**Research and Action
for Emancipatory Policies
for Youth**

PROBLEMATIC & HYPOTHESIS BUILDING

Deliverables	**Further refinement of the initial question based on the exploration + construction of one or more hypotheses.** Building a hypothesis implies formulating an idea of what should occur if the solution proposed by the hypothesis is correct – in other words, a hypothesis proposes a concrete answer to the problem posed in the research question.
Goals	Go from a feeling of helplessness to consciousness of one's own power in society and to act: assume that the situation could be different and imagine a hypothesis to change it.
Step-by-step, with some tools	This step starts by sharing and organising information gathered in the exploration step **SUGGESTED TOOLS :** **[mindmap of variables Link to the sheet]** Next, building on that foundation, identify variables[1] : what factors could change an unsatisfactory situation? And finally, formulate one or more hypotheses. To be valid a hypothesis must meet several criteria: **→ suggested tool to check the validity of hypotheses: [checklist of the characteristics of a good hypothesis link to the sheet]**
Reminders	• Work on representations: after the information has been appropriated by the group, it can be useful to return to their representations before the exploration step, to see what has changed (see suggestion in **STEP 2**). • The hypotheses the group identifies will influence what action can be considered in the rest of the process: "concrete" actions (i.e. "projects") or "research"-type actions.[2]

[1] A variable is a factor that has been identified as having an impact - positive or negative - on the problem situation being studied.

[2] "research" or "action" type? Inventing a board game for children to talk about emotions ("action" type), or conducting a local assessment to understand young people's behaviour in a given neighbourhood ("research" type), are "research" or "action" type initiatives that are only pertinent in the context of the problem you're looking at.

Tips	A "spiderweb" is a fun energizer to start the step. In this activity, each participant chooses 2 people in the group without telling them. Then he or she gets into position at an equal distance from each of those 2 people and tries to move around the room to always stay an equal distance from them. Everyone moves around in every direction for some time. When the group stops moving, the facilitator selects one participant and moves him or her, which makes the whole group move. This activity introduces the work in this step, by making participants aware of the interactions between variables. You can also assign names to the person you move at the end, to make the game more tangible: "I'm moving the variable "money", "legal system", "politics", etc."
What's expected of you: your role, posture, and skills	• Help organise and summarise the information • Reformulate and solicit explanations • Help formulate hypotheses
Illustration	We think that building specific infrastructure for bikes would make getting to our structure easier. We should see more bikes coming to our structure after a bike path is created **(Hypothesis 1)** and secure bike parking is built **(Hypothesis 2).**
Ressources	• Philippot, P. (2000). Du problème de recherche à l'hypothèse. In R. J. Vallerand & U. Hess (Eds.), Méthodes de recherche en psychologie (pp 57-90). Québec : Gaëtan Morin Editeur • Poletiek, F. H. (2001). Hypothesis Testing Behaviour. Hove: Psychology Press • **[Gudelines link to the sheet]**