

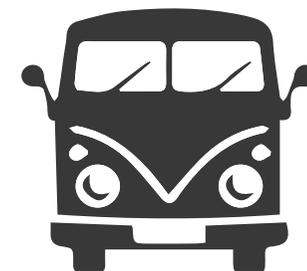


PROMOTED BY  
Comune di  
Milano



# ACTIVISTS TOOLS

mini  
toolkit



**AUDIO-VISUAL  
STREET ACTIONS**

## ACTIVISTS TRAINING MINI-TOOLKITS

These mini-toolkits are meant to be used as a cross-cutting and versatile toolbox to develop **communication skills oriented to social change** in young activists. Communication languages selected (video making, photography, web radio, audio-visual street actions) can be the core alphabets for activists to develop **awareness raising, campaigning and mobilization actions**, acting as catalysts for change. Each chapter deals with the basics of one communication language, so to invite activists to experiment, test and explore its potential.

This is a **training kit** designed for **coordinators, facilitators, tutors, educators** in charge of developing learning modules for young activists. However, it has also been created to be further disseminated to have a multiplier effect, being available to motivated activists willing to transfer skills, expertise and competences to other peers, in their communities, organizations, networks.

Digital communication skills are particularly relevant in pandemic times, as physical distancing has enhanced the importance of audio-visual tools in awareness raising, campaigning and engagement. Contents, methodologies and tools suggested in these mini-toolkits have been designed to be easily used in online trainings and distance learning.

### Target

- 15-35 years-old young climate activists involved in training courses;
- facilitators, tutors, educators engaged in activists training and their organizations.

### Objectives

1. Increase knowledge and understanding of communication for social change of trainers, facilitators, educators;
2. provide an introductory overview and tools on selected communication languages, to better frame, plan, organize training for young activists;

3. foster critical understanding and conscious use of selected key audio-visual languages and tools among activists;
4. enable young activists to use selected communication tools for awareness raising and campaigning.

### Structure

The mini-toolkit series is composed by 4 chapters, which can be used complementarily or separately:

1. **Videomaking**
2. **Photography**
3. **Web radio**
4. **Audio-visual street actions**

Each chapter includes:

- An introduction on the relevant communication language;
- a selection of suggested formats;
- technical tips, indications and recommendations for effective output, including free and open-source tools;
- technical references to effective, meaningful and inspiring case studies and best practices in English;
- suggested exercises and activities that can be used during training, both in person and online.

### For coordinators/facilitators/trainers of young activists

Mini-toolkits can be used as background materials for well-informed planning of training courses, but could also strengthen communication skills of junior staff members and collaborators. They can also be distributed as additional materials to activists, inviting them to replicate training modules in their own organizations.

## For young activists

Mini-toolkits should support training in which they are used, enhancing knowledge and understanding of communication for social change, but also developing technical skills for campaigning aimed at changing behaviours and raising awareness. They can be disseminated and used in youth organizations, movements, platforms, networks, in a peer-learning process.

## For educators

Developing communication skills in youngsters is an effective empowerment strategy, which on the one hand provides them with critical lenses to analyse and tell about their local context, and on the other enables them to take action through tools having wide outreach potential. Moreover, working with digital communication languages is crucial to comply with COVID containment measures.

## How to use these communication languages to campaign for alternative/sustainable food systems

Below you may find some ideas and suggestions on how to use audio-visual communication tools to campaign for sustainable food systems.

Before selecting your campaigning tactics, the relevant **objectives** should be clarified by choosing or combining the following options:

- Inform, raise awareness, develop critical understanding of food systems challenges and solutions;
- foster individual behavioural change towards sustainable food consumption;
- motivate citizens to engage their families, their peers, their communities in the transition towards sustainable food systems;
- encourage citizens who are aware of sustainable food consumption to take a step forward e.g. ask for changes in local policy-making, push for transition in collective consumption settings (e.g. HORECA sector, public procurement and canteens, etc.);
- develop a sense of belonging to a global community in transition towards alternative food systems, by strengthening trust and optimism in social change and overcoming the sense of isolation among responsible consumers.

Video making, photography and web radio can therefore be used to:

- tell about local best practices, e.g. using interviews/reportages/documentaries involving urban farmers, ethical purchasing groups, officials dealing with sustainable public canteens, volunteers engaged in food waste reduction schemes, etc.;
- report, research, explore drawbacks in local food systems, e.g. using interviews/reportages/documentaries/newsletters on different topics, including: the loss of agrobiodiversity in peri-urban farming, widespread consumption of packaged, out-of-season, highly-processed food, food waste at household and collective catering level, etc.;
- foster behavioural changes towards sustainable consumption, by suggesting feasible practices through video tutorials, video recipes, short advertising on different topics, including: decreasing the carbon footprint of one's diet, making cities greener using balcony and guerrilla gardening, shopping planning tips to reduce food waste, etc.

Products could be more effective - in terms of citizens engagement and mobilization - if developed by embedding a participatory and bottom-up process:

- A **call** can be launched to identify best practices to narrate, collect sustainable recipes, gather creative ideas for advertisement, map sustainable food actors in the city;
- a **contest** can be promoted in which participants take pictures of the least common vegetable or grain variety, the greenest balcony garden, the smartest recipe for climate;
- a **challenge** can be launched on social media, in which participants portray for example: how they shop local products, how they grow their city, how they reduce food waste when eating out, etc.

All these products could be further **disseminated** using digital and online exhibitions/catalogues, public screening at community level and/or within larger festivals, audio-visual street actions including projections on buildings, strategic partnerships with local media such as community radio stations or local newspapers/websites.

## CONCORD Code of Conduct on Images and Messages

When working on communication and campaigning through pictures and visual languages, on top of compliance with privacy and data protection regulations in force, a useful reference is the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages issued by the European NGO platform CONCORD. Here are its key principles:

- Choose images and related messages based on values of respect, equality, solidarity and justice;
- Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and in its wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development;
- Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise or discriminate against people, situations or places;
- Use images, messages and case studies with the full understanding, participation and permission of the subjects (or subjects' parents/guardian);
- Ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves;
- Establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identifiable and always act accordingly;
- Conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and protection of the vulnerable people.

**<https://concordeurope.org/2012/09/27/code-of-conduct-on-images-and-messages/>**

To implement these principles, Dóchas, The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organizations, developed an effective "Illustrative Guide to the Concord Europe Code of Conduct on Images and Messages".

**[https://www.dochas.ie/assets/Files/Illustrative\\_Guide\\_to\\_the\\_Dochas\\_Code\\_of\\_Conduct\\_on\\_Images\\_and\\_Messages.pdf](https://www.dochas.ie/assets/Files/Illustrative_Guide_to_the_Dochas_Code_of_Conduct_on_Images_and_Messages.pdf)**



## AUDIO-VISUAL STREET ACTIONS

By street action we mean all those actions aimed at involving people in public spaces to create moments of information or mobilization.

There are many possible forms of street action, these are the most used:

flash mobs, street art actions, performance events (theatre, cinema, radio).

In all cases, the goal is to involve people who pass through a given territory or who live in that territory using the road as a stage to maximize the impact of the actions or to redefine a public space thanks to the actions themselves.

Therefore, there is not a single way to carry out street actions, but all possible actions must still take into consideration some fundamental elements:

- the context
- the public
- the strategy



Photo by Alessandro Viganò - Cinevan



## The context

To choose the right context we must first try to answer these questions:

Do we want to fill a place with a new meaning?

Are we interested in the intrinsic value of that place and do we want to enhance it?

Or are we looking for a place of great passage that is useful to maximize the visibility of our action?

## The public

Do we know what audience we will have?

Do we aim to have as much audience as possible, or to have a certain type of audience?

How do we imagine that the public can react or interact with our action and how do we intend to manage it?

Which brings us to the next point.

## The strategy

What is our goal and what kind of strategy do we want to use?

Do we want to create a moment of breaking from the routine and destabilize our audience?

Or do we want to create moments of aggregation by actively involving our audience?

Or eventually do we want our audience to take action following the street action?

Last but not least, there is always the delicate question of institutional relationships: since these are often public spaces, we will have to plan our street action in agreement with the relevant institutions, or if we decide not to do so, we will have to make sure to act in limits of the laws in force in order not to cause damage to the public and to the success of the action itself.

The most relevant aspects are: permission for the occupation of public land, license to use the chosen contents, safety of the event.

Each nation has its own rules and often each place has its own specific rules, so before organizing any event, a precise survey of the legal and safety aspects must be made.





## CINEMA STREET ACTION - CINEVAN



As we have said there are many ways of doing street action. In this section we will focus on the use of images as a means of raising awareness, mobilizing and sharing.

A first famous example of an awareness raising action to convey an anti-discrimination message is represented by the "Love has no labels" campaign in which the use of an X-ray screen places viewers in front of the curiosity to know who is behind and the disclosure it brings with it not only the solution but also the message. Never as in this case can it be said that the medium is the message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnDgZuGIhHs&t=105s>

Another very famous case concerns a street action on sustainability in the production of a very popular low-cost garment, the T - shirt. Its low cost is at the heart of this awareness-raising action and the trick used is to exploit the propensity to save of the average citizen to inform and sensitize them on the exploitation system behind the product they are about to buy:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfANs2y\\_frk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfANs2y_frk)



Let's now examine two ways of using images in order to create mobilization and sharing. The first mode consists of a Flash mob from the balconies of private homes.

This street action mode involves the involvement of the inhabitants of the cities (but also of smaller places) to convey visual messages on the walls of the buildings. It is a mode that has as its main strength its feasibility even in

the event of a lockdown, as well as its ability to activate territorial networks and create activism. Do what exactly is this about?

On the occasion of special anniversaries or events linked to campaigns (for example a campaign on climate and sustainability), a public call can be activated on the web to call networks of activists or ordinary citizens and invite them to take a position publicly through the projection of photos or videos.



Photo by Bruno Zanzottera - Parallelozero



In April 2020, when the first wave of the pandemic was raging in Italy and there was a total lockdown, an online call was made on the occasion of the national anniversary of the liberation from Nazi-fascism, on April 25, in a moment of complete personal segregation in which there could not have been the traditional live demonstration.

A public call was therefore made to collect photographs and also a call to action so that people on the evening of April 25 projected from their balconies on the walls of the buildings opposite, photos or videos that represented their idea of "liberation". Since ordinary citizens were involved, no particular technical specifications were required, anyone with a projector in the house and a wall in front of the house was invited to project!

The walls of Italian cities were thus animated with personal images or historical photos and everything was also told with various live coverage on a Facebook event that went on until late at night. Ample space was also given to this event in traditional media (newspapers and radio). To document this type of event it is also recommended to make a video that can tell it in its entirety.

This video summarizes what happened in that event in which the street, the public space became the stage for collective action (#Panoramidilibertà – Freedom landscapes):

<https://vimeo.com/527200480>

This type of flash mob does not incur particular logistical or legal problems as it is carried out from one's home and has a limited duration. It is also achievable at any time of the year and in any urban or residential context.

The second street action mode that we are now examining aims to activate sharing and sociality and can be implemented in different contexts but is primarily designed for an urban periphery context.



Photo by Alessandro Viganò - Cinevan

The urban outskirts of the great European cities and the social housing centers in particular are often places of degradation where there are more problems than solutions and where cultural and sharing initiatives are absent. To overcome all this, it is possible to use video and cinema as tools to carry out a street action that aims to give a new meaning to a given context and activate processes of socializing and sharing.

First of all, video interviews are carried out with the inhabitants of the place, about their life, their problems and their expectations. While the interviews are done, some emblematic characters are also taken with photographic portraits. Then these interviews are assembled into a short video product and a photo exhibition.

An event is then organized within those same places, in this case within the courtyards of social housing or in the squares of the peripheral contexts (it is possible to create a series of events of this type in different urban contexts if



the testimonies and photographs come from more than one context. In this case we will have a traveling tour of projections and photographic exhibitions). The photographic portraits are printed in A3 format and hung on threads (a bit like it used to be in the dark room to develop the photos) to delimit the event area, a screen and audio system is placed and condominiums are invited to participate, perhaps even bringing a chair from home. Once the audience is settled, the video made in the previous days is shown followed by a film relevant to the context. In this way there will be a restitution to the inhabitants of their own life context and a moment of sharing and socializing will be created in a place that is instead often the scene of loneliness and conflicts: *"Welcome to everyone, come to the open air cinema in the square! We are not selling you knives, it's for free, come to the square to watch the movie Frida!"*

<https://vimeo.com/529910565>

This type of action can help give a community a voice and often fortify bonds or create new ones but needs meticulous preparation:

- Check all safety conditions (cables, electrical systems, etc) and the presence of public lighting that could disturb the projection (in case check if it is possible to obscure the light sources);
- Contact with the managing bodies of public spaces and consequent authorization;
- Preparation of an information campaign among citizens (in case of bad weather forecasts, communicate at least two days before the cancellation date and possible rescheduling);
- Contact with film distribution companies and bodies responsible for the protection of copyright;
- Safety of the event and observation of any physical distancing.

P.S. All these aspects vary from country to country and from context to context and therefore must be evaluated case by case.

### Exercise 1 (both live and online):

*Trainees must plan a street action that involves the use of images (photos / videos / films). It is advisable to divide the group into groups of 4/5 participants.*

*Exercise duration: 1 hour, addressing the following steps:*

1. *identify the goal / message of the street action*
2. *choose your target, who would you like to involve and reach?*
3. *identify the methods: what do you do? How?*
4. *identify the context (where and when)*
5. *communication and engagement: how do I promote the action before, to involve participants and the public?*
6. *communication and visibility: how do I promote the action during and after its implementation?*
7. *check preliminary steps: how to prepare and organize the action? Do not forget technical / logistical / legal aspects*
8. *define roles and tasks of the group members<sup>1</sup>*

*At the expiry of the set time each group will illustrate the planned intervention in plenary.*



Photo by Alessandro Viganò - Cinevan

<sup>1</sup> Steps integrated with the experience of Mani Tese, Action Aid Italy and the Municipality of Milan in the 1st Food Wave School of Activism in Milan



## RADIO STREET ACTION - SHARE RADIO

One of the radio applications that Shareradio has experimented with great success in recent years is the creation of live radio shows. On the occasion of public events, school parties, sporting initiatives, the radio amplified and conducted live becomes the voice that accompanies the public to enjoy the activities and get to know its protagonists.

First of all, it is necessary to pay attention to the rules governing the dissemination of music in public, and investigate the possible need to apply for a permit for the occupation of public land. Each country has different rules in this regard, the use of non-copyrighted creative commons music can be a good solution:

<https://audionautix.com/>

<https://incompetech.filmmusic.io/>

<http://dig.ccmixer.org>

[https://musopen.org /music](https://musopen.org/music)



A good mix of music, carefully chosen according to the type of audience with which you are confronted, and interviews with organizers, participants, artists, institutions present, allows you to tell and facilitate access to the initiative. Service radio, therefore, with the possibility of announcing and remembering the program facilitating the organizers, but also exploratory and discovery radio, an opportunity to get to know active subjects of one's own community. The recording and publication of the live broadcast also offers a way to historicize the initiative through the voice of its protagonists.

Furthermore, the radio can itself be an opportunity for a public event, which takes place live with the involvement of passers-by and users of the city space. From a technical point of view, the bare minimum to create a good live stream is: mixer, two microphones, a computer, two amplified speakers, a camping table and possibly a gazebo to protect yourself from the sun or bad weather.

You will need an internet connection: audio streaming is quite light and also works with hotspot connections from phones or internet sims. To save bandwidth, you can also decide to transmit in mono or by lowering the transmission bitrate!

<https://sourceforge.net/projects/butt/>



### Create participated narrations, the street action of Share Radio

Live radio can be an exceptional tool for engaging and interacting with the public during parties and public events! The voice of the speakers and the opportunity to interview promoters and participants in the initiative facilitate access to events and improve their communicative potential.

#### LIVE BACKGROUND

Using music to create connections, recall common cultures and intertwine different generations is a great way to bring the public closer: a background carefully chosen based on the target present on the spot will capture the attention of people, who are asked to participate in the background of the situation in which we all find ourselves.

This creates familiarity with the radio instrument and with the rest of the bystanders.

Activity: together we choose the background for this moment, for this day, for this space.

Creation of a collective live set via a PC available to the public.



## LET ME ASK U | RADIO BOX

Making available to the public a vase with many questions, on specific topics or on their own territory - some examples:

What is my favourite place in the neighbourhood?

In my neighbourhood I would like to ... (do)

In my neighbourhood I would like to ... (have)

How do you imagine your neighborhood in ten years?

Creation of a space for individual reflection, shared with the other people present.

## JUST ASK ME

Ask whoever you want a question on the radio.

The action can be proposed as an interview with someone specific or as an open question to anyone who wants to participate; the goal is always to connect people in the same space, questions can be suggested or invented.

## WHO ARE U?

Double interview with two people who do not know each other, or of a different generation, or of a different gender. Depending on the themes, the territory and the moment, various thematic paths are proposed to investigate, to inform and raise awareness through the direct involvement of the public.

## EXERCISE 2: online planning of a street action in the area

How to do it

- create an online room on a remote communication platform (Jitsi.meet);
- invite your friends and form your work group;
- together identify a territory, a street, a square, a path on which to focus your street action.
- cue question: What is your goal? What is your research? What are u looking for?
- identify the theme, the topic, the field of research you want to focus on;
- identify the shops, the points of reference, the realities located around the defined place;

- choose the characters. cue question: who do you need to interview to achieve your goal?
- define an action time and a hypothetical day;
- create a list of questions, which will be your outline for the interview;
- if possible, make contact with the identified characters, so that they are ready for when you can go to the field!

Tip:

Build a small theme song for your project: choose an instrumental piece you like, use 20/30 seconds and then let it fade. You can record your voices and mix them together, so as to make the jingle unique and personalized!

## EXERCISE 3: realization of a live street action

As in the previous exercises, fundamental skills for these street actions are listening, opening horizons and the awareness that the result could be different from what you expect, because it is based on the people you will meet.

Build your interviews starting from your target and your goal:

Who would you like to hear this episode?

Which age groups are you referring to?

How many interviews do you think you will be able to do in the time you have available?

Define a minimum and a maximum of people that you think are important to interview in order to produce interesting content.

When you are on the road, look for the best way to put people at ease, perhaps hooking them up with a piece of music or a few questions about the neighborhood: show yourself curious and respectful of the experience that people bring you.

If you ask people to stop for a few questions, remember that they are putting their time at your disposal: choose your questions carefully based on the objective, and stop at a maximum of three.



*After about ten minutes of speaking, play a piece of music to move from one interview to another or from one topic to the next.*

*Be careful to put yourself in a passageway and to be visible without hindering the daily activities of that place.*

*Take care to provide the people you interview with contacts to listen to the episode you are broadcasting.*

### **a) with a cargo bike or van:**

Radio in public can be offered by loading the necessary equipment on a cargo bike. To compensate for the absence of electricity you can use equipment with battery, or the battery of a car with an inverter. The radio on the cargo bike can reach even more secluded places: parks, gardens, residential courtyards, etc.

1. define the route you are interested in taking to collect the number of testimonials you need;
2. create a list of questions that you are interested in asking who you will interview;
3. choose a background music, which will play when you move and will remain under the voices of the interviewee;
4. involve citizens in the choice of background, and to improvise interviewers with your trace of questions.

### **b) with a recorder:**

- define places and characters of your research;
- create a list of questions you are interested in asking who you will interview;
- enter the places you are interested in mapping, listen and remember to record the typical sounds and the background;
- while editing alternate interviews and music



Photo by Share Radio



**Food Wave** - Empowering Urban Youth for Climate Action- is a project promoted by the Municipality of Milan with ACRA, ActionAid Italia, Mani Tese and 26 other partners (18 Local Authorities, 8 Civil Society Organisations). Food Wave has the aim of increasing knowledge, awareness, and engagement of young people on sustainable patterns of food consumption and behaviour. The project is co-funded by the European Commission in the framework of the programme DEAR - Raising public awareness of development issues and promoting development education in European Union. The project is developed in over 21 locations across 17 countries (16 within the European Union and 1 in the Global South - Brazil). The global network C40 is also an associate of the project.

[www.foodwave.eu](http://www.foodwave.eu) - [info@foodwave.eu](mailto:info@foodwave.eu) - [Facebook/Instagram @foodwaveproject](https://www.facebook.com/foodwaveproject)

**ACRA** is a Milan-based non-governmental organization, engaged for over 50 years in the fight against poverty and in international cooperation on: food, education, water, energy and environment. In Europe and in Italy it fosters a culture of dialogue, integration, intercultural exchange and solidarity. For more than 30 years it has been implementing projects, initiatives and workshops on Active and Global Citizenship Education.

ACRA, via Lazzaretto 3 - 20124 Milan, Italy  
T +39 02 27000291  
[www.acra.it](http://www.acra.it)

**CINEVAN** is a Cultural Association made up of videomakers, photographers and communication experts. We bring cinema to squares, streets and courtyards, creating new opportunities for culture and socializing, we produce video and photographic narratives for events, we teach in schools, we work together with profit and non-profit institutions to communicate projects and carry out awareness and fundraising campaigns.

**SHARERADIO** is a web radio born in 2009 in Baggio, a western suburb of Milan, with the aim of promoting social cohesion in the city that became an association for social promotion in 2015: communicating and teaching how to communicate are the actions that characterize its activity. The association aims to combine in its activities forms of citizen journalism, story telling and media education, understood as disciplines and processes of collective teaching and learning on the media aimed at social changing.

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