



Widespread
School

TOOLBOX

*Widespread Education: Exploring Education
Outside the Classroom in Europe*



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Authors

Reggio Children Foundation: Benedetta Melloni, Camilla Cadice, Annalisa Liuzzi, Eloisa Di Rocco

Saunalahti School: Suvi Puronsuu, Katja Lappi

Carme Auguet School in Girona: Laura Serrats, Eva Rodríguez

City of Zadar: Ana-Marija Tahija Jurjević, Anita Šimac

Municipality of Reggio Emilia:

Michele Campanini, Michela Casamassima, Roberta Vizzari, Manuela Magistro, Francesca Tagliavini

University of Girona: Moises Esteban-Guitart, Alfredo Jornet, Edgar Iglesias, Àdam Bertran Martínez

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia: Chiara Bertolini, Paola Damiani, Laura Landi, Erica Biagini





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HOW TO USE THE TOOLBOX

The Toolbox **supports teachers in conducting education outside the school**, involving various professionals such as educators, teachers, and cultural experts. This innovation requires more than individual effort from teachers, as it relies on a **community endeavor** supported by factors such as awareness of local resources, partnerships with non-formal education providers, support from policymakers, co-design of interdisciplinary educational programs, and collaborative teamwork.

The Toolbox offers **suggestions, thought-provoking questions, possibilities for educational activities, and downloadable documents** designed to support teachers in taking education beyond the classroom walls: **what is my idea of a child? What is my idea of school, learning, and education? What is my idea of a teacher?**

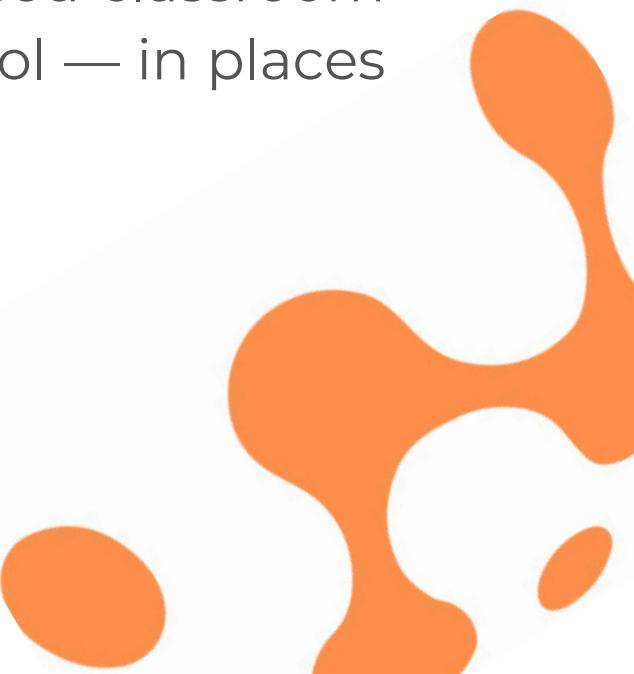
You can read the document sequentially or use the hyperlinks to navigate from one section to another. Each person will find their own takeaways according to their interests, opportunities, and sensitivities.

Whenever you see the download icon  it means a document is available for download.

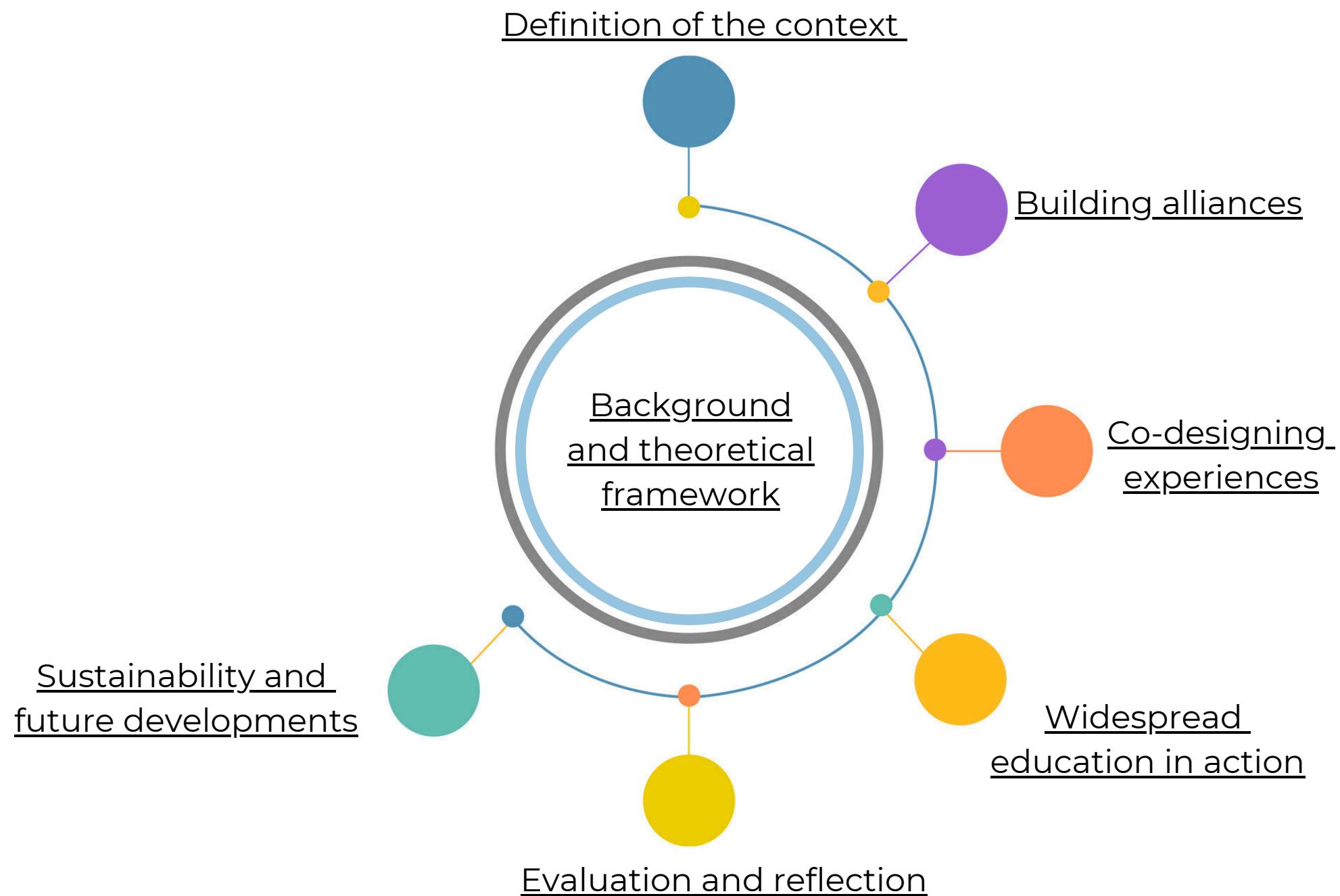
WHAT IS WIDESPREAD EDUCATION

It is a pedagogical approach that engages primary and secondary schools developing curricular objectives in cooperation with other organizations and actors outside the school across time on contextualized, real, and authentic issues and questions that matter to students and communities by **co-researching, co-designing, and co-teaching, bridging formal, non-formal and/or informal agents** and connecting learning experiences in and out of school.

The **Widespread School Project** builds on these principles by viewing cities and communities as valuable educational resources that enrich the school system. It promotes Widespread Education, integrating curriculum-based classroom activities with learning experiences facilitated by teachers, educators, and professionals outside the school — in places like museums, forests, and farms.

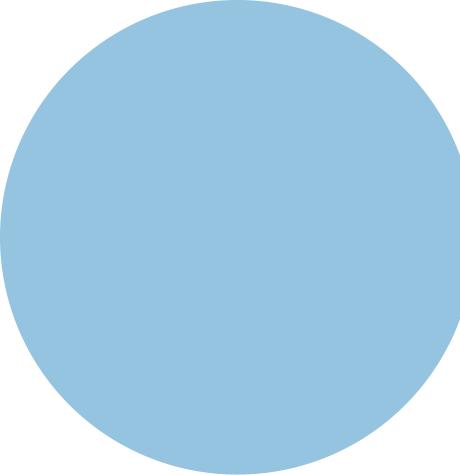


LET'S START THE CODESIGN



These pictures represent the main steps for design a WE experience. The figures represent a **process combining action, reflection, and observation** in a recursive flow. You can start from the topic that most interests you simply by **clicking on the titles**.

To support the design and implementation of your WE experience, **download and customize the Circular Roadmap Tool**, by [clicking here to download it.](#) 



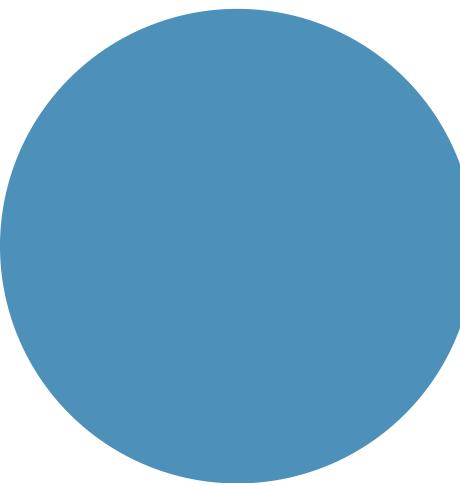
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Education Outside the Classroom (EOC) is grounded in **socio-constructivism**, a learning theory that emphasizes social interaction, cultural context, and active participation in knowledge construction. Learning is seen as a dynamic, collaborative process where students build understanding through engagement, dialogue, and problem-solving in real-world settings. Teachers act as mediators who guide exploration rather than just transmit information, addressing cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of learning.

Key principles in action:

- **Co-construction** of knowledge through collaboration with teachers, peers, and community actors.
- **Active methodologies:** project work, inquiry-based science, and hands-on learning.
- **Teachers as mediators** alongside other educators and external partners.
- **Design and co-design:** flexible, evolving processes rooted in observation, listening, and reflection.
- **Observation** as a cognitive and relational tool to understand and evolve educational practices.
- **Documentation** as a reflective and research-based process that links theory and practice.
- **Dissemination:** sharing practices, outcomes, and reflections with colleagues and other stakeholders, through both virtual and physical spaces

These strategies build meaningful connections between theory and lived experience, supporting well-being, engagement, and lifelong learning.

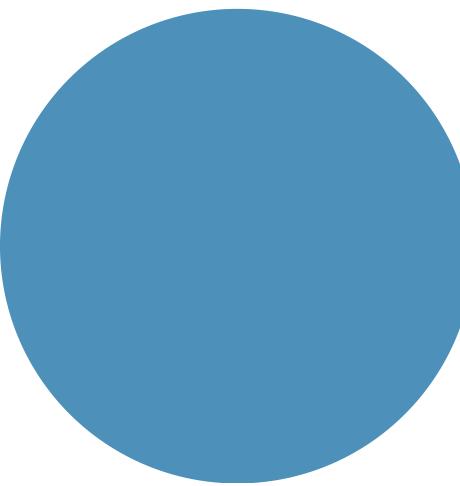


DEFINITION OF THE CONTEXT

Widespread Education transforms communities into socio-educational ecosystems by **integrating local spaces—such as community centers, parks, museums, theaters, cultural organizations, farms, and businesses**—into the learning environment. Success depends on strong collaboration among teachers, staff, students, and external partners, supported by school leadership. Co-designing activities aligned with curricula, including subjects like science and social studies, enhances learning outcomes.

Key principles in action:

- Strengthens the **link** between **school and community**
- **Encourages interdisciplinary**, student-led exploration
- **Fosters shared responsibility** among students, teachers, and external partners

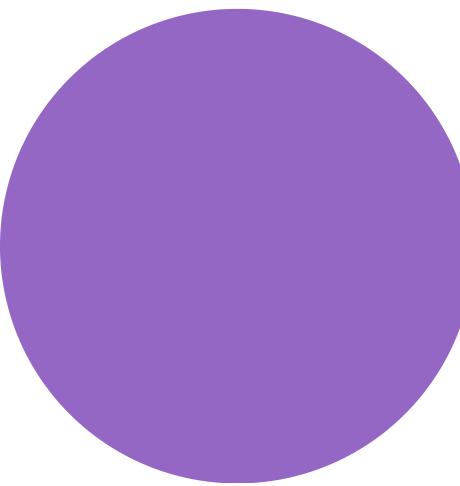


DEFINITION OF THE CONTEXT

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Where in the curriculum can you find opportunities to integrate problem-based, phenomenon-based and inquiry-based learning?
- Where in your school's operating environment can you identify meaningful partners and collaborations to support Widespread Education?
- Where in and around your school are the most common and suitable places to visit, co-operate, and create meaningful learning experiences?
- Where can you find inspiration, resources, and support to proceed with new pedagogical approaches?
- Where can your school community connect learning with the wider environment in ways that expand and enrich the curriculum?

N.B.: The proposed questions do not require precise answers, but serve as guides to spark reflection and offer inspiration for educational design.



BUILDING ALLIANCES

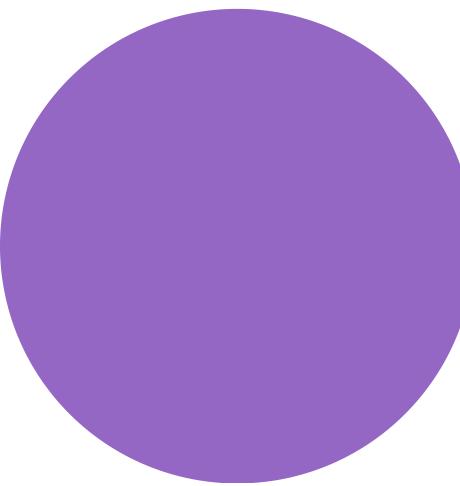
The Widespread Education approach gathers **diverse partners**, such as local government, universities, businesses, cultural institutions, and volunteers to co-create practical, resourceful activities that enhance educational experiences.

This **socio-educational ecosystem** represents a group of social, educational, and community agents working collaboratively to build mutual trust, connect diverse expertise, and create co-responsibility, ensuring all partners have a voice in the decision-making process.

Widespread Education thrives when these agents share ideas, resources, and strategies to design engaging activities outside the classroom.

Key principles in action:

- **Identifying** local resources and traditions to integrate into the curriculum.
- **Building** lasting partnerships through clear communication and shared goals.
- **Sharing** best practices from previous experiences and adapting them to new contexts.
- **Centering** students' interests, making them co-protagonists in the learning process.

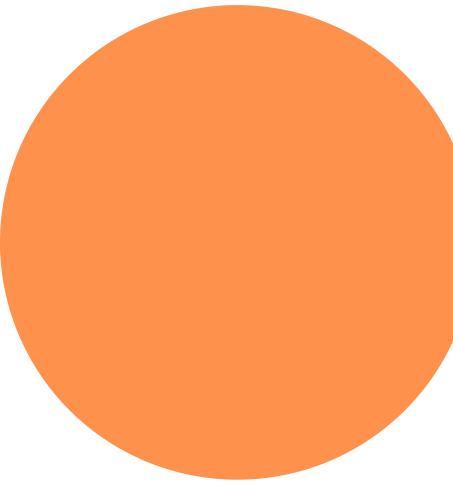


BUILDING ALLIANCES

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Have you ever experienced “schooling” outside the school walls, and how could such experiences be meaningfully connected to your curriculum?
- How can outdoor and community-based learning be intentionally integrated into your existing curriculum to enrich students’ experiences?
- What strategies can you use to involve students in planning and carrying out activities, ensuring their interests and needs are sustained?
- Have you and your colleagues considered collaborating with professionals in their workplaces, and what opportunities could this open for students?
- Which individuals, institutions, or organizations could help you build meaningful partnerships that both support your educational goals and benefit the wider community?

N.B.: The proposed questions do not require precise answers, but serve as guides to spark reflection and offer inspiration for educational design.



CO-DESIGNING EXPERIENCES

The Widespread Education approach requires attention to the social, cultural, and material conditions that shape local socio-educational ecosystems:

Social conditions: trust-based, collaborative relationships among formal, non-formal, and informal agents.

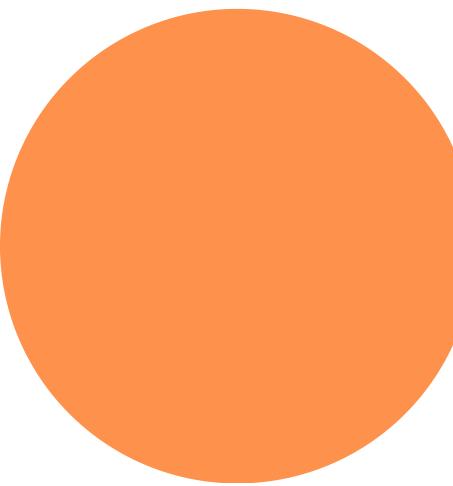
Cultural conditions: creating a shared language, purpose, and vision.

Material conditions: providing infrastructure, such as time and space for co-design, and spaces outside school to expand learning opportunities.

This perspective also emphasizes horizontal and distributed forms of responsibility, where different actors contribute by valuing their roles, interests, and expertise, in order to sustain the educational project as a collective endeavour.

Key principles in action:

- **Identify** and activate relationships between partners and the community, addressing key socio-educational challenges.
- **Include** teachers, school leaders, and students in co-design processes.
- **Map** and **make visible** the network's needs and competencies.
- **Transform** education by establishing shared values and goals through collaborative reflection and planning, supported by organizing tools and shared documents.



CO-DESIGNING EXPERIENCES

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How can you co-design didactic activities outside the school that meaningfully contribute to your students' learning objectives?
- What socio-educational needs in your community could foster collaboration with local stakeholders?
- Which educational resources, opportunities, and distinctive elements of your neighborhood or city can be integrated into your teaching?
- What forms of evaluation can be carried out before, during, and after the process to support and document learning?
- What strategies could help you design Widespread Education in a sustainable and long-term way?

N.B.: The proposed questions do not require precise answers, but serve as guides to spark reflection and offer inspiration for educational design.

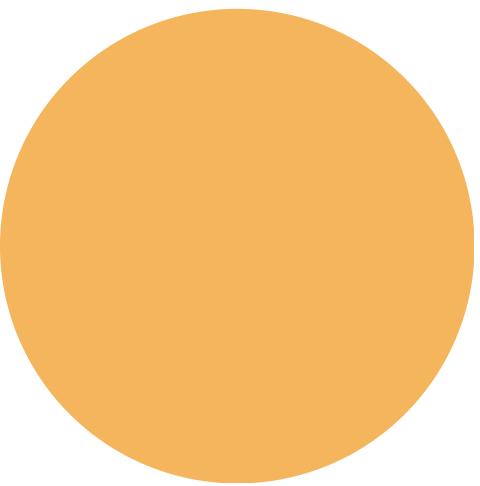
WIDESPREAD EDUCATION IN ACTION

The Toolbox offers a **portfolio of 19 experiences** organized by **research questions** and that have been implemented by school associated to the project.

These experiences result from extensive research conducted by the project team to gather EOC initiatives implemented by schools, educational centres, and teachers at local, regional, national, and international levels.

Click on the link to our  [**Booklet**](#) to find more descriptions of these experiences.





WIDESPREAD EDUCATION IN ACTION

Based on these experiences, a series of **action sheets** have been developed — concise documents and working tools that support the co-design of educational activities through **key points** and **guiding questions**. Each action sheet is linked to multiple research questions, allowing the same experience to be interpreted from different perspectives.

Organizing the experiences around research questions enables a cross-cutting reading, encouraging us to adopt new perspectives and go beyond disciplinary boundaries. It reveals, for instance, how exploring nature can foster technological or mathematical thinking, or how economic-based activities can nurture ecological awareness.

For teachers and educators engaging with the Toolbox, these questions offer meaningful opportunities for reflection, creating space and time to reconsider how learning takes place and how it can be interpreted through different lenses.

WIDESPREAD EDUCATION IN ACTION

1. How can we foster sustainable relationships?

- ASK (#12)
- Castels (#7)
- Ecosystems (#17)
- JA's Business society (#19)
- Local forest (#16)
- My Homeland (#13)
- NEXES (#10)
- SEAS (#11)
- Spanish quarter (#4)
- The Hill (#2)
- Scented Park (#8)

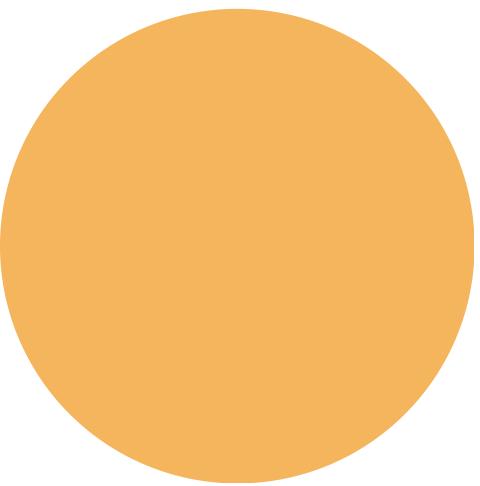
2. How can we value and update past experiences?

- City of Peace (#14)
- Constitution (#5)
- Historical site (#9)
- Literature History (#18)
- Spanish quarter (#4)
- Stories (#6)
- Theaters (#3)

3. Artistic languages and democracy: how can the arts support the development of citizenship competences?

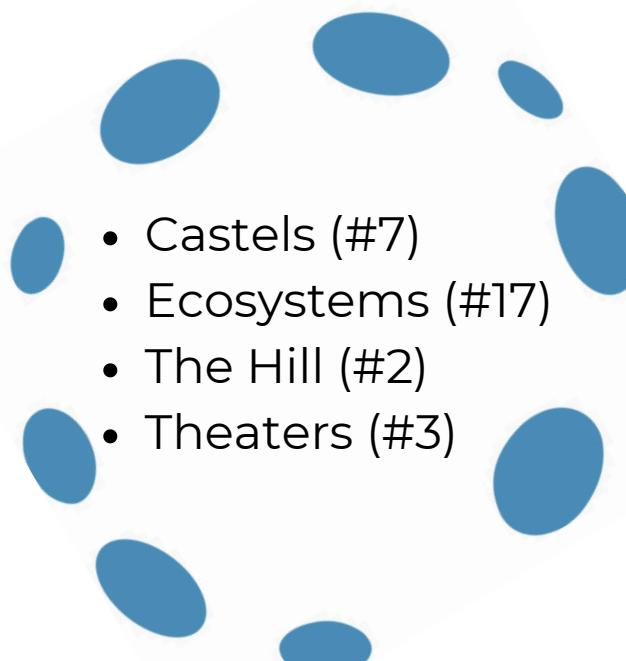
- Citizenship (#1)
- City of Peace (#14)
- Historical site (#9)
- Literature History (#18)
- My Homeland (#13)
- NEXES (#10)
- SEAS (#11)
- Theaters (#3)

N.B. Click on the title of each question to view all related action sheets.



WIDESPREAD EDUCATION IN ACTION

4.
[How does the body learn and
how do we learn through the body?](#)



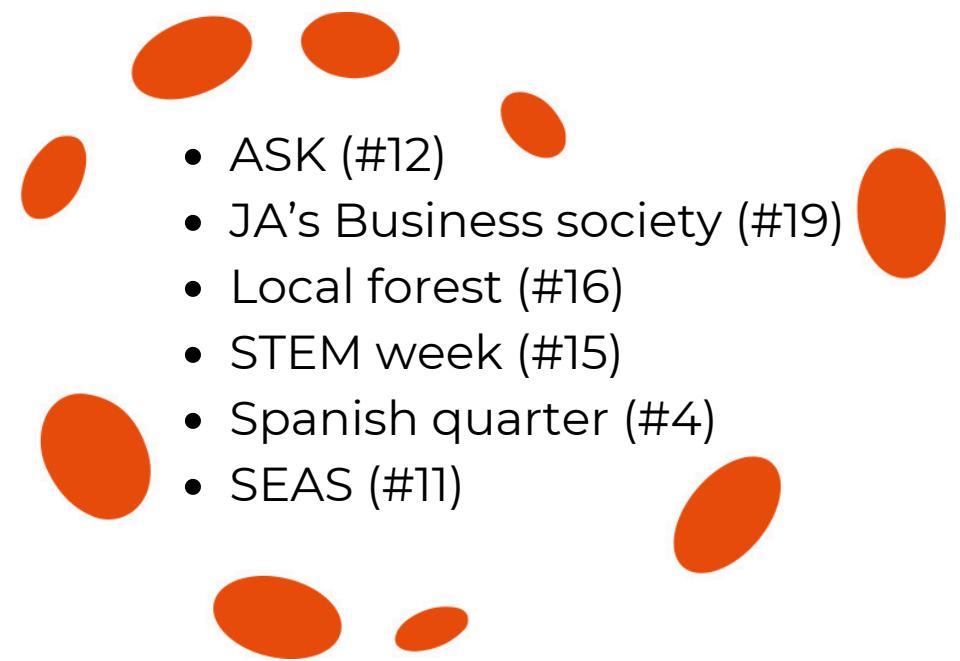
- Castels (#7)
- Ecosystems (#17)
- The Hill (#2)
- Theaters (#3)

5.
[How technological is nature?
How natural is technology?](#)



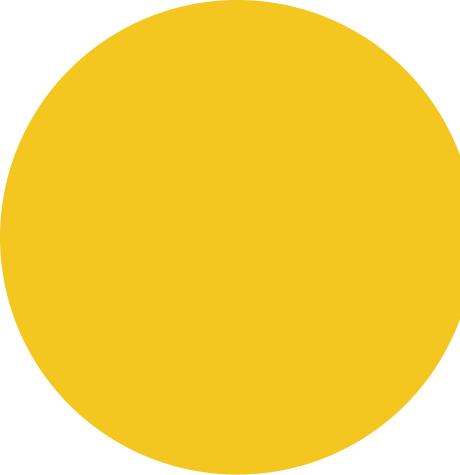
- STEM week (#15)
- Stories (#6)

6.
[How do the mathematical and
economic sciences enable us
to know the world?](#)



- ASK (#12)
- JA's Business society (#19)
- Local forest (#16)
- STEM week (#15)
- Spanish quarter (#4)
- SEAS (#11)

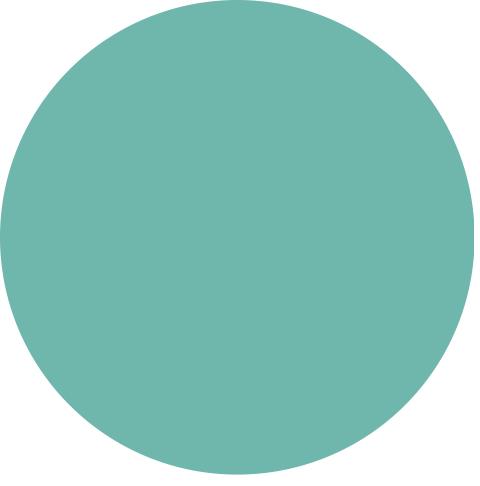
N.B. Click on the title of each question to view all related action sheets.



EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

Evaluation is a meaningful time for **reflection and listening**, an opportunity to question, together, what worked and what encountered difficulties, seeking to understand the reasons behind it. This form of evaluation—more qualitative and narrative—values the process and It brings to light unexpected learnings, relationships, and shifts in perspective. To evaluate, in this sense, means to give value to the lived experience, by searching together for the meanings it has produced.

Here  [**Observation Tool - After the Experience**](#) you can find some useful questions that may guide the process of reflection, evaluation, and self-evaluation of the experience.



SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

WORK IN PROGRESS
this slide is still a draft as the contents will be
defined based on the policies.



WIDESPREAD SCHOOL

An Erasmus+ project
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città dell'educazione della conoscenza

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