

Introduction

Welcome to the revised edition of the T-Kit “Intercultural learning”!

Since the first edition was published in 2000, the world has experienced numerous and complex changes and events that make intercultural learning an important tool for young people navigating their lives in a globalised, interconnected and multicultural world.

The idea of revising the T-Kit came both from the awareness of a changing global context and from the need to bring intercultural matters closer to political and human rights education explicitly. The result is a revised T-Kit intended as an educational material for youth workers, educators and trainers to understand what intercultural learning is and how to best consider it and enhance it when planning, running and evaluating activities with young people. The ultimate aim of these educational processes is to enable people to live together peacefully and respectfully in a multicultural world.

Intercultural learning is not a new topic in the environment of education or youth work. It remains an important topic for the political priorities of both the European Commission and the Council of Europe, and of their partnership in the field of youth. Intercultural learning is an educational approach that can lead to social transformation, so that people from different cultural backgrounds can develop positive relations based on the values and principles of human rights and on seeing cultural differences as positive things. It is a form of political and social education that needs to pay attention not only to intercultural relations, but also to different understandings of culture and diversity, power relations, distribution of resources, political and social context, human rights, discrimination, history, daily interactions among different groups, and so on. In the process of revising the T-Kit, the authors paid attention to making links between intercultural learning and these considerations specifically, aware of the fact that intercultural learning is a lifelong process, and it cannot develop its full potential unless contextualised in young people’s daily lives.

At the beginning of the revision process, the editorial team members asked themselves the following question: why should young people need intercultural learning? This is a question we would also invite the readers of the T-Kit to ask themselves, as their answers have profound implications for their educational approach with young people. The editorial team’s answers guided the development of the contents of this T-Kit.

- ▶ Intercultural learning helps decode structures of power in society and relations between individuals and groups.
- ▶ It helps facilitate open identity definition.
- ▶ It prepares young people for intercultural dialogue.
- ▶ It encourages curiosity and effort to make sense of a complex world.
- ▶ It cherishes diversity and human rights values.

This T-Kit was developed for the context of youth work and non-formal education with young people, both of which are tools for personal development, social integration and active citizenship of young people. Educators and youth workers have an important role in addressing intercultural learning in their work with young people.

They can stimulate young people's learning in their daily lives, so that they can question and extend their perception, develop competences to interact positively with people from different cultural backgrounds and embrace the values of diversity, equality and dignity. In today's Europe, it seems to us as an editorial team that these values and skills are fundamental for young people and for society as a whole in order to continue building peace and mutual understanding.

WHAT IS IN THE T-KIT? STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The approach of the T-Kit is to accompany the reader from the theory to the practice of intercultural learning, from the broad aims of intercultural learning to the detailed questions of how to embed it in youth work.

The first chapter of the T-Kit, "Intercultural learning: intersections and limitations", briefly presents a picture of how intercultural learning and its related concepts are being questioned, redefined and developed to respond to a changing world.

Chapter 2, "Intercultural learning: theories, contexts, realities", introduces several perspectives on diversity, culture and identity. How people perceive these three realities shapes how they understand the world and also intercultural relations. The chapter also presents the competences needed for intercultural learning. Stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination are analysed as the main challenges for intercultural societies. Finally, the chapter introduces elements of intercultural learning theory and models.

Chapter 3, "Facilitation and design of intercultural learning processes", reviews different approaches and key aspects for facilitators to consider when planning content and methods to make intercultural learning processes meaningful.

Chapter 4, "Educational activities", includes several activities and proposals designed to facilitate intercultural learning in the context of youth work and non-formal education.

Chapter 5, "Intercultural learning in action", presents ways in which intercultural learning can be linked with daily practice, outside of the non-formal education or youth work settings.

We hope that your intercultural learning journey will be enriched after reading this T-Kit and that it will become a useful companion in your work with young people.

Mara Georgescu

Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth