools implemented within 3 pilot actions: Poland, Germany, Lithuania

topic \ tool	Storytelling	Stakeholders map	Walk & talk	Persona	Interviews	Observations	SWOT analysis	Charette workshop	Brainstorming	Prototyping
Civic Engagement		+	+		+	+			+	
Co-designing		+	+	+			+	+	+	+
Information, Consultation and Co-decision-making process	+		+					+		
Ethics and Responsibility				+	+	+				
Inclusion		+	+	+		+		+		+
Communication & Media		+		+						
Intergenerational Dialogue	+	+						+		
Social Activation			+	+	+	+		+	+	
Revitalisation		+	+				+			+
Resistance to Crises				+			+			+

– progress in knowledge and skills of students participating in the pilot action in Poland



Providing students with good conditions for participatory learning is a very challenging and demanding process. It exceeds standard learning requirements therefore students should be motivated well to participate in this process.

This is particularly true when the teacher has to design curricula first. And then introduce a new course, considering several iterations and constant improvements. It requires outstanding competencies and creativity of teachers.

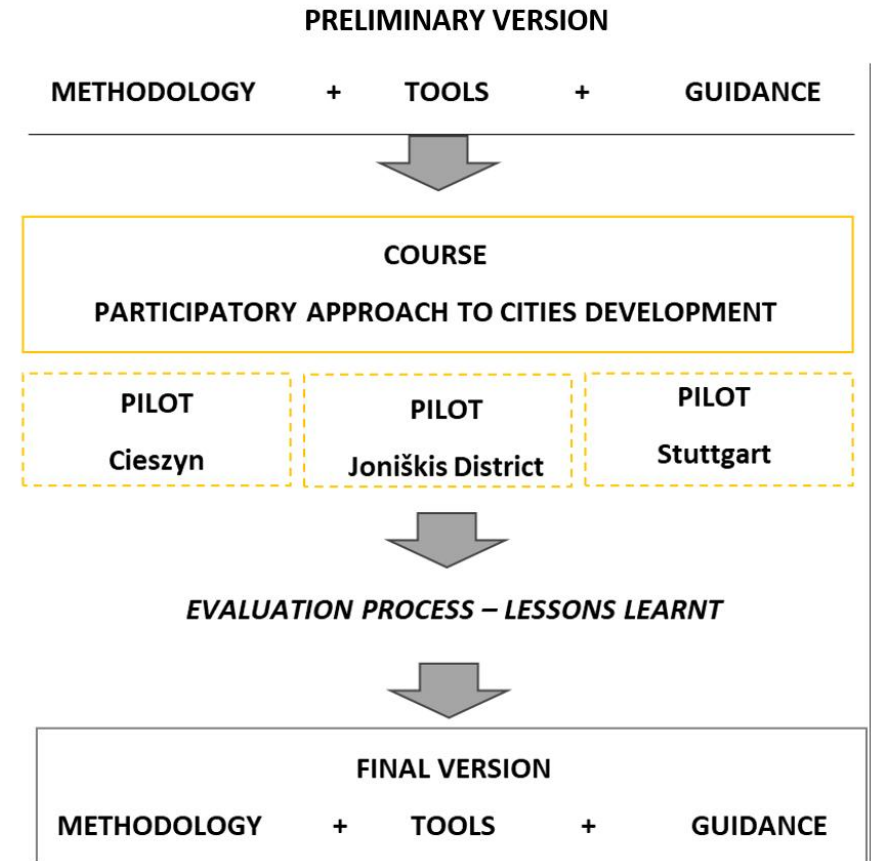
Participatory learning connected with socially-driven challenges for students also require efficient cooperation with external stakeholders who are challenge owners, usually.

Therefore, in this educational project, manuals both for teachers and external stakeholders are being prepared, tested and validated together, providing a multi-dimensional view and assessment.

The final version of the project outcomes (manuals) will be approachable at the project website in December 2025.

More information: <https://wsb.edu.pl/heisciti/about-the-project>

Preliminary conclusions



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Thank you for your attention!

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