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Simulation based training package

TRAINERS' MANUAL

By M. Begonia Arenas



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Introduction

ACT4DYS (Enable People with Disabilities and Youth to Act for Sustainable Cities) is an Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership in Youth (KA220-YOU) running from December 2024 to November 2026. The project is led by CARDET (Cyprus) and brings together partners from Portugal, Spain, Ireland, and Belgium, including the European Disability Forum (EDF) - the organisation that represents persons with disabilities at European level.

The overarching ambition of ACT4DYS is to build the capacity of youth workers across five European countries to champion disability-inclusive urban development. The project recognised that too many urban spaces continue to exclude young persons with disabilities from full participation in public life, and that youth workers - as frontline practitioners - are uniquely placed to challenge and change this reality.

What is the WP3 Training Package?

Work Package 3 (WP3) produced the Simulation-Based Training Package: four interlinked learning modules that use non-formal education methods, role-play scenarios, and collaborative problem-solving to equip youth workers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to advocate for disability-inclusive cities. The training does not require specialist expertise. It is designed for practitioners from diverse backgrounds who want to understand urban inclusion well enough to act on it.

All materials were reviewed by the European Disability Forum to ensure alignment with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards. All four modules are published under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence.

Who Is This Manual For?

This manual is written for anyone delivering the ACT4DYS training package: experienced trainers, youth workers delivering peer learning, partner organisation staff running workshops, or facilitators new to the topic. You do not need to be an urban planner or a disability specialist — you need curiosity, commitment to inclusion, and willingness to step into a facilitation role.

Structure of This Manual

The manual is organised as follows:

- Section 1 - Introduction to the project and training package
- Section 2 - Overview of all four modules briefly
- Section 3 - Facilitation principles and inclusive delivery guidance
- Section 4 - Module-by-module trainer briefs (objectives, structure, scenario, tips)
- Section 5 - Assessment and reflection
- Section 6 - Resources and further reading

1. Overview of the Four Modules

The four modules form a coherent learning journey, with each one building on the last. Every module concludes with a practical simulation scenario helping to ground abstract concepts in lived, collaborative experience. The table below provides a quick reference.



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Module	Title	Core Focus	Scenario Method	Est. Duration
M1	Understanding the Urban Environment: Implementing Universal Design	Universal Design principles, accessibility barriers, sustainable transport, youth-friendly spaces	Collaborative park redesign sprint ("Vrijbroekpark 2.0")	3–4 hrs
M2	Improving Alternative Transportation: Encouraging Sustainable Practices	Sustainable transport, Avoid–Shift–Improve framework, equity, behaviour change	Role-based transport analysis and improvement proposal	3–4 hrs
M3	Creating Youth-Friendly Public Spaces	Participatory urban planning, co-design, Urban Living Labs, New European Bauhaus, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11	Co-design workshop for an inclusive public space (role-based)	3–4 hrs
M4	Urban Development Audit Tool (UDAT)	Accessibility auditing, impact scoring, evidence-based civic proposals	Urban audit simulation — on-site or scenario-based	4–5 hrs

Learning Journey Note: While the modules are designed to be delivered in sequence, each can also stand alone. Module 4 (UDAT) is most powerful when participants have completed Modules 1–3, as it draws on all prior knowledge. If delivering a single module, provide a brief context-setting introduction to the ACT4DYS project and its goals.



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2. Facilitation Principles & Inclusive Delivery

2.1 Core Facilitation Principles

ACT4DYS training is grounded in non-formal education. This means participants learn by doing, reflecting, and collaborating - not by passively receiving information. As a trainer, your role is to design and hold the space in which learning happens, rather than to deliver content as an expert.

Inclusion First

Every design decision - room layout, language used, materials prepared, time allowed for breaks - should reflect the same inclusion principles the training teaches. Ask yourself before each session: “Is there anything in how I have set this up that could exclude a participant?”

Participant-Centred Learning

Draw on participants’ professional experience. Youth workers and trainers bring rich contextual knowledge. Build in moments to surface this knowledge: paired discussion, case-sharing, and open reflection questions.

Psychological Safety

Disability, exclusion, and urban inequity are personal topics for many participants. Establish group agreements at the start (confidentiality, respectful language, right to pass). During scenarios, normalise making mistakes - the simulation is a safe space to explore difficult decisions.

Role of the Trainer During Scenarios

During simulation scenarios, shift from “teacher” to “coach.” Move between teams, ask probing questions, introduce unexpected challenges if groups finish early, and observe team dynamics for the debrief. Do not solve problems for teams - prompt with: “What does the Universal Design principle say here?” or “How might a wheelchair user experience that?”



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2.2 Inclusive Delivery Guidance

The following practical measures support inclusive facilitation in line with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and WCAG 2.2:

Physical Space

Ensure the venue is step-free, with accessible toilets clearly signed.
Arrange seating so that participants using wheelchairs or mobility aids can join tables without needing assistance.
Provide quiet break-out space for participants who need sensory breaks.
Check that projector fonts are minimum 24pt and high contrast. Avoid red/green combinations.

Materials

Provide printed materials in minimum 12pt font or offer digital versions accessible by screen readers.
Activity sheets and rubrics are available in the individual module documents - always share these in advance when possible.
Avoid PDFs that are image-only; use tagged, text-searchable versions.

Language and Communication

Use plain language and define technical terms (a glossary is provided in each module).
Avoid ableist language. Prefer “persons with disabilities” (person-first) or follow participants’ own preferences.
If participants communicate in multiple languages, allow brief translation moments within teams during scenario work.
Check whether any participants use augmentative or alternative communication - plan extra time if so.

Timing and Pacing

Build in at least one 15-minute break per 90-minute block.
Allow flexible timing for scenario phases: some groups work faster than others. Have extension prompts ready.
Do not rush the debrief - this is where the deepest learning consolidates.

3. Module-by-Module Trainer Briefs

Each of the briefs below follows the same structure: module purpose, learning objectives, session structure, the simulation scenario in detail, key facilitation moves, and common pitfalls to avoid.

Module 1 - Understanding the Urban Environment: Implementing Universal Design

Purpose

Module 1 is the conceptual and ethical foundation of the entire package. It introduces Universal Design (UD) not just as a technical standard but as a rights-based imperative grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals. By the end, participants should be able to see urban environments through the lens of inclusion and articulate barriers they previously took for granted.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the seven principles of Universal Design and apply them to urban contexts.
- Identify physical, social, and attitudinal barriers affecting young persons with disabilities.
- Analyse real-world case studies (e.g. Barcelona's Superblocks, Norway's Design for All) for inclusivity.
- Collaborate in multidisciplinary teams to propose accessible urban solutions.

Session Structure (Suggested: 3.5 hours)

1. Icebreaker and group agreements (20 min) — use a simple accessibility-themed warm-up: ask participants to navigate the room blindfolded, with support from a partner.
2. Theoretical input (40 min) - present the seven UD principles, the social model of disability, and the relevant CRPD/SDG framework. Keep input interactive with paired discussion questions.
3. Practical insights (30 min) - case studies of Barcelona Superblocks and Norway's Design for All. Small-group analysis: what UD principles are visible? What is missing?
4. Simulation scenario - Vrijbroekpark 2.0 (60 min) - see below.
5. Pitch and presentation (20 min) — each team presents their redesigned park to a "citizen panel" (other participants).
6. Debrief and reflection (20 min)

The Simulation Scenario: "Vrijbroekpark 2.0 — Let's Improve It!"



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Participants form multidisciplinary teams of 4–5 (city planner, disability advocate, environmental expert, community representative, and youth representative). Each team receives a printed blueprint of Vrijbroekpark, a real public park in Belgium, and a brief: redesign the park to make it accessible and inclusive for all users, applying UD principles.

Teams must identify specific accessibility gaps (e.g. steep gradients, lack of tactile paving, no sensory zones) and propose concrete improvements. They are required to reference at least three UD principles by name and to consider both physical and sensory needs. Eco-friendly features (rain gardens, solar shade structures) should be integrated where possible to connect with sustainability goals.

Trainer Prompt Cards

Prepare a small set of “challenge cards” to introduce mid-scenario: e.g., “A group of autistic young people will be using this park every Saturday morning - what do you add?” or “Your budget has been cut by 30% - prioritise.” These keep energy high and deepen analysis.

Facilitation Tips

- Do not pre-explain what a “good” answer looks like - let teams discover tensions themselves.
- During the pitch phase, invite the “citizen panel” to ask one challenge question per team.
- In debrief, ask: “Which principle was hardest to apply? Why?” and “What would change if a person with a visual impairment were on your team?”

Common Pitfalls

- Teams defaulting to physical accessibility only (ramps, widths) — redirect to sensory, cognitive, and social dimensions.
- Rushing the debrief to stay on time — the reflection is not optional; reduce scenario time instead.



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Module 2 - Improving Alternative Transportation: Encouraging Sustainable Practices

Purpose

Module 2 addresses one of the most tangible barriers young persons with disabilities face: transport. It explores transport not as a neutral technical system but as a social and political one - one that currently pushes disabled people towards less sustainable and more restrictive forms of mobility. Participants will understand that sustainable and inclusive transport are not separate objectives, but mutually reinforcing goals.

Learning Objectives

- Apply the Avoid–Shift–Improve (ASI) framework to analyse transport challenges.
- Explain the principles of sustainable transport design (access, equity, health, environment, economic viability).
- Recognise the intersection of disability, mobility, and sustainability in urban transport.
- Develop concrete transport improvement proposals using a role-based collaborative method.

Session Structure (Suggested: 3.5 hours)

1. Warm-up (20 min) - “Journey mapping”: participants sketch their last public transport journey and identify one moment of friction. Share in pairs.
2. Theoretical input (40 min) - sustainable transport principles, the ASI model, and systems thinking. Include a brief on behaviour change and the ‘15-minute city’ concept.
3. Practical insights (25 min) - case studies: Transport for Ireland’s “Prepare Me” autism campaign; Łódź railway’s accessibility programme; the Independent Travel Support scheme. Group discussion: what made these work?
4. Simulation scenario - transport analysis and redesign (60 min) - see below.
5. Presentations and peer challenge (25 min)
6. Debrief (20 min)

The Simulation Scenario

Participants are assigned roles (urban planner, youth disability advocate, local authority representative, transport operator, and community member) and given a fictional mid-sized European city with a described transport network and identified gaps. Using the ASI framework, each team maps which transport problems fall under Avoid, Shift, or Improve, identifies accessibility failures (broken lifts, no audio announcements, scattered micro-mobility vehicles blocking pathways), and proposes three to five specific, actionable improvements. Teams are also asked to flag any proposed “sustainable” intervention (e.g. e-scooters) that inadvertently creates new barriers.

Key Discussion Prompt



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“A city introduces a shared e-bike scheme as part of its green mobility plan. What does the disability advocate in your team say about it?” This prompt reliably generates rich debate about the tension between sustainability and accessibility.

Facilitation Tips

- Ensure all roles are genuinely heard - the youth disability advocate role is often quieter; check in with that participant explicitly.
- Use the real case studies (TFI, Łódź) as reference points when teams get stuck on what “good” looks like.

Common Pitfalls

- Teams focusing exclusively on physical accessibility and ignoring information accessibility (audio announcements, digital journey planning).
- The ASI framework can feel abstract - use the simple visual from the module document to make the cycle concrete.

Module 3 - Creating Youth-Friendly Public Spaces

Purpose

Module 3 shifts from what inclusive spaces should contain to how they are created - through genuine participation. It introduces co-design, Urban Living Labs, and citizen science as practical methodologies, and links local youth work practice to the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative and SDG 11. Participants leave equipped to involve young people as co-creators, not just as passive users, of public space.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the principles of co-design and participatory urban planning.
- Describe the Urban Living Lab model and its seven key components.
- Apply participatory tools (mapping, prototyping, serious games) in a collaborative scenario.
- Connect local youth-led initiatives to the New European Bauhaus and SDG 11 frameworks.
- Facilitate inclusive decision-making in diverse groups.

Session Structure (Suggested: 4 hours)

1. Warm-up (20 min) - “My ideal public space”: participants sketch or describe their favourite public space and share one feature that made them feel welcome. Discuss whose voices shaped that space.
2. Theoretical input (45 min) - NEB values (sustainability, inclusion, beauty), SDG 11, Urban Living Labs, and the spectrum of citizen engagement from symbolic to genuine co-creation.



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3. Practical insights (30 min) - Youth4Bauhaus project (Braga, Bucharest, Ghent, Košice). What methods did they use? What was the role of young persons with disabilities?
4. Simulation scenario - co-design workshop (70 min) - see below.
5. Presentations (25 min)
6. Debrief (30 min)

The Simulation Scenario

Participants take on four roles: Urban Planner, Disability Advocate, Youth Representative, and Environmental Advocate. They are given a brief describing a neglected or poorly designed public space in a fictional European neighbourhood and asked to co-design a transformation proposal, applying NEB principles (sustainable, inclusive, beautiful) and referencing SDG 11 targets. The process itself mirrors an Urban Living Lab cycle: teams first explore the space together (using a provided description and photographs), then generate ideas using “make tools” (cards, simple floor-plan sketches, sticky notes), prototype at least one core feature, and present a co-created proposal.

A critical requirement is that teams document how inclusion was embedded throughout the process, not just in the final design but also in the way decisions were made. Who contributed to discussions? Whose ideas were adopted? Were there occasions when power imbalances needed to be recognised and addressed?

Facilitator Note on Conflict

Role conflicts are likely and intentional. The Urban Planner may prioritise cost; the Environmental Advocate may resist hard surfaces; the Disability Advocate may reject features that look beautiful but are inaccessible. Do not resolve these tensions for participants. Instead, you may pause and ask: “How would a genuine co-design process navigate this?”

Facilitation Tips

- Provide physical “make tools” if possible: index cards, coloured markers, a printed floor plan, sticky notes. Tactile engagement deepens the co-design experience.
- The debrief should encourage participants to reflect not only on how the co-creation process unfolded, but also why co-creation matters (e.g. social impact, strategic, collaborative synergy) - not just the “how.”

Common Pitfalls

- Groups treat co-design as consultation (asking users, then deciding without them). Challenge this directly in debrief.
- The NEB and SDG 11 links can feel abstract - anchor them with the Youth4Bauhaus example throughout.

Module 4 — Urban Development Audit Tool (UDAT)

Purpose



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Module 4 is the methodological culmination of the training package. It equips participants with a structured, evidence-based tool - the Urban Development Audit Tool (UDAT) - to assess accessibility across four critical domains: pedestrian infrastructure, public transport, urban policy, and digital services. The module transforms abstract rights frameworks into concrete, measurable data that participants can bring to local authorities and decision-makers.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the five-part structure of the UDAT: Criterion, Metric, Audit Finding, Impact Score (1–5), and Civic Proposal.
- Apply the tool to assess pedestrian infrastructure, transport, policy, and digital accessibility.
- Assign evidence-based impact scores and interpret their meaning for exclusion.
- Develop professional civic proposals responding to identified barriers.
- Advocate for accessible and inclusive cities using data-driven evidence.

Session Structure (Suggested: 4.5 hours)

1. Warm-up (20 min) - “Barrier hunt”: participants walk around the venue (or look at a set of street photographs) and list as many accessibility barriers as they can spot in 5 minutes.
2. Theoretical input (50 min) - introduce the UDAT structure in detail, walking through the worked example from Nicosia (Cyprus) in the module document. Spend time on the Impact Score rubric: what distinguishes Score 1 (total exclusion) from Score 3 (partial compliance)?
3. Practical insights (30 min) - ACT4DYS research findings from focus groups across Belgium, Cyprus, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain. Key themes: need for dignity and autonomy, consistent infrastructure, invisible disabilities, legacy infrastructure challenges.
4. Simulation scenario - urban audit (75 min) - see below.
5. Civic proposal presentations (30 min)
6. Debrief and closing (25 min)

The Simulation Scenario

Teams of 4–5 participants act as an audit team and advocacy group. They are given a detailed written description of a fictional urban area (or, optionally, you may assign a real local area to walk and audit). Using the UDAT scorecard, each team assesses all four sections (Pedestrian Infrastructure, Public Transport, Urban Policy, Digital Accessibility), recording findings, assigning impact scores, and calculating section averages.

Once the audit has been completed, each team selects the two barriers with the lowest impact score and prepares a Civic Proposal for each. The proposals should set out clear, evidence-based and cost actions that could be submitted to local authorities or other decision-makers.. To strengthen their credibility, proposals must use the language of policy



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(referencing relevant standards such as WCAG 2.2, Universal Design for Movement, or EU Accessibility Act) rather than vague recommendations.

Optional Real-World Extension

Where time and logistics allow, the Module 4 scenario can be conducted as an on-site audit of a real local area. This is the most powerful version of the module. Provide teams with printed UDAT scorecards, tape measures, and smartphones for photographic evidence. Debrief back in the training room.

Facilitation Tips

- Pre-brief participants on the impact score scale before the scenario — scoring is the part most groups find hardest. Use the Nicosia example to calibrate.
- During the civic proposal phase, circulate and push teams to be specific: “What exactly would change? By when? Who is responsible? What standard does it need to meet?”
- Invite participants to read their proposals aloud as if addressing a city council meeting - this raises the register and makes the advocacy dimension tangible.

Common Pitfalls

- Teams spending too long on Section 1 (pedestrian infrastructure) and rushing Sections 3 and 4 (policy and digital) - set time markers and rotate sections if needed.
- Civic proposals that are too vague (“improve accessibility”) - redirect with: “What specific metric would tell us this has been done?”



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4. Assessment and Reflection

4.1 Evaluation Rubrics

Each module contains a built-in evaluation rubric designed to assess scenario performance. Rubrics assess four dimensions: application of theoretical knowledge, quality of teamwork and facilitation, inclusivity of the proposed solution, and clarity and persuasiveness of the presentation. Trainers should share rubrics with participants before the scenario begins, not after.

4.2 Reflection Methods

End every module session with a structured reflection. Recommended approaches include:

- PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting): quick individual reflection, then share one point per person.
- Exit ticket: one change I will implement in my work because of today.
- Learning journal: for participants working through multiple modules, encourage a running journal linking concepts across sessions.

4.3 Trainer Self-Evaluation

After each session, take 10 minutes to review your own facilitation. Ask yourself:

- Did every participant have meaningful opportunities to contribute?
- Were there moments where power dynamics in the group went unaddressed?
- Did the scenario surface the key learning objectives?



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5. Resources & Further Reading

5.1 ACT4DYS Project Resources

- Project website and e-portfolio: act4dys.eu
- Module documents (M1–M4 with activity sheets, glossaries, bibliographies, and trainer scripts): available at act4dys.eu
- UDAT scorecard template: included in Module 4 document

5.2 Key Frameworks and Standards

- [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) - especially Article 9 (Accessibility)
- [UN Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 11 \(Sustainable Cities and Communities\)](#)
- [New European Bauhaus initiative](#)
- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.2](#)
- [European Accessibility Act \(EAA\)](#)



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5.3 Recommended Further Reading

- Steinfeld, E. & Maisel, J. (2012). Universal Design: Creating Inclusive Environments. Wiley.
- Oliver, M. (1996). Understanding Disability: From Theory to Practice. Macmillan.
- Banister, D. (2008). The sustainable mobility paradigm. Transport Policy, 15(2), 73–80.
- Connell, B.R. et al. (1997). The Principles of Universal Design. NC State University.