

Chapter 4

Educational activities

In this chapter we propose a series of activities specifically designed to facilitate intercultural learning in the context of youth work and non-formal education.

For an overview of the activities, you can consult the two tables presented below, where activities are organised by themes and by competences, respectively, in alphabetical order. The T-Kit can be used in any informal, non-formal or formal setting to facilitate intercultural learning with young people. The activities can be used for awareness-raising events, as well as for bigger youth events, youth work activities or training courses. Although the T-Kit provides guidelines, facilitators are the ones who know their context and participants best, so they will need to adapt the activities and to integrate them into a coherent overall programme in order to respond to the needs of their target group and to achieve the objectives of their intervention.

In this T-Kit we use the word “facilitator” for people who run activities with young people. These could be youth workers, young people themselves (peer-to-peer education), teachers, trainers, summer camp educators or any person accompanying young people in learning and reflection processes. A facilitator is not expected to be an “expert”, but rather to provide a supportive space for learning and for helping young people develop their knowledge, skills and attitude through exchange, experiences, discussions and reflections.

The tips and instructions provided in the T-Kit are to be considered as guidelines. It is not possible to develop a manual that would fit the situation of all young people in Europe and respond to the needs of all local realities. Therefore, the descriptions below are to be taken as “standard” explanations, which facilitators will need to adapt.

BUILDING AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

Depending on whether you run a half-day workshop, a one-day activity or a one-week training course, you have different ways of building a coherent programme to facilitate intercultural learning. You can find below suggestions for short-term interventions (half-day and one-day programmes). Of course, these are to be taken as general proposals, and strongly depend, as stated earlier, on your target group and context.

Running a half-day workshop on intercultural learning

If you only have half a day with a group to address intercultural learning, you could choose two or three activities to introduce the subject and get participants to reflect further, with the possibility to open up the path for further work on the topic.

Here are two proposals:

1. Introduction to culture, cultural differences and intercultural learning

- ▶ The “Man/mouse” activity could be used as a warming-up exercise for participants and as a way to make them realise that we often have different perceptions of what we consider to be “the same”.
- ▶ Afterwards, you could use “Grandma, let me tell you about culture” as an opportunity for participants to reflect on their understanding of words such as culture, identity, religion, etc.
- ▶ You could then move on with “Autobiography of intercultural encounters”, which provides participants with the opportunity to reflect on their own experience with intercultural learning, as well as to start addressing stereotypes and prejudice.

2. Intercultural communication and dialogue, the meaning of words and stories

- ▶ You could start with “Do you see what I see?” as a warming-up activity about perception and perspectives.
- ▶ You could then continue with the “Associogram” (in particular if you work with a group of participants who speak various languages) in order to reflect on the importance of words and cultural associations.
- ▶ “Where do you stand?” offers an opportunity for debate and different perspectives on intercultural dilemmas and controversial topics.
- ▶ Finally, you could use “In other words” to get participants actively involved in reviewing media articles related to intercultural issues in order to develop critical thinking skills.

Running a one-day activity on intercultural learning

If you have a whole day, you could spend some time in the morning exploring concepts and opinions, and you could then move towards activities tackling the issue of intercultural learning and human rights in the afternoon.

Here are two possible scenarios again; remember, these are just examples of one possible flow.

1. Tackling discrimination, power relations and social and political contexts of intercultural learning

- ▶ You could start with “Find your group” as a way of introducing the day and raising awareness of participants about solidarity, differences and belonging.
- ▶ You could then continue with the “Flower of identity” as a way to deepen the reflection on diversity and multiple identities, and categories we belong to or choose to belong to.
- ▶ As a next step, you could introduce “From exclusion to integration”. This activity explores the mechanisms of minority and majority in society and enables participants to reflect on their own behaviours, attitudes and prejudice.
- ▶ Finally, you could do “Don’t be a bystander” as a way for participants to learn about human rights violations in relation to intercultural issues and to develop skills to respond to such situations.

2. Understanding culture, intercultural learning and dialogue

- ▶ In this scenario, you could start with “Every picture tells a story” as a way of introducing the topic of perception and cultural bias.
- ▶ You could then move to the “Intercultural history line”, which enables participants to share their knowledge, understanding and experiences about their history, culture and/or religion. This can be interesting both in an international group with more heterogeneity and in a local group where you can see different perceptions of the “same” history.
- ▶ Afterwards, you could do “Stages of intercultural sensitivity” in order to introduce Bennett’s model and get them to reflect on these stages and their experience or understanding of them.
- ▶ Finally, you could do the activity “Sharing discrimination – Fighting discrimination”, allowing participants to share real-life situations they have faced and discuss how to address similar scenarios in the future.

Longer training or educational activities

For longer training activities, you have the time to define your overall objectives and the objectives of each session you want to run, and you can then choose your activities accordingly. Make sure that the progress line of your training course and the link between sessions becomes clear to participants.

A practical tool for reflecting on programme development from an intercultural perspective is the “Indicators for Intercultural Dialogue”,²⁶ developed by the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union in the field of youth. A grid of criteria and indicators organised around the three phases of an activity – preparation, implementation and follow-up – will give you a picture of the way in which you approach intercultural dialogue in your activities. It highlights the aspects that are your “strong points”, but also the aspects you might want to give closer attention to, in order to create spaces for meaningful intercultural dialogue and learning. This tool can be used for various types of activities: those that focus primarily on intercultural learning and those that focus on other topics but choose to have a transversal intercultural perspective.

The criteria are as follows.

²⁶. Available at: <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/indicators>, accessed 14 December 2017.

Preparation phase

1. The overall aim and the objectives of the activity are explicitly linked to intercultural dialogue and learning.
2. The diversity of those involved in the activity provides an opportunity for intercultural dialogue and learning.
3. Facilitators use updated theoretical base and diverse methodologies of intercultural dialogue and learning to plan the programme.
4. Activities focused on understanding the functioning of stereotypes, prejudices and different forms of discrimination and social injustice are planned in the programme.
5. Contents of the programme related to intercultural dialogue are clearly connected to the daily life contexts of participants.

Implementation phase

6. Multilingualism is used if needed.
7. There is a clear connection between intercultural dialogue and any other main topic of the programme.
8. The activity takes into account aspects related to identity and power relations.
9. The activity stimulates participants to develop their knowledge about the historical and cultural backgrounds of the people they interact with and the social and political context in which they live.
10. The activity stimulates the development of attitudes like empathy, solidarity, openness and respect for otherness.
11. The activity stimulates the development of skills like critical thinking, multiperspectivity and tolerance for ambiguity.
12. The activity increases participants' awareness about global interconnectedness and the role of solidarity and co-operation in addressing global challenges.
13. Facilitators engage in conflict transformation in compliance with human rights principles.

Follow-up phase

14. Participants are encouraged and supported to act as multipliers of intercultural dialogue and engage in social transformation.
15. The activity contributes to building evidence of good practices in intercultural learning and intercultural dialogue.

KEY TO THE PRESENTATION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Source

The source mentions where the activity comes from.

If activities are adapted from another publication, this is mentioned. Often, activities have been transformed, so the name of the person who adapted them is mentioned as well.

If they are new activities, you will find the name(s) of the person(s) who developed them.

Themes

The themes listed in this category correspond to the issues listed in the activity overview table.

- ▶ Identity
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Social and political context
- ▶ Differences in perspectives
- ▶ Stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination
- ▶ Intercultural communication and dialogue.

In some activities, you will find additional, more specific issues mentioned. These could be related to a particular target group or situation, or to one specific issue within the broader themes (refugees and migration, for example).

Competences addressed

This section offers information about the competences addressed through this particular activity. The competences are those provided in the overview table on activities, and also in the section “Competences developed through intercultural learning” in Chapter 3 of the T-Kit, where they are described and categorised into knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Complexity

Levels 1 to 4 indicate the general level of competency required for participation and/or the amount of preparation involved, as well as the level of challenge for the participants and facilitator involved in the activity.

Level 1 – These are short, simple activities mostly useful as starters to get people to begin thinking about intercultural learning, but without going into too much depth.

Level 2 – These are simple activities designed to stimulate interest in an issue. They do not require prior knowledge on intercultural learning. Many of the activities at this level are designed to help people develop communication and group work skills, while at the same time stimulating their interest in issues related to culture and intercultural learning.

Level 3 – These are longer activities designed to develop a deeper understanding and insights into an issue. They demand higher levels of competence in discussion or group work skills.

Level 4 – These activities are longer, require good group work and discussion skills, concentration and co-operation from the participants and also take longer to prepare. They are also more all-encompassing in that they provide a wider and deeper understanding of the issues.

Group size

This indicates how many people you need to run the activity and what the maximum number of participants is in order to work in good conditions.

Time

This is the estimated time in minutes needed to complete the whole activity, including the discussion.

Objectives

These outline the extent of the learning that the participants are aiming to achieve in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Materials

This is a list of equipment needed to run the activity.

Preparation

This section provides you with specific information on how and what to prepare before you run the activity, as well as with suggested activities to run prior to the activity in question, as a way of creating a good flow.

Instructions

This is a list of detailed step-by-step instructions on how to run the activity.

Debriefing and evaluation

This section includes suggested questions to help the facilitator conduct the debriefing and evaluate the activity. The debriefing and evaluation are a very important part of an activity, and the one where people move from doing to reflection and learning. Depending on your context and objectives, you may adapt the debriefing questions to lead the discussion in a particular direction or to tackle particular issues.

Tips for facilitators

These include guidance notes, things to be aware of – especially for the debriefing of the activity – information on possible variations on running the activity and points of attention.

Variations

This section includes variations, that is, alternative scenarios for running an activity, taking into account the size of the group, the topic or the time frame.

Suggestions for follow-up

These include ideas for what to do next and links to other activities that are relevant for dealing with the theme.

Handouts

These include role cards, action pages, discussion cards and other material that should be given to participants in the context of the activity.