ABOUT THE PROJECT – MINDZEN

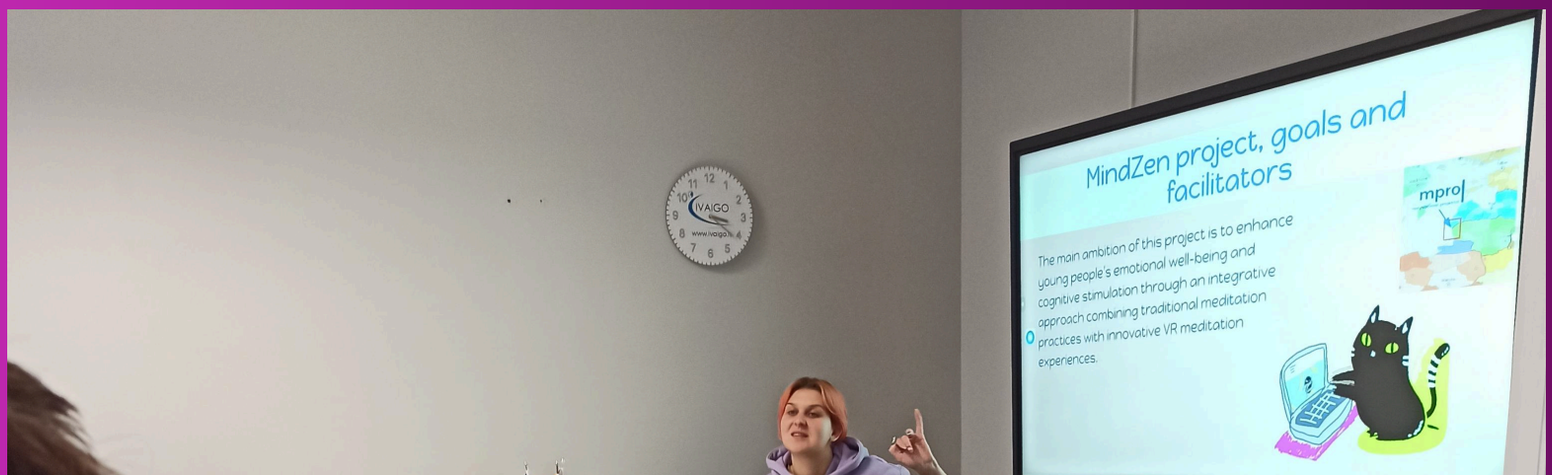
MindZen is a youth-focused initiative designed to enhance emotional well-being and cognitive awareness by combining traditional mindfulness practices with immersive Virtual Reality (VR) experiences. The project responds to the growing levels of stress, anxiety, and cognitive overload among young people by offering innovative, accessible, and engaging tools for self-regulation and mental resilience.

At the core of MindZen is the integration of embodied mindfulness methods—such as breathwork, movement, creative expression, and reflection—with guided VR meditation environments. This blended approach supports young people in developing self-awareness, emotional balance, focus, and stress-management skills in a way that resonates with their everyday digital realities.

The project also aims to strengthen the capacity of youth workers by providing a practical, replicable workshop model and a digital toolkit that can be adapted to different non-formal education contexts. MindZen promotes inclusion, digital innovation, and quality youth work, while ensuring that mindfulness practices remain grounded, human-centered, and safe.

The MindZen Workshop Model presented in this toolkit has been piloted, tested, and positively evaluated by young participants (18–25) and youth workers, demonstrating strong relevance, emotional impact, and practical applicability in youth work settings.

MINZEN WORKSHOP MODEL



A replicable and flexible mindfulness & VR-based workshop format for youth and youth workers

The MindZen Workshop Model is a modular and flexible experiential learning format designed for non-formal education contexts. While it can be implemented as a two-day workshop, the model is intentionally designed to allow youth workers to select, adapt, and combine individual mindful moments according to the needs of their target group, available time, group dynamics, and local context.
The model brings together grounding practices, creative mindfulness methods, and immersive Virtual Reality (VR) meditation. Youth workers may choose to deliver the full sequence or use specific mindful moments as standalone sessions or in customized combinations. This flexibility allows the model to be applied both as a longer immersive experience and as shorter, focused interventions supporting emotional regulation, stress reduction, and cognitive presence.
The MindZen Workshop Model has been tested and very well evaluated by young people (18–25) and youth workers, who highlighted its calming effect, accessibility, and the innovative yet safe use of VR as a mindfulness support tool. The structure presented below is intentionally generic and context-independent, making it easy to replicate, adapt, and integrate into a wide range of youth work, educational, and well-being settings.

Mindful Moment 1: Yoga & Body Awareness

Gentle movement and breath-focused exercises support body awareness and help participants identify physical and emotional stress signals. This mindful movement session promotes grounding, relaxation, and body–mind connection, preparing participants for deeper mindfulness practices.

Mindful Moment 2: Therapeutic Painting & Puzzle-bassed activities

An art-based mindfulness practice focused on sensory awareness rather than artistic outcomes. Through painting and puzzle-based activities, participants engage with color, texture, shape, and movement, gently shifting their attention to the present moment. This mindful creative process supports emotional regulation, self-expression, concentration, and mental calm, while reducing cognitive overload and performance-related pressure.

Mindful Moment 3: VR Introduction & Safety

Participants are introduced to Virtual Reality technology, its role within mindfulness practice, and clear safety guidelines. This session builds confidence, ensures accessibility, and supports the responsible and comfortable use of VR tools before immersive experiences.

Mindful Moment 4: VR Meditation

Guided VR meditation experiences support deep focus, relaxation, and cognitive presence. Participants engage individually or in rotation, depending on available equipment, followed by short moments of self-observation and note-taking to capture immediate impressions.

Mindful Moment 5: Reflection, Feedback & Testimonials

The workshop concludes with group discussion, written reflection, and short testimonials. Participants reflect on emotional and cognitive changes, while youth workers gather qualitative feedback and insights for evaluation and future adaptation of the MindZen Workshop Model.

Visual Method Guide: MindZen Mindful Moments

Method:
4–4 diaphragmatic breathing (breathwork)

Description:
Participants practice slow diaphragmatic breathing by inhaling for four counts and exhaling for four counts. This simple breathwork method supports grounding, body awareness, and nervous system regulation, helping participants settle into the present moment and prepare for further mindfulness activities.

Method:
Seated mindfulness with guided breath and body awareness

Description:
Participants sit comfortably on mats while the facilitator guides attention to breathing and bodily sensations. This seated mindfulness practice supports grounding, emotional settling, and present-moment awareness, creating a calm and focused group atmosphere and preparing participants for deeper reflection or immersive practices.

Method:
Gentle yoga stretching with breath awareness

Description:
Participants engage in slow, guided stretching combined with conscious breathing. This gentle yoga-based movement supports body awareness, releases physical tension, and encourages participants to notice sensations without pushing limits. The practice promotes grounding, flexibility, and a calm mind–body connection, preparing participants for further mindfulness activities.

Method:
Therapeutic painting (mandala-based mindfulness)

Description:
Participants engage in mindful painting of symmetrical mandala patterns, focusing on color choice, texture, and repetitive movement. This practice supports present-moment awareness, emotional regulation, and mental calm by anchoring attention in a non-verbal creative process. The symmetry and rhythm of painting help reduce cognitive overload and promote a sense of inner balance.

Method:
Puzzle-based mindfulness (focused attention practice)

Description:
Participants engage in puzzle assembly as a mindful attention exercise, focusing on shape, color, and detail. This activity supports concentration, patience, and present-moment awareness by gently anchoring attention in a structured, hands-on process. The method helps calm the mind, reduce mental noise, and strengthen cognitive focus without verbal guidance.

Method:
Meta Quest VR introduction)

Description:
Participants are introduced to the Meta Quest VR headset and its basic controls through a short guided demonstration. The session explains how Meta Quest is used within mindfulness practice, helping participants feel confident and familiar with the technology before engaging in immersive VR meditation experiences.

Method:
Meta Quest safety briefing & TRIPP App VR introducti

Description:
Participants receive a safety briefing for Meta Quest headsets and are introduced to the TRIPP App as a VR-based mindfulness tool. The session explains basic controls, comfort guidelines, and the purpose of using TRIPP for guided meditation, helping participants feel safe, confident, and prepared for immersive VR experiences.

Method:
Meta Quest Guardian setup & TRIPP App intention setting

Description:
Participants are guided through the Meta Quest Guardian setup to define a safe virtual boundary before entering the VR experience. After this step, participants select a TRIPP App meditation mode—such as Calm or Focus—based on their personal intention, preparing them for an immersive and purposeful VR mindfulness session.

Method:
Individual Meta Quest–based VR meditation (TRIPP App)

Description:
Participants engage in individual VR meditation sessions using Meta Quest and the TRIPP App, with on-site support available whenever needed. Each participant selects a meditation based on personal preference (Calm or Focus) and enters an immersive experience lasting between **8 and 30 minutes,** allowing for a personalized, self-paced mindfulness journey.

Method:
TRIPP App personalized VR meditation setup

Description:
Participants customize their VR meditation experience in the TRIPP App by selecting a worldscape, audio environment, and thematic focus (e.g. calm, joy, focus). This personalization supports intention-setting and increases engagement, allowing participants to enter a VR meditation that aligns with their emotional state and individual needs.

Method:
Group reflection and facilitated discussion

Description:
Participants take part in a facilitated group discussion reflecting on their mindfulness and VR meditation experience. Through guided questions and shared insights, the session supports collective reflection, emotional integration, and closure of the workshop, allowing participants to articulate personal takeaways and learning outcomes.

Method:
Soft Yoga

Description:
We connect with our body through mindful yoga movements. The participants will be guided and moving with the rhythm of the breath.

Method:
Breathwork

Description:
Guided Meditation + Different Breathwork techniques for energizing, releasing and calming the body, mind and soul.

Method:
Sound experience with crystal singing bowls & instruments

Description:

Introduction: Sound vibrations, how sound calms the body and mind through brain waves and frequencies. How we can connect with our subconscious mind through sound mediation.

- Part 3 Guided Meditation / Yoga Nidra: A guided meditation through sensory, visualization, and breath awareness.
- Part 4 Sound Meditation: A sound experience for deep relaxation, dreamscape exploration and rest.

Method:
Reflection & Journaling

Description:
Short journaling questions about the activities led by meditation-coach. How did I feel? What activities shifted my nervous system and helped me focus? How did sound meditation affect me? What practices will I use moving forward?

Method:
Introduction to VR & Safety Guidelines

Description:
Explanation: VR technology, purpose in meditation
Demo: how to use VR headset safely

Method:
Meditation with VR

Description:
Guided VR meditation (15–20 min per participant, rotation if limited devices)
Participants record immediate feelings (cards/notes)

Method:
Sharing prompts

Description:
The participants will get carefully curated prompts that might spark some thoughts about self-care, rest, emotional awareness and relations. These questions will be discussed in smaller groups.ely