

SECTION II

PRACTICES, TOOLS, GUIDELINES

CHAPTER 2

METHODS AND APPLICATION



Introduction

The European Union is a society formed by increasingly composite and multicultural local communities.

According to Eurostat, there are 35.1 million residents in Europe born outside the EU-28. Over the last ten years, Europe has been facing massive migration waves. In addition, we live in a historical period characterized by impressive migratory flows of political asylum seekers from African and Asian countries, fleeing from war and misery.

Mediterranean countries, in particular Italy, are very exposed to migration flows arriving in Europe by sea - in 2017 alone were 171,635 (IOM data, 2018) - which add to the migratory pressure on the eastern borders of the Union.

On the other hand, European citizens themselves increasingly decide to live in Union countries other than

those of birth: on 1 January 2016, according to Eurostat, these citizens were 19.3 million.

Having this data in mind, we can say there is a great mobility of people towards but also across Europe, especially regarding the new generations. This happens for two reasons: on the one hand, new generations are more bent on moving and they often consider this as a challenge, as well as an opportunity, to build an intercultural European Union. On the other hand, Young Europeans are also the ones who move easier within the Union: decades of Youth, Youth in Action, Erasmus, Erasmus+ programmes have facilitated youth mobility, leading to an increasing number of young people willing to live in another country, and also to meet non-EU peers.

Cultural diversity is an “integral part of the European Union’s values” (JOIN/2016/029 final) that characterizes its development and strategic role in the world.

Therefore it appears fundamental to start developing different activities that are interculturally oriented for young people, starting from the organization of events, sports and recreational activities, local volunteering, to create a continuity of values, methods and perspectives with the Erasmus + programme and with the European Solidarity Corps.

The intercultural perspective is the horizon of this path, but this path must be declined in the daily life of young people, so that it becomes solid and produces long-lasting fruits.

The toolkit “From Youth Centers to Intercultural Centers” intends to facilitate the transition of Youth Centers into Intercultural Centers within the EU, where young people can experience different contexts and take part in a range of activity characterized by the intercultural element.

For this reason, the first objective of the toolkit is pro-

moting the quality of work in the field of youth through its intercultural characterization. Another objective is fostering social inclusion, fundamental when considering the increasing influx of immigrants and asylum seekers; this influx can be seen as a chance to practice solidarity and promote inclusiveness in the local communities that compose the EU. The young people, placed in this context, have the need for empowerment (the last objective), to increase such skills that enable them to address the challenges and to better take advantage of the opportunities that the epochal processes of mobility in Europe pose.

This toolkit aims to implement an innovation within the framework of Youth Work, from four countries: Italy, Portugal, Spain and Slovenia. The four partner organisations operate in local communities where young people already cohabit with their immigrant peers, including asylum seekers and refugees. This situation, which will increasingly characterize local communities

in the EU, requires an evolution of the traditional model of Youth Centers. Starting from the experience of the partners, the final goal is then to propose an innovation in methods and practices, which can curve the different activities of the Youth Centers by making them more and more inclusive, multi-centred and able to reflect the complexity of the local communities in which they take place.

70 Such innovation can be adopted by youth workers all across Europe, progressively building a European Network of Intercultural Centers.

Following this path the social inclusion of young people, paying special attention to those with fewer opportunities, can be facilitated.

At the same time, such characterization of youth activities carried out in local contexts eases the empowerment of young people who become more equipped to face both challenges and opportunities of multicultural

societies.

In the growing multicultural composition of Europe, the issue of the influx of thousands of asylum seekers - which in some Mediterranean and Central/Eastern Europe countries often represents an emergency - has become a problem.

Past experience of the project partners reflects different socio-cultural contexts, as well as different immigration profiles and their impacts. Consequently, the trials conducted to validate the Toolkit have taken into account such diversity. Therefore, the developed model, which is now proposed at EU level, has the necessary flexibility and capability to adapt to various and heterogeneous scenarios.

So, the Toolkit proposes activities that make the Youth Centers evolve by giving all their traditional activities an intercultural twist: sports, aggregative and ludic workshops, public events, local volunteering, etc.

This is intended to provide a stable and permanent basis for local (and intercultural) communities in Europe fostering social inclusion, youth empowerment and building bridges with those community programmes that provide turning-point experiences for young people (Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, etc.)

Methodology

The FYCIC project "From Youth Centers to Intercultural Centers" comes from the need to implement innovative interventions of inclusion, participation and active citizenship of the migrant population within the field of the youth work, tested in recent years by several European non-profit organizations.

The need arises as a response to the migratory phenomenon that has characterized Europe in recent years.

Since the 1990s, European countries bordering the

Mediterranean began to be crossed by the transit of migratory flows to Northern Europe; over the years, there has also been an increasing number of migrants settling down in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

Italy has been the protagonist of this important passage, along with other southern European countries such as Spain, Portugal and Greece.

In our days, the transformation is also affecting the countries of Central Europe, such as Slovenia. This country, is part of the so called "Balkan route", so it is a transit for those moving from Central Asian countries to Northern Europe; on the other hand, it has been chosen as destination country by many people moving from ex- Yugoslavia countries in early '90s, who nowadays settled down in Slovenia and are building their future with their families in a new country.

FYCIC, because of these features linked to the new flows of settled immigration, involved organisations

from four countries, three of the Euro-Mediterranean area: Italy, Portugal, Spain; and Slovenia as a country of Central Europe.

The four organizations involved, as well as being united by experiences in educational, aggregative and socialization activities, deal with immigration and promote inclusion, participation and recognition of the rights of the different communities living in their territories.

The four partner organisations operate in local communities where native young people live with immigrant peers, including asylum seekers and refugees.

This situation requires an evolution of the traditional approaches of educational and aggregative centers, which should become places open to diversity, which encourage dialogue, confrontation and development of a more welcoming and inclusive community able to respond to the changes.

The goals of FYCIC " From Youth Center to Intercultural

Center" are to reflect on this necessary cultural transformation, to understand what experiences are capitalizable and transferable in Europe, what useful advice to give to educational and aggregative realities and what tools we can put in place to facilitate and promote the necessary transformation.

Starting from a comparison of the partners' experiences and innovative practices, new strategies and methods have been elaborated and shared in order to enrich the daily activities of the Youth Centres with an intercultural sensitivity.

The activities have been designed in such a way that they can be carried out in different contexts and in different ways: from playful-aggregative workshops, to public events, to local volunteering, to sports activities.

This path of study and comparison with partners, in addition to the development of transferable activities to promote, has allowed to share and refine an innova-

tive method to be applied.

Through non-formal education and learning by doing, the strategies used to structure and describe the activities of the toolkit were to focus on the promotion of relationship, cooperation and active participation.

Consequently the toolkit activities are divided into:

- **Learning:** aimed at improving the intercultural learning, the activities are mainly focused on providing opportunities to discover and understand the cultural diversities, by developing relational skills;
- **Exchanges:** aimed at fostering the intercultural exchange, these activities provide occasions to promote confrontation and cooperation;
- **Active Participation:** after a process of relation and cooperation, these activities help promoting interculture by creating occasions of civic engagement and active citizenship for people from differ-

ent cultures

- **Box of inspiration:** successfully tested by different organizations in specific contexts, these activities can be an inspiration to other youth centers to implement innovative activities for the promotion of interculture.

With the FYCIC project, it has been possible to address the issue of diversity in all its aspects, from cultural to social, geographical, religious, political, etc..

The project team also developed a set of tools and advices to ensure the physical premises and general initiatives to encourage the welcome, inclusion and participation of people with different needs within the youth centers.

The principles that have guided the project team in setting up the methods, tools and advices contained in this toolkit are those set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of United Nations and in the

White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue promoted by the Council of Europe.

74

The different activities proposed in the toolkit have been tested in different local contexts with different target groups. This validation phase allowed the project team to recognize strengths and weaknesses in each of them; the activities have then been improved and refined in order to make them adaptable to the widest scope of possible scenarios and contexts. Each partner has been able to contribute to the adaptability of the activities thanks to the specificities and the different experiences acquired in its local context. The diversity of these organisations has fostered a dialogue between the partners that allowed each action to be conceived and improved according to the different peculiarities and needs that have emerged. This work has facilitated the applicability of the different proposed activities in different contexts, thus favouring their replicability.

CANTIERE GIOVANI (CG) has twenty years of experience in interventions and activities related to the support and inclusion of foreigners in the local community. Specifically, it deals with minors, adults and foreign families with work, economic and bureaucratic difficulties, which try to settle in peripheral urban contexts. The reference area of intervention is the region Campania, Southern Italy, in particular the densely populated urban area that goes from Naples to Caserta. The type of migration is very heterogeneous and the main communities present are Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria, Burkina Faso from Africa; Poland, Romania, Albania and Ukraine from Europe; Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh from Asia. Cantiere Giovani deals with the teaching of the Italian language, support and guidance, cultural mediation in schools, it organizes initiatives and events that promote knowledge, respect and enhancement of cultural diversity in the territory.

AVENTURA MARÃO CLUBE (AMC) based in Amar-

ante, Portugal, AMC has 27 years of experience in the youth work, the last years it coordinated around 70 projects involving more than 600 youngsters in volunteering and international mobility. Through the activities of Casa da Juventude de Amarante, AMC has been promoting the practice of healthy lifestyles (especially food and sport), raising awareness for sustainable development (support for organic producers in the region and promotion of Fair Trade) and promoting volunteering, Human Rights education and intercultural dialogue.

DRUSTVO ZA RAZVIJANJE PROSTOVOLJNEGA DELA NOVO MESTO (DRPDNM) is based in Novo Mesto (Slovenia) and has 25 years of experience in education, youth, citizens, migrants, refugees, woman, families, empowerment, international cooperation.

It promotes the values of solidarity, tolerance, voluntarism, active living, clean environment, citizenship awareness and inter-cultural dialogue, citizens participation. It

manages a daily centre for Roma children to promote integration with the local community.

ASOCIACIÓN CULTURAL ESPACIO PLAZA SAREAN KULTUR ELKARTEA (SAREAN) located in the neighbourhood of San Francisco in Bilbao (Spain), an area with a high percentage of migrant population.

It organizes different activities as talks, workshops, exhibitions, concerts or dinners in collaboration with migrant associations, making public the work of artists and thinkers from other countries. It is an intergenerational space, and organizes activities for children, youngsters and older people.

The final activities elaborated in the toolkit have taken into account the comparison between these realities, the valorisation of the specific experiences and the adaptability of every single activity in the different specific contexts.

This process has allowed, in addition to the attention

to dialogue between the different components, the enrichment of methods and strategies to be applied, creating an instrument that has greater possibilities to be used in the different European realities. The Toolkit is translated into different languages with the idea of making it a useful manual for organizations operating in different places and contexts, to encourage participation and inclusion on a wider scale.

76

The intention of this Toolkit was precisely to contribute to improve the work in the youth field, creating a tool, the Toolkit, to be adopted by the youth workers of the partners, their national and European networks, and then extended in the European Union, progressively building a European Network of Intercultural Centres.

The toolkit can then be used by the organizations involved in the project and their networks, to concretely facilitate the social inclusion of young people, paying attention to young people with fewer opportunities such as refugees or people with a different cultural

background.

This idea of characterizing the Youth Centers into Intercultural Centres also has, as its transversal objective, the empowerment of young people, more prepared to face the contemporary challenges, ready to seize new opportunities for local development in a multicultural context and to be more open to understand the complexity of the world we live in.

Interculture in Erasmus +

Europe needs more cohesive and inclusive societies which allow citizens to play an active role in democratic life. The European Union considers a value the intercultural dialogue and knowledge about and the acceptance of diversity and tolerance in society. Education, training, youth work and sport are key to promote common European values, foster social integration, enhance intercultural understanding and a sense

of belonging to a community, and to prevent violent radicalisation. Erasmus+ is an effective instrument to promote the inclusion of people with disadvantaged backgrounds, including newly arrived migrants. Other priority is the empowerment of young people, and their ability to participate actively in society, in line with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty to "encourage the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe". This issue can also be targeted through non-formal learning activities, which aim at enhancing the skills and competences of young people as well as their active citizenship

The Erasmus Plus Programme supports active citizenship and ethics in lifelong learning; it fosters the development of social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy. Priority is active participation in democratic life, social and civic engagement through formal or non-formal learning activities. The focus is on raising awareness on and un-

derstanding the European Union context, notably as regards the common EU values, the principles of unity and diversity, as well as their social, cultural and historical heritage.

Social inclusion is an overarching priority across all sectors of the programme. Promote – in particular through innovative and integrated approaches – ownership of shared values, equality, social inclusion, diversity and non-discrimination. Priority is to support and assess new approaches to reduce disparities in accessing and engaging with formal and non-formal education, as well as projects that tackle discrimination, segregation and racism. The programme supports the integration of people with migrant backgrounds, including gathering and disseminating good practices on the issue.

Priority of the programme is also to improve the level of key competences and skills of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, as well as to promote participation in democratic life in Europe and the

labour market, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity, in particular through increased learning mobility opportunities for young people, those active in youth work or youth organisations and youth leaders, and through strengthened links between the youth field and the labour market;

Through the Erasmus+ programme, the Commission funds projects and other activities for the integration of migrants in all sectors of education and training. Strategic partnerships are aimed at the development of innovative educational practices and promoting transnational cooperation.

78

What is an Intercultural Center: prerequisites

This toolkit can be used by the youth workers to facilitate the transition of Youth Centres in Intercultural Centres, but before a series of prerequisites to prepare

the space in order to for it to have an open environment and attitude towards diversity are given.

"Cultural differences should not separate us from each other, but rather cultural diversity brings a collective strength that can benefit all of humanity."[...] Intercultural dialogue is the best guarantee of a more peaceful, just and sustainable world." (Robert Alan Silverstein (American writer, artist and social activist; 1922-1978))

When we talk about different cultures we are not just talking about geographical differences, but we have to focus also about political, generational and social differences, as well as different tastes and trends. In order to fully embrace those differences, the youth worker should continuously question his/her idea of how the youth center should be. Intercultural means here not just a place where differences are welcomed, where differences are only connected with different nationalities. A welcoming and intercultural place should be indeed a place devoted to the promotion and respect

of human rights.

The main activities which promote interculture (due to their own nature of informal gathering and by creating spontaneous relations), can be parties and excursions, or all those convivial actions with food and music including visits and excursions; they are the basis of interculture as they realistically unite people.

The center should then promote gender equality, stimulating a dialogue and creating models to promote different cultures. It should promote cooperation to fight against stereotypes, providing, instead, different information about cultures to avoid stigmatization.

The centre structure should be flexible and should be willing to change, and adapt to the situations that the cultural context proposes.

The space should be set to allow all the culture to be comfortable with it, the purpose is to grow together respecting differences.

We all have hidden beliefs and biases about the world, which are shaped by our experiences and culture. Basing our judgement only on assumptions are like wearing a pair of glasses we do not even notice until something makes us see the lenses. Checking your assumptions requires you to reflect and understand your own beliefs. By understanding your own beliefs, you can avoid projecting them onto others. Starting from the laws and regulations of the context, facilitate discussion on such themes like drugs, alcohol or gender equality, keeping in mind that the intercultural dialogue is an important resource, to overcome barriers.

Here below a series of hints, indications in order to have an open environment which embraces diversity.

- Have a clear mission (why the centre is intercultural, what does intercultural mean). Write down, somewhere in the youth centre the concept. You can also put posters with quotes connected with human rights.

- Try to convert signs, information and indications in your centre in different languages. This is important to let people understand and decode the context at first sight, especially those coming for the first time.
- Place an example of International dictionary (activity proposed in chapter 4) where people can write down different standard sentences in their own language.
- Try to insert in the appearance of the centre different international cultural references, based on the communities which most frequent the centre. For example, put posters of international athletes, musicians, writers, poets, etc...
- Use a calendar to mark the different holidays and festivities of different religions and cultures. Try to focus not only on religious festivities (i.e. catholic and orthodox Easter), but promote the adoption of a laic calendar, in which the events are connected with cultural initiative, with environment, human rights etc...
- Take into account the cultural and religious background of your communities. It does not make sense to fix an activity which involves food during Ramadan.
- Offer the youth centre for the communities to organize their own activity.
- Try to offer different information in order to link different communities together, basing on common interests or needs.
- Try to focus not only on the youth centre, but observe what happens on your territory, to get in touch with the different cultures. By observation of the events spontaneously organized by the different communities, you can propose people to use your center for their activity. Do not wait just them to come, but propose your centre for cooperation.
- Promote the value of diversity, so do not allow the creation a monocultural dominance in the youth

centre. Try to mediate promoting intercultural and sharing of spaces.

- Set a space where people can have international news of what it's happening in the world. Organize also some moments to deepen certain news/topics with forum activities, seminars, conferences. This allows different cultures to share ideas about the same topic with different points of view.
- If available, manage an accessible kitchen to let different culture cook together. Encourage people to share their skills and to try together new moments of gathering, through intercultural food.
- Promote awareness-raising actions against discrimination and racism either inside and outside the centre. Organize activities that can put in relation people coming from different realities (through football matches, etc.)
- If possible, try to work with schools, to make a deep

connection with the territory and the young people from the local community, promoting interculture.

- If possible, set free language courses.
- If you promote something connected with religion, try to be sure to represent all the religions, or not to impose your opinion/faith/culture on others.
- Organize an info point to provide some informations about the services of the city (employment centre, hospital, offices etc...). This will help to promote integration among communities and with the territory.
- Set the timing of the youth centre according to different needs of different people, so that everyone can use the space. Make sure to organise the centre's activities according to the participants' time requirements. For example, try to stay open in the afternoon after working hours, do not set morning activities for school-age children etc...
- Provide an inclusive environment by setting con-

ditions for confrontation between communities by creating safe spaces.

How to read and use the toolkit

The Toolkit contains innovative methods and practices, tools, guidelines, based on non-formal education and intercultural dialogue.

82 This section is a guide to read the several activities proposed in order to theoretically and practically orient youth workers in the evolution in the sense of intercultural of youth activities, in particular to facilitate the transition of Youth Centres in Intercultural Centres.

All the activities proposed are divided into three areas representing the three main fields: Learning, Exchange and Active Participation. There is also another category, Inspiring Box, which contains suggestions and good practises to implement.

The youth worker will choose the activity according to the area of interest.

Regardless of the subject area, all the activities proposed have the same structure:

Brief description of the activity:

This part contains a brief summary of the activity, so that it is possible to have a quick overview on the kind of activity proposed.

Topics, objectives and methodology:

This part contains the topic of the activity, the objective pursued by the activity and the methodology used. If the activity is addressed to children, this part contains also the suggested pedagogical approach. If the activity is composed by more than one phase, this section contains methodology applied for every single step.

Duration:

This section contains guidance on how long the activity should last. If the activity is composed of more than one

phase, it contains indications on the duration of each of the individual phases.

Location:

In this section it is described the ideal location for the activity, together with the minimum requirements that a venue should have to implement the activity.

Materials:

This section contains a list of materials required for the activity. It is possible that some activities don't require any material.

Staff needed and eventual specific skills required:

In this section, there is a description of specific skills required by staff members to implement the activity, if any are needed. It is possible in fact that some activities need a particular skilled youth worker. (i.e. an artist, a gardener etc...).

Participants involved:

In this part, the estimated number of participants and

the kind of target group that can participate in the activity are described: if the activity is suitable for young people, children, adults, a multicultural group, local community at large, etc...

Steps:

This is the section in which the activity is explained in details. It contains every step of the activity, describing in full all the actions involved. It is divided into three parts:

1. **Before:** This part contains the instructions to prepare the activity, both practically and theoretically. It explicates how to prepare the group of participants, the location and needed material before the activity begins.
2. **During:** This section contains a detailed description of the activity, step by step, with an estimate duration of each step, where applicable. This part basically provides all the instructions to carry out the activity.

3. After: This is the part that contains the instruction to have a moment of debriefing/reflection after the activity. As the activities proposed are not a simple list of games and exercises, this part should be always performed, as it provides a moment for debriefing with participants. In this section are described in details the ways to lead a reflection related to the activity.

84

Do's and don'ts:

This last part contains, when applicable, a series of tips that the author suggests after having tested practically themselves the proposed activity during the validation phase of the project. This part, based on previous experience, warns about what can go wrong during the activity and suggests how to deal with it.

Innovative aspects for the promotion of interculture:

In this section are expressed the innovative aspects of the activity. The activity can be innovative regarding the context in which it is implemented, it can be innovative

regarding the beneficiaries it is addressed to (specific target groups with specific needs or features) or innovative as for the methodology used. This section explains also how the activity promotes interculture, as the aim of the toolkit is to promote and explain innovative approaches for the transition from youth centres to intercultural centres

Possible follow-up or link to other activities:

All the games, exercises, events and workshop presented in this toolkit are not intended as spot-activities. They are rather conceived as a sparkles to ignite positive dynamics in your youth center, and local community at large, that ease the creation of a more intercultural environment. In this perspective with this paragraph some suggestions are given, where applicable, to continue, replicate and increase the scope of the activity and trigger the above mentioned dynamics. When possible, a connection with other activities of this toolkit, which can be implemented before or after, is suggested.