

# What we recommend – An Inspirational Manual Utilizing the *Up to You!* Simulation for Engaging Workshops on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



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The *Up to You!* Simulation was developed by the Centre for Systems Solutions (CRS) in collaboration with ÖFSE - Austrian Foundation for Development Research, Vienna University Children’s Office, and Rogers Foundation for Person-Centred Education in the project *FutureSIM: Making Europe’s Future Sustainable! A simulation-based learning program for schools.*

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## An Inspirational Manual Utilizing the *Up to You!* Simulation

### How Will This Manual Help Your Organization?

At a time of global climate crisis and in our rapidly changing world, organizations need to find new strategies to contribute to a better future. They need to evolve as fast as the technological changes that are reshaping society and address the key issues of sustainable development in their field of activity – whether it is a forward-looking research strategy at universities or other research organizations, more sustainable production processes in commercial companies, or the educational opportunities offered by non-profit organizations. To adapt, we need to rethink our approaches and perspectives. One effective way is to look at the world through the eyes of young people. Their directness, curiosity and values can teach us to think differently and innovative.

This manual provides guidance on how to set up an *Up to You!* simulation workshop where young people can not only learn about the complexities of decision-making processes, but also have the opportunity to share their views on issues affecting our world in the context of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By incorporating their perspectives and ideas, you as a researcher, science communicator of your organization as a whole can better navigate the inevitable changes that lie ahead. The workshops can be held in collaboration with a local school, following an 'open schooling' approach to education that encourages real-world relationships between educational institutions and their communities.

### Who is the manual for?

You can explore the various options to use the *Up to You!* material in detail with the decision tree on page 10. This recommendation manual was written to support the following groups:

- **Policy makers**, who are looking either for innovative ways of teaching and/or have an interest in Education for Sustainable Development and active citizenship.
- **Professionals working in non-formal education environments**, who seek ways to address the complexity of SDGs for an audience group of the age of 14+ and/or are interested to extend their programs with new formats.
- **Researchers**, who are exploring effective ways of embedding Education for Sustainable Development in the curricula and/or working on gamification in education.
- **Experts**, who are looking for engaging ways to enter a discussion with young people, who want to provide background information for their informed decisions and who understand and/or feel the responsibility to contribute to society with factual knowledge.

The manual is a policy and implementation document that promotes the *Up to You!* simulation material as a comprehensive tool for interaction between the formal and non-formal education sectors, and for linking 'open schooling' to the SDGs. The manual is based on several pilots in Austria, Hungary and Poland for multipliers and accompanying school workshops. It also includes findings and recommendations from online stakeholder and policy maker meetings and an inclusive conference-meeting for practitioners in gamification and at the intersection of non-formal and formal education, including the voices of marginalized young people.



As an easy to share document for stakeholders and decision makers in non-formal education environments a policy brief "Using Social Simulations to Foster Learning about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Critical Thinking in Youth (Aged 14+)" is added as Annex 2 to this manual.

## The Erasmus+ Project “FutureSIM: Making Europe`s Future Sustainable!”

The *Up to You!* simulation and all other materials related to this manual have been produced within “FutureSIM: Making Europe’s Future Sustainable! A simulation-based learning program” that was co-funded by the European Union within the Erasmus+ program. The project objectives have been to enable education institutions to provide students with a unique learning experience on how to become global citizens and contribute actively to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The project was led by the Austrian Foundation for Development Research (ÖFSE), the Centre for System Solutions (CRS) from Poland, the Rogers Foundation for Person-Centered Education from Hungary, and the Vienna University Children’s Office from Austria from the years 2022 until 2024.

The learning program comprises a set of resources:

- **The *Up to You!* Simulation:** a social simulation focused on the SDGs including a moderator’s handbook for self-learning
- **Teacher`s Toolkit:** a set of practical training materials for teachers and educators
- **Digital Learning Materials:** various digital, interactive learning materials for students
- **Online Learning Platform:** an open-access platform, where all materials are presented in a structured way

All materials for teachers and educators are available via the online course “[Empowering Educators](https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/empowering-educators/)”<sup>1</sup> while materials for students and learners are accessible via the online course [Up to You! Making Europe`s Future Sustainable](https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/up-to-you-en/)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/empowering-educators/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/up-to-you-en/>



## What is the *Up to You!* Simulation and Workshop?

*Up to You!* is a simulation that makes complex relationships between society, the economy, politics and the environment tangible in a playful way. Although it is technically not a game but a simulation, it uses gamification as methodology to engage the players in a cooperative way without winners and losers at the end. The simulation is designed for people aged 14 and over and can be played in groups. The *Up to You!* simulation was designed to examine the potential for interrelationships between the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The simulation is a multiplayer, moderated experience in which participants assume the role of the governments of the three imaginary countries and attempt to identify various strategies for addressing the needs of their populations. By making challenging decisions and engaging in negotiations to reach compromises, participants gain an understanding of the interconnections between various Sustainable Development Goals. The participants are required to identify and utilize a range of resources, respond to external shocks that impact stability in the countries, evaluate alternative strategies and develop their leadership abilities. Every country has different specializations and starting points to reflect also the diverging points of departure in real life – but this information is not communicated to the players initially and shall be explored in the debriefing phase.

The material has been developed and refined for use either in a school setting with limited time, with at least two school lessons (at least 2 x 45 minutes as a minimum), or in a wider setting with more time available. This could be an extended workshop in a school, but also in a non-formal education setting such as a museum, a public library, a youth council workshop, or in relation to all kinds of Education for Sustainable Development settings. A comprehensive moderator's handbook allows for a convenient preparation without the need of special training. Accompanying teaching materials in the form of a teachers' toolkit and a learning platform are also available to support the process and extend

the opportunities to more in-depth insights on various topics (see above or use the link to the [project website of FutureSIM/Up to You](#))<sup>3</sup>.

A suggested time frame for the simulation flow in a school setting is included in the comprehensive moderator's handbook, which can be accessed via the online course [Empowering Educators: A Modular Toolkit for the Up to You! Simulation](#). Based on the evaluation and results of the pilot testing and various workshops in Austria, Hungary and Poland with different participants (youth, teachers, students and researchers), it can be concluded that the workshop setting is highly adoptable in terms of meeting the needs of the target group and the possibilities of the organizers.

Depending on the age, background and connections of the young participants, it is possible to extend the workshop into a full day event or even make it the centerpiece of a thematical week on the SDGs, e.g. in a summer camp setting. In most cases, due to time constraints, organizers opt for a condensed session of less than four hours.



### How Does an *Up to You!* Workshop connect with the Youth as Drivers of Change?

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasized already in 2015 that young people are uniquely aware of the pressing issues in today's rapidly changing world and are best positioned to devise effective responses. He declared: "That is why I am calling on young people to speak out – and I am urging leaders to listen." Furthermore, he continues: "Youth movements and student groups are challenging traditional power structures and advocating a new social contract between States and societies. Young leaders have contributed fresh ideas, taken proactive measures, and mobilized through social media as never before."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <https://uptoyou.socialsimulations.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/08/on-youth-day-un-officials-urge-member-states-to-make-young-people-drivers-of-change/>

The European Union has also emphasized the vital importance of Public Engagement, which is thoroughly discussed by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) at the University of West England (Bristol, UK). The NCCPE defines Public Engagement as follows:

"Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activities and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit."<sup>5</sup>

The NCCPE categorizes public engagement into three often-overlapping purposes:

- Informing
- Consulting
- Collaborating

These purposes underpin the *Up to You!* workshop process, particularly emphasizing the importance of consulting with young people and collaborating with them to shape the final outcomes of the project. This alignment ensures that the workshop not only disseminates information but also actively involves young people in meaningful dialogue and joint efforts, fostering mutual benefits and deeper public involvement.

### The Importance of Young People's Voices

FutureSIM and the produced materials are based on this acknowledgement of the importance of mutual learning, emphasizing the significance of considering both young people and adults in this exchange. Young people must not only be engaged but also empowered through their involvement. Achieving this requires an open and honest relationship with the youth, acknowledging that their input is valuable and will influence sincere reflection. This is especially important if the *Up to You!* simulation and the other materials are utilized in the context of idea generation processes and by bringing in the perspectives of experts in various fields that relate to the SDGs. A potential scenario might be a student council session on climate change, or other forms of engagement in a non-formal or formal sector, where for instance local decision makers (e.g. city council members or education managers) have interest in honest exchange with young people.

For many young people, having their views genuinely included in the planning and development of future initiatives is empowering. The *Up to You!* workshops provide a platform for young people to reflect on and to understand about general decision-making processes but also their own choices and assessments of complex situation, helping them understand how they choose between options and the consequences of their decisions. This relates not only to Education for Sustainable Development but also to democracy literacy and active citizenship in a broader sense.

Authenticity is a fundamental aspect of public engagement. It is crucial for both adults and young participants to communicate openly and truthfully throughout the process. This two-way authenticity allows adults to gain genuine insights into young people's perspectives.

Using the material and the simulation workshop benefits both the organizations listening to the young people's recommendations and the young people themselves. Especially the workshops support young people to think positively about a co-created future despite the seemingly unsolvable big challenges

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/>

and therefore hopefully gain greater self-assurance and confidence, reinforcing their sense of belonging in society.

## Motivating Young People

Motivation is essential for deeper learning and engagement, as it drives the agenda, often subconsciously. Young people frequently have complex motivations that differ significantly from those of adults, highlighting the importance of listening to their perspectives. However, young people's agendas are often underestimated or overlooked, risking the imposition of the institutions or organizer's agenda and confusing young people's motivations with adults' efforts to motivate them.

Young people should be empowered to define their own interests in a particular topic. This approach reduces the control imposed on them and allows them to prioritize what matters to them in their daily lives. Adults must be prepared to receive not what they expect from the young people but what the young people genuinely want to share.

In times of multiple global crisis – after years of pandemic restrictions, new wars that dominate the media, and the more and more palpable effects of the climate change – it is important to show ways of cooperation and possible shifts in policies. The *Up to You!* simulation is a useful tool for this as it allows a very thorough discussion in the important debriefing zone with a lot of flexibility for the facilitators and participating experts to listen to the young people. The social simulation adopts a well-designed and innovative gamification approach which provides a playful low-threshold entry to numerous topics related to the SDGs. It therefore supports the motivation of young people and opens room for expressing their voices.





## Use Case Scenarios and Decision Tree for Utilizing the *Up to You!* Simulation

If you are interested in working with young people and the SDGs you have various options to put the *Up to You!* simulation into practice depending on your role. By following this decision tree, stakeholders can effectively start to integrate the *Up to You!* simulation into various educational settings, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the SDGs and enhancing critical thinking skills among young people. An illustrative chart of the decision tree below can be found as Annex 1.

### Step 1: Identify Your Own Role

#### 1. Teacher

- Are you looking to integrate SDG learning into your classroom?
  - Yes: Please utilize the *Up to You!* teachers` toolkit to incorporate the materials in your classroom and get inspiration for educational activities on the SDGs.<sup>6</sup>
  - No: You might want to explore the *Up to You!* digital learning materials<sup>7</sup> with various engaging elements, like videos and interactive elements to get an idea what topics might relate to your teaching needs and/or you wouldn` t have originally linked to the SDGs.

#### 2. Policy Maker

- Are you supporting the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and/or seeking to promote innovative educational tools within your district or institution?
  - Yes: That`s great! Please proceed to Step 2.
  - No: Please consider the opportunities your position and expertise provide towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet and how valuable you can be as a voice for young people.<sup>8</sup> To explore the versatile world of social simulations, the SDGs and youth engagement, see the *Up to You!* teachers` toolkit.<sup>9</sup>

#### 3. Non-formal Education Facilitator

- Are you looking for an innovative and easy way to implement a gamification format related to the SDGs in your portfolio?
  - Yes: That`s great! Please proceed to Step 3.
  - No: If incorporating a social simulation is not your thing, you might find many other educational engagement formats related to the SDGs in the *Up to You!*

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<sup>6</sup> Via the online course Empowering Educators - <https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/empowering-educators/>

<sup>7</sup> Via the online course Up to You! Making Europe`s Future Sustainable - <https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/up-to-you-en/>

<sup>8</sup> An inspiring and comprehensive collection of background information and support for individuals is the “Act now” campaign of the United Nations. Watch the videos how young people can be empowered to contribute and how important these joint efforts are also on a small-scale level to trigger ripple effects. <https://www.un.org/en/actnow>

<sup>9</sup> Via the online course Empowering Educators - <https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/empowering-educators/>

#### 4. Researcher

- Are you studying the impact of gamification on learning outcomes and/or education in the context of global citizenship / Education for Sustainable Development or related topics?
  - Yes: That`s great! Please proceed to Step 4.
  - No: Getting insights into the theoretical background of social simulations might help you identifying new areas of interest within educational innovation.

#### 5. Expert

- Are you interested to bring your knowledge (e.g. from your field of research related to the SDGs) to the public and bridge it with the gamification methods of social simulations and the perspective of young people?
  - Yes: That`s great! Please proceed to Step 5.
  - No: Identify other formats of public outreach for your expertise, e.g. as an interview or project partner for young people. You might want get in contact with the projects` experts to get input on how you can get involved.

### Step 2: For Policy Makers

- **Explore School Networks:**
  - Contact a local school or use existing networks and offer support in implementing an *Up to You!* workshop in an Open Schooling approach.
- **Foster Collaboration:**
  - Encourage partnerships between schools and non-formal education organizations for sustainable use of the material and approach.
- **Set up Workshops:**
  - Use the guidelines to kick-start the workshop and get more into detail by using the *Up to You!* teachers` toolkit, which is available via the online course "Empowering Educators"<sup>11</sup> and/or the materials for students and learners of the online course Up to You! Making Europe`s Future Sustainable.<sup>12</sup>
- **Monitor and Evaluate:**
  - Implement assessment tools in collaboration with the schools to measure the effectiveness of social simulations in achieving educational goals.

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<sup>10</sup> Via the online course Empowering Educators - <https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/empowering-educators/>

<sup>11</sup> Online course Empowering Educators - <https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/empowering-educators/>

<sup>12</sup> Online course Up to You! Making Europe`s Future Sustainable - <https://learn.socialsimulations.org/course/up-to-you-en/>

- **Support Teacher Training:**
  - Invest in professional development programs focused on using social simulations, e.g. by encouraging teacher training programs to include social simulations in teaching.

### Step 3: For Non-formal Education Facilitators

- **Engage with Schools or a Young Audience:**
  - If you have no existing contacts establish new partnerships with local schools or otherwise use your already running cooperation to introduce the *Up to You!* simulation.
  - If you want to have a more individual and flexible approach, use your communication channels to offer workshops for young people using the simulation.
  - The flexibility of the *Up to You!* simulation can also be used in all kinds of out-of-school settings that allow for more individual participation and openness.

Some examples could be:

- a youth convention with the aim of a wider participation of young people,
  - free workshop offers in the context of science outreach activities, such as the European Researchers Night, national science festivals, open days, etc.,
  - workshops, organized together with teacher training students,
  - engagement with youth organizations,
  - and many other non-formal education opportunities in various places of learning, e.g. museums, exhibitions related to SDG topics etc.
- **Facilitate Workshops:**
    - Use the guidelines to kick-start the workshop and get more into detail by using the materials for teachers and educators, which are available via the online course [Empowering Educators](#) and/or the materials for students and learners of the online course [Up to You!](#).
    - Moderate workshops that use the simulation to learn about the complexity of the SDGs and critical thinking.
  - **Support Teachers:**
    - Provide resources and guidance to teachers for effective simulation implementation as a follow up (e.g. using the *Up to You!* teachers` toolkit and the digital learning materials).
  - **Ensure Feedback Loops:**
    - Gather feedback from participants and educators to continuously improve the simulation experience.

#### Step 4: For Researchers

- **Design Research Studies:**
  - Develop studies to evaluate the impact of the gamification approach of the *Up to You!* simulation on student learning and engagement.
- **Cooperate with Schools:**
  - Establish contacts with local schools to participate in your research project. The cooperation with experienced intermediaries, e.g. your local/regional Children's University or municipal organizations at the intersection of formal and non-formal education might help with that.
- **Set up Workshops:**
  - Use the guidelines to kick-start the workshop and get more into detail by using the materials for teachers and educators, which are available via the online course [Empowering Educators](#) and/or the materials for students and learners of the online course [Up to You!](#).
- **Collect and Analyze Data:**
  - Gather data from classrooms using the simulation to assess its educational impact.
- **Publish Findings:**
  - Share your research outcomes with the educational community to inform best practices and promote the approach of utilizing social simulations and gamification in various learning scenarios.

#### Step 5: For Experts

- **Define Outreach Strategy:**
  - Get acquainted with the *Up to You!* simulation by using the moderator's handbook and define your own outreach strategy accordingly.
  - Reach out to the *Up to You!* project partners to learn about existing programs and opportunities to participate for learning purposes.
- **Find Cooperation Partners:**
  - Establish contacts with local schools to participate in your activities or find other supporting organisations/formats. E.g. you could use the simulation to offer a workshop on the green transition of the energy market at a researcher's night or long night of museums.
- **Set up the Workshop:**
  - Use the guidelines to kick-start the workshop and get more into detail by using the materials for teachers and educators, which are available via the online course [Empowering Educators](#) and/or the materials for students and learners of the online course [Up to You!](#).

- **Evaluate Feedback:**
  - Gather feedback from your participants if the format works for your field of expertise.
  - Use the discussions in the debriefing phase of the simulation as starting point for new ideas in your own research and as a source of inspiration.



## How to set up an *Up to You!* Simulation Workshop for Non-Formal Education Providers?

Setting up an *Up to You!* simulation workshop in a non-formal education setting involves several key steps to ensure it is effective and inclusive. The *Up to You!* Teachers` Toolkit provides good guidance and additional activities on how to run the workshop in a school setting and already offers ways of bridging the approach to the non-formal education sector with useful didactical recommendations. It is advisable to utilize those resources as accompanying material if you decide to set up a workshop.

To give you a first starting point and help you run a successful workshop in an out-of-school setting, you can quickly explore the guiding steps below. By following these steps, you can set up an *Up to You!* workshop that genuinely values and incorporates the voices of young people, fostering mutual learning and meaningful engagement in an easy and manageable way.

## **1. Define Objectives:**

- As you begin planning an *Up to You!* workshop, it is advisable to ask three fundamental questions:
  - o Why does your organization want to engage in dialogue with young people?
  - o What benefits will your organization gain?
  - o How will the young people benefit?
  
- Clearly outline why your organization wants to engage with young people by using the *Up to You!* simulation and other educational materials and resources from FutureSIM project. Potential objectives are manyfold and might range from contributing to the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and Education for Sustainable Development in general, to highlighting the importance of certain aspects related to current research programs, or to start an interaction with young people to learn about their perspectives and give them a voice.
  
- Identify the expected benefits for both your organization and the young participants. These benefits should be clearly outlined and communicated in the preparation phase of the workshop.

## **2. Identify Participants:**

- Once you have established your objectives and can explain the potential benefits of the workshop, you will need to find your participants. In many cases, it is best to work with a local school. Another option is the cooperation with an intermediary partner, e.g. a youth center (see below).
  
- If possible, it is advisable to select a diverse group of young people from different backgrounds, including different socio-economic statuses, ethnicities and abilities. This will allow for a more diverse outcome in the debriefing discussions and a richer experience for both participants and facilitators. It is also likely to be more representative of the demographic reality in your local context. It may be a good approach to work with community-based organizations, schools or faith groups to reach potential participants.
  
- Often it is a good approach to cooperate with an intermediary organization to find interested young people. This allows also to avoid mistakes in communication with the young participants and understand better their needs and expectations. Therefore, if you are working with intermediary organizations be sure that they understand and support your intentions, the workshop goals and approaches.
  
- If you are working in an out-of-school context, you might consider aiming for a mix of ages, ideally between 14-20 years old, to ensure that all participants feel respected, valued and have enough space to make their own decisions and express their thoughts. This will create a greater dynamic among the participants and help you as an organization to bring in more diverse perspectives.

### 3. Find your Moderator:

- The role of the moderator is to facilitate the simulation, guide the discussions, ensure that everyone is heard and maintain a respectful and open environment. Most importantly, facilitators will guide through the debriefing phase and may also provide additional context, either by bringing in other external experts or by contributing themselves.
- The *Up to You!* simulation might seem complex and sophisticated at the first glance but the simulation set-up and available materials will help you to easily understand the dynamics of the program. To make it as simple and easy as possible both for the moderator and the players, a comprehensive tutorial was included in the game as an introduction phase. This will allow for a quick learning curve to understand the game and the different tasks.
- The freely available moderator's handbook provides further material to support facilitators of the simulation, including game flow charts, a handbook with a full description of the game, an introduction script with further explanations and practical tips, and a tutorial scenario document.
- More information related to the SDGs and specific content can be found in the materials for teachers and educators, which are available via the online course [Empowering Educators](#) and the online course [Up to You!](#) for students and learners.
- You can either become your own moderator, train your staff to facilitate the workshop, or decide to find an experienced moderator. This could be a teacher, an expert or an independent facilitator. Working with neutral facilitators helps to avoid influencing the young people's openness and, in many cases, allows for a deeper experience on both sides: the young participants and your own position as the organizing institution. Newcomers and experienced moderators can use the [Empowering Educators](#) course to give feedback and connect.
- Important Note: *Up to You!* is a browser-based simulation that doesn't require any installation. It is free for non-commercial use and accessible at <https://play.socialsimulations.org/>. To obtain login credentials for the moderator account, contact "[contact@socialsimulations.org](mailto:contact@socialsimulations.org)". Upon agreeing to the Terms of Use, you will receive the login details. The FutureSIM learning materials are freely available as long as there is no commercial purpose involved. However, it is necessary to get the access data for documentation and support purposes. This might take some days because it is not an automatic process, so please include this into your time planning.

### 4. Select a Location/Set-up:

- If you don't run the workshop in a school class environment with a given set-up, you should choose a location that makes the young participants feel relaxed and safe, not one that aims to impress.

- The layout of the workshop is quite important as it strongly influences the communication between the participants. For example, if two of the fictional countries in the simulation sit closer together than the third country, they will have an advantage in transnational agreements and quick check-ups. More support how to set up the location can be found in the moderator's handbook.
- The facilitator or moderator should move between the countries and be perceived as part of the group rather than as an authority figure.
- Be aware that you will need sufficient computers – although the simulation runs on mobile devices as an alternative as well, the experience is much better on a bigger screen.

### **5. Plan the Workshop Structure:**

- Create a flexible agenda: Design an agenda according to your timeframe that allocates time for introductions, discussions, and, most importantly, reflections. A typical workshop timeframe in a non-formal education context would be ideally three hours or even a half-day, which allows for breaks and not rushing through the simulation.
- Include engaging activities: Highlight the activities in the game dynamics that encourage the participation and engagement of all participants. This is of utmost importance in the debriefing session, where all young people should have a chance to be heard and express their experiences and conclusions from the game. Encourage participants to share their views and opinions freely. Additional recommendations for various activities can be found in the *Up to You!* teachers' toolkit.

### **6. Invite Experts and Key Stakeholders:**

- Consider inviting representatives from local authorities or other relevant organizations to participate in the discussion, either in the role of an external observer (e.g. an NGO with an observer position or a journalist), or include them in the debriefing phase towards the end of the workshop.
- Bring in experts: University students, scientists and teacher training students can relate their own field of expertise and scientific research to everyday challenges of students and the public, and explore the potential of social simulations
- Ensure their role is to listen and engage with additional information and practical real-life perspectives, not to dominate the conversation.
- Emphasize the importance of authenticity and openness from both adults and young people.



## **7. Debriefing:**

- Summarize the key points and recommendations from the workshop. This is the most important phase of the social simulation as this reflects the whole process and connects to the learnings related to the complexity of the SDGs. A very good guideline how to run the debriefing is part of the *Up to You!* moderator's handbook.

## **8. Follow-Up:**

- Share the outcomes with relevant stakeholders. You can use your learnings and especially the input and perspectives from the young participants to provide background material for informed decisions of your most important stakeholders. This will support them in understanding the motivation of young people and might help them to become active. You might also share the learnings within your own organization and team for organizational development.

## **9. Important Ethical Considerations:**

Basic ethical guidelines for programs involving young people as stakeholders highlight key issues that must be considered before organizing any event. This is especially important if you are acting in a non-formal education setting without the structures of schools and the experiences of teachers as a basis.

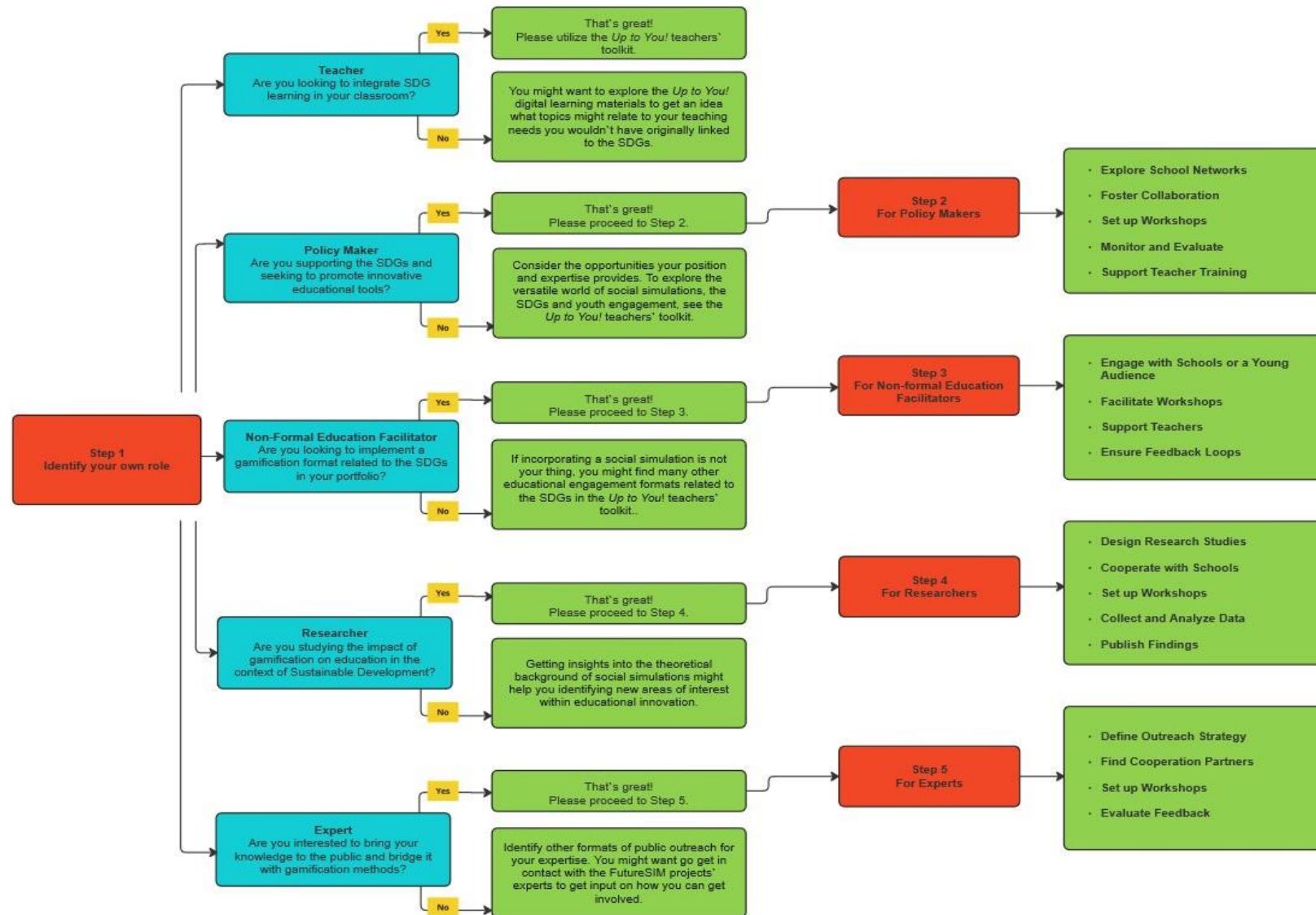
- The Aim of the Project/Activity
  - o What do you want to achieve pursuing this project/activity? What is the purpose of the event? How will the reflections of the young people be used?
  - o Will the right people be involved? How have the young people been selected?
- Consent and Assent of Participants
  - o Have the young people and their parents been given enough information to provide informed consent (parents) and assent (young people)?
- Data Protection and Privacy
  - o What kind of information will be collected and how will it be used?
  - o How will the information be stored and who will have access to it?
- Internet Safety
  - o Have you considered 'netiquette rules' if computers are used by young children? If personal data is collected, how will it be stored and who will have access to it?
- Social Implications
  - o Have you considered the long-term responsibilities that might arise as a consequence of this activity? Already the name of the social simulation *Up to You!* might raise specific expectations on the role of the young people. You should address this in the debriefing phase that it is not the intention to put all the responsibility on the shoulders of the young participants.

- Equal and meaningful participation:
  - o Have you considered
    - inclusive participation of diverse participants,
    - a comprehensive gender-sensitive approach, and
    - participant well-being, particularly focusing on children safety and protection?

It is of utter importance to ensure the meaningful inclusion of diverse participants, and emphasize equal participation and representation across gender, identity, culture, religion, and socio-economic background. Arrange an inclusive environment where all individuals, especially disadvantaged and marginalized, feel valued, respected, and empowered to participate fully. Actively address barriers and biases, promoting open communication and opportunities for all participants to thrive.

By thoroughly addressing these ethical considerations, you can ensure that the event respects the rights and privacy of the participants, maintains their safety, and acknowledges the potential long-term impacts on their lives.

## Annex 1: Graphical Representation of the Decision Tree Utilizing the *Up to You!* Simulation



## Annex 2: Policy Brief: Using Social Simulations to Foster Learning about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Critical Thinking in Youth (Aged 14+)

### Key Messages

- **Empowering Youth:** Social simulations and gamification are powerful tools to engage young people in learning about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and fostering critical thinking skills.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Simulations integrate real data, various socio-political topics and the complexity of global issues of the “real world”, making learning relevant and holistic.
- **Engagement and Motivation:** Simulations increase student motivation by offering interactive and immersive learning experiences.

In a rapidly changing world, traditional educational methods often struggle to keep pace with the dynamic, complex and interconnected challenges we face. Social simulations, such as the *Up to You!* simulation, offer innovative solutions to engage young people in learning about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This policy brief outlines the potential of social simulations to enhance education in non-formal settings, promoting critical thinking and a deeper understanding of global issues.

### The Role of Social Simulations

- **Interactive Learning:** Social simulations provide a hands-on approach to education, where students actively participate in scenarios that reflect real-world challenges.
- **Critical Thinking:** By navigating and discussing complex social, economic, and environmental issues, students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **SDG-Awareness:** These simulations raise awareness about the complexity of the SDGs, illustrating their interconnectivity but also their relevance and importance in everyday life.

### Implementation in Non-Formal Education

- **Flexible Learning Environments:** Non-formal education settings, such as community centers, museums, and after-school programs provide very good opportunities for implementation because they have usually more flexibility to integrate social simulations effectively, e.g. flexible time frames and designed workshop areas.
- **Collaboration with Schools:** Partnerships between non-formal education providers and schools can augment the impact by utilizing the flexible setting of non-formal education institutions and the group dynamics of school classes to enhance the learning experience, providing students with diverse perspectives and learning opportunities in an inclusive and accessible way.
- **Training Facilitators:** Educators and facilitators in non-formal settings can use the moderator’s handbook of the *Up to You!* simulation and the accompanying materials for easy-access and

curated self-training. This includes how to use effectively the simulation, ensuring they can guide students through the learning process, and give useful thematic input about the SDGs.

### **Policy Recommendations for Non-Formal Education Organizations**

- **Support and Funding:** Provide resources to develop and implement social simulations in your non-formal education settings to explore the benefits for your target groups regarding empowerment, real-world relevance and inclusivity.
- **Professional Development:** Allow for self-training of educators and facilitators to effectively use social simulation and accompanying material to get confident to implement this into future offers.
- **Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between schools and non-formal education providers, or between your institutions and invited experts to create a cohesive learning experience and to foster a bigger perspective on the complexity of the SDGs.
- **Research and Evaluation:** Conduct evaluations to assess the impact of social simulations on student learning and engagement, and use the findings to refine and improve these tools.

### **Conclusion**

Social simulations represent a promising approach to education, particularly in non-formal settings. By fostering critical thinking and raising awareness about the SDGs, these tools can prepare young people to navigate and address the complex challenges of our world. Implementing social simulations requires collaboration, support, and continuous evaluation to maximize their potential and impact on education.