

JDL Youth Worker Guidance

Jovem Design Lisboa (JDL)

Overview

Jovem Design Lisboa (JDL) is a design-oriented approach to engaging young people in community safety, helping young people aged 12 to 18 years who may be considered at risk of becoming involved in socially undesirable behaviours. The scheme aims to foster positive behaviours in young people and to strengthen their sense of belonging.

JDL is a structured design challenge that engages young people in designing creative solutions to problems and socially undesirable behaviour in their neighbourhood. Over 12 weeks, teams of young people seek to research problems in their neighbourhood, understand community needs, and generate creative solutions. Their ideas are presented to their community and a panel of eminent judges at a final 'JDL Showcase' event. Each JDL team is supported by a youth worker and a police mentor — a community policing officer from the local area.

The evidence base

True participation by young people

“Youth participation is not an end in itself, but a means of achieving positive changes in young people’s lives and of building a better society.”

Zaneta Gozdzik-Ormel (2015) p. 9.¹

Participation in decision-making processes that impact our lives is considered a fundamental right, and the basis for modern-day democracy. Article 12 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) highlights the need for the opinions of children and young people to be considered when decisions are being made about things that involve them.

JDL reinforces findings from literature on the engagement of young people. The most widely applied scale of measurement related to youth participation is *Hart’s Ladder of Participation*² (Day *et al*, 2011³).

¹ Gozdzik-Ormel, Zaneta (2015) *“Have your say! Anual on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life”*, Council of Europe Publishing: Strasbourg, France, available [here](#).

² Hart, R.A (1992) *Children’s participation: From tokenism to Citizenship*. Unicef: Florence, Italy, available [here](#).

³ Day, L., Sutton, L. and Jenkins, S. (2011) *“Children and Young People’s Participation in Planning and Regeneration”*. A Final Report to the Ecorys Research Programme 2010-11. Ecorys: Birmingham, UK. Available [here](#)

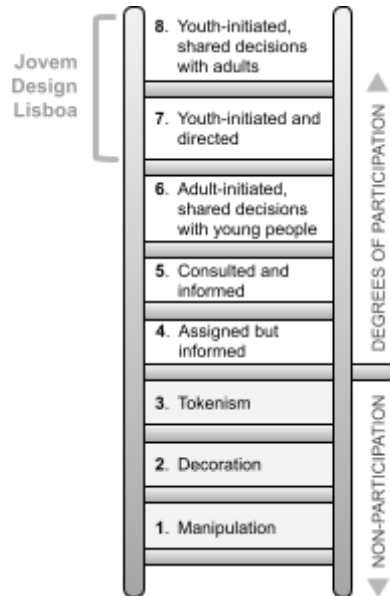


Figure 1. Hart's Ladder of Participation.

Adapted from Hart (1992)

Hart's ladder consists of eight levels, the bottom three of which are classified as 'non-participation', when children's views are simply co-opted to validate the decisions of adults. For Hart, true participation does not begin until the fifth level, and then escalates according to children's power to direct matters and the reducing influence exerted by adults.

The top two levels on the ladder imply a high level of independent decision-making by children, with adults performing more of the role of partners. These top two levels are where the JDL programme aspires to operate.

Creativity, self-esteem and self-actualisation

Evidence suggests that creativity methods may help improve and strengthen intergenerational relationships (Day *et al*, 2011). In this area, the methodology adopted by JDL also contributes.

The participation of young people in design and planning interventions in the real world brings with it a range of benefits (Day *et al*, 2011; Frank, 2006⁴), including:

- ***Personal benefits to young people*** – such as improved confidence, self-esteem, assertiveness and sense of control over their environment
- ***Development of 'life' skills that help young people progress*** – communication skills, creativity, problem solving skills, design skills, map interpretation and better understanding of community processes and the needs and perspectives of different social groups
- ***Educational benefits*** – related to academic achievement, attendance and behaviour at school

⁴ Frank, K.I. (2006) "The Potential of Youth Participation in Planning". *Journal of Planning Literature*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 351–371, available [here](#).

- **Enhanced civic and social responsibility** – including better understanding of community issues, enthusiasm for community participation, informal networking between young people, change in behaviour (toward the community and environment) and increased sense of community and ownership
- **Changes to physical and social environment** – improvements in design, planning and use of space
- **Social benefits** – including changes in adults’ attitudes towards young people and the development of better intergenerational relationships.

Your role as a JDL youth worker

Each JDL project focuses on a specific neighbourhood and involves four teams of between 5–9 young people. Each team is supported by a dedicated youth worker — you — and a police mentor from the local Community Policing Team. With your help, JDL has the potential to transform intergenerational relationships, and seeks to build bridges between young people and authority figures, including community police officers and the local community.

The success of *Jovem Design Lisboa* depends on the design and delivery of the programme, and so the following principles must be respected by JDL youth workers:

Principles for the JDL youth worker role

1. Your role is to support the young people in your team to make a positive difference in their neighbourhood / community
2. Young people should lead on the direction of their JDL project and make the decisions. Your role is to advise and support them in their decision-making, in particular by ensuring that:
 - The views and ideas of all team members are heard and respected (no-one should bully the team into any decision)
 - Decisions are taken in a fair and practical manner (e.g. by members voting with a show of hands)
 - The team sticks to the project timeline, so that they are ready to present at the final JDL Showcase event
3. JDL enables young people to learn about research, design and the communication of ideas.
 - You should provide constructive feedback on young people's ideas and support their development to a point where they can be tested with end-users (e.g. members of the community; or other people outside the team who raised the issue / problem the idea seeks to address)
4. Adults are also transformed by the process of engagement and involvement of young people
 - Young people should be given the opportunity, skills and support to challenge adult views (e.g. through development of design and communication skills)
 - Mentors must be willing and able to fully engage with the JDL programme.

Youth worker action during the JDL process

Setting up the JDL teams

- Drawing on your experience of working with the young people in the neighbourhood, your role as JDL youth worker will be to work with the JDL Coordinator to allocate 5–9 young people to the JDL project teams.

Training for youth workers and police mentors

- Training will be provided for youth workers, police mentors and volunteers to help them better understand their role in supporting teams of young people during the JDL programme. This will be an opportunity:
 - To review the JDL Team Workbook
 - To meet the police mentor allocated to your JDL team of young people
 - To ask any questions you might have about the JDL programme and your role.

Evaluating JDL impact

- Youth workers will support the JDL Coordinator in collecting information to assess the impact of the JDL programme. This will include a short, voluntary survey completed by participating young people before and after their JDL project to assess potential positive changes in their self-perception
- Youth workers, in the context of their organisation, must guarantee compliance with GDPR procedures when collecting information from young people.

JDL Launch event

- Youth workers play an important role at the JDL Launch event, working to help their young people identify as a team, bond together and build a positive team spirit. This is important for the young people to be able to work and tackle problems together effectively. Interpersonal problems that arise between team members will need to be managed and any tensions diffused
- Youth workers will support their teams of young people to complete positive team-building activities that are fun and competitive.

Completing the JDL project

- The JDL Team Workbook will guide activities during the JDL project period. This begins with activities to support team cohesion, including identifying strengths of team members and collectively agreeing on a team name
- Youth workers will collaborate with their team's police mentor in supporting and advising the young people in researching and understanding problems, and selecting the focus for their project
- Youth workers and police mentors will ensure that young people are accompanied by an adult when they are conducting interviews or undertaking other design research in their neighbourhood
- Over the course of the project, Youth workers will liaise with the JDL Project Coordinator to discuss the progress of their team

- During the JDL project, youth workers should support and advise their young people in completing their JDL Team Workbook. At least one, neatly completed workbook will need to be provided to the Judging panel at the final Showcase event at the end of the project. This should allow JDL judges to understand your team's thinking — the work it has undertaken and decisions it has made.

Mid-challenge activity

- Youth workers will accompany their teams in the mid-challenge activity half-way through the JDL project. This is a fun, social event that brings the teams together for a meal and an entertaining activity — like playing laser-tag, going bowling or roller-skating. The event rewards the young people for their work so far, and is an opportunity for the youth workers and police mentors to share their experiences
- Youth workers may need to assist the JDL Working Group with the logistics of the mid-challenge activity — such as shepherding the young people to and from the venue.

The final JDL Showcase event

- Youth workers will support their teams to complete the '*Final Checklist*' given at the end of the JDL Team Workbook, and support them in preparing and rehearsing their presentation of their design ideas for the final JDL Showcase event
- Youth workers will encourage their young people to invite family, friends, and members of the community who have helped in developing their team's design ideas, to attend the final JDL Showcase event. The JDL Working Group will provide promotional flyers for the Showcase event to youth workers, police mentors, volunteers and other key stakeholders, so these can be distributed around their team's neighbourhood
- Youth workers will support their teams during final rehearsals of their presentation at the event venue before the Showcase event begins
- The JDL Showcase event may be the first time some young people have ever presented to an audience. They may be very nervous, and your support will be crucial in helping them to overcome their fears and enjoy their success.

JDL youth workers' evaluation

Youth workers will be invited to share their thoughts and feedback regarding their JDL project experience at a focus group session that will be arranged after the project is completed.

Implementation of JDL team ideas

After the final Showcase event, the JDL Project Coordinator will liaise with members of the judging panel to follow-up on potential implementation of teams' design ideas. While there is no guarantee that ideas will be implemented (a fact made clear to the young people at the JDL Launch event) experience with similar programmes is that some will be — and the young people should be involved in this.

Further details

For more details about anything raised in this guidance, please contact the JDL Coordinator.

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