

# The city grows in new colours / The world made up my city



## Brief description of the activity

This activity consists in a photo reportage of the city, in which participants are asked to take pictures of the new colours in the city, different from the ones they are used to see, or products and items that come from outside the country. The pictures can be both full body shots or close-up/details, can be pictures of clothes, meals, spices, advertisements... as long as they portray new/strange colours in the city. The pictures taken can be then printed out and shown in a public exhibition.

## The city grows in new colours / The world made up my city

### Topics:

Knowledge of diversities

### Objectives:

The objective of the activity is to reflect on diversities, by seeing how our cities change and grow thanks to people and goods coming from other countries. The activity calls into question the concept of cultural identity and the idea that it is something of immutable and to be preserved from external cultural contaminations. Here the photographic language is used to stimulate a reflection on the influence that other cultures have on our own one.

### Duration:

The activity has different phases, and its duration can vary according with the size of the group of participants and the extension of the city where the photo reportage will take place. As general indication, the activity has three phases, with the following duration:

- 1. Introduction, explanation of activity:** The first phase is dedicated to the explanation of the activity, division of the group of participants in subgroups and assignation of one area of the city to each group. This phase lasts 1 hour.
- 2. Photo reportage:** The participants should then have enough time to accurately explore the city (namely entering in shops, interacting with people...), so two hours is recommended but this phase can last up to half day.
- 3. Debriefing:** After the photo reportage itself, the groups gather again, to collect and show the pictures taken. A debriefing then is conducted to reflect on the results of the activity and their meaning. This phase lasts 1,5 hours.

**Follow-up and additional phases:** The best pictures taken can be printed out on panels and shown in a separated activity, a public exhibition where the results of the activity can reach a wider audience. 3 hours

**Location:**

This activity can take place both in your youth center or in schools as a workshop. As the second phase of it necessarily takes place outdoors, try to set its date on a sunny day Take into account that there might be some events (such as markets, cultural events, etc.) that can ease the participants' task, and set the date accordingly.

**Materials:**

- Maps of the city (paper)
- Maps of the world to project on the wall (see Annexes)
- Computer, projector, cables for transferring data from cameras/mobiles to the computer or alternatively a universal SD card reader.
- Cameras, where available, but also mobiles are good to take decent pictures.
- Black cardboard as background of the printed pictures, clasps or hooks to hang them on the wall or, if the exhibi-

tion takes place outside, tripod to hold the panels

**Participants involved:**

This activity works better if you have a mixed group made up of locals and foreign people, as it makes no sense if there are no locals among the participants.

If the group is made just of locals, focus on the origin of items instead of colours. In this case the activity could be renamed "The world made up my city"

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## Steps:

### Before

Recruitment and involvement of participants

Once the dates of the activity have been chosen, it is crucial to make a proper promotion of it, in order to ensure an adequate number of participants.

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To make it more attractive it can be promoted on the social networks of the organization presented as a photo contest or a collective exhibition, where people can participate for free, by applying within a given deadline.

It is also important to have local partners for the promotion phase and consequently the execution. For this purpose, schools are strategic; the first step is to send to schools a formal communication by the organization, presenting the activity, its purpose and objectives, and the benefits it can have on the students in terms of increment of creativity and civic sense.

During a following meeting in person with the Principals who have responded positively, it is advisable to ask to appoint a reference person in the school, in order to speed up and smooth the next steps. In this meeting it should be hand over to the Principal a detailed description of the activity, times, venue, terms for the participation and deadlines, that should be disseminated among the students with a school communication.

Once the group of participants has been defined, set up the room where the first phase will be developed, ensuring that you have:

- Laptop
- Projector
- Flipchart
- Maps of the city (as many as the subgroups you intend to create from the group of participants)

## During

### Introduction, explanation of activity

Welcome the participants and briefly describe yourself and your organization. 10 minutes

Let participants make acquaintance with each other, by using name games or icebreakers. You can find useful resources here:

<https://youthgroupgames.com.au/top-ten-ice-breaker-games/> 10 minutes

Once the group is ready, start explaining the activity and its purposes. Explain the participants that they have to walk around the city and, as a group, choose objects for their picture that have strange and new colours, that they are not used to see. Suggest a list of objects they can start from: Dresses, meals, spices, hair colours... Ask each group to take at least 15 different pictures. 30 minutes

Split randomly the group into subgroups and assign each of them one area of the city and one map. Tell the groups to go and start their photo reportage recommending to be back in two hours sharp. 10 minutes

(While the groups are out, prepare the room for the next phase. Connect the laptop to a projector and a SD card reader or cable. Prepare a list of question to start and liven up the debriefing session).

### Debriefing

Once the groups are back, ask to one person from each group to upload the pictures taken on the computer.

Ask locals to describe the typical inhabitant of this town, in terms of habits, daily routine, what does he/she eat, where does he shop...

Then ask each group to show and describe the pictures in plenary.

Start and liven up the debriefing with the following questions:

- What was the strangest colour/thing you shot?
- Does anyone know what this is and where does it come from?
- Who shot any object or person that interact or influence the daily life of the person as previously described? Do they influence your daily life too? (For example. Ingredients of typical meals you eat, shops owners where you do grocery, people who accomplish tasks of public utility...)

Try to number how many different nations/cultures directly or indirectly influence your daily life (your food, your clothes, your free time...)

Ask participants to count how many countries they encountered and therefore how many nations contribute to what they are.

## After

A follow up of the activity, organize a photo exhibition with participants in your youth center, named “The city grown in new colours” or choose with the participants a fancy name for it.

Ask participants to select the most significant pictures in terms of influence of other cultures on the city daily life. Ask them to collect information about the objects and people photographed (it can be both on the web and interviewing those people).

For each chosen picture write captions describing its object and the importance it has in the storytelling of the city. Set up the exhibition by printing the chosen pictures and captions and sticking them on black posters. Hang them up on the walls of your youth center or on tripods if your exhibition takes place outdoors.

Tips for setting up the exhibition:

Project a mute map on a wall (Annex 0). Put a tag with the name of the city and where it is on the map. Put the other pictures in the corresponding country of origin. Connect the city with the pictures with coloured threads/ropes to give an idea of the connection with places very far from the city.

## Possible follow-up

### Additional activity

When it comes to maps, interesting food for thoughts about intercultural can derive for cartography. Before setting up the exhibition, or right after that, have the following cartographic session.

### Cartographic session (40 min)

#### Introduction

The maps we are used to see in schools and on the me-

dia are based on a cylindrical projection of the earth introduced by the cartographer Mercatore in 1569. As it projects a sphere on a plane, it necessarily has some distortions. For this reason this projection has been criticized, as it would represent - and justify - an "Eurocentric" vision of the world, that tends to diminish the size (and therefore the importance) of the so called Southern world. Lately, other projections of the world have been done; among them, the one made by Arno Peters, a German historian and cartographer who in 1974 tried to realize a more faithful reproduction of the actual size of the continents.

The world representation made by Mercatore and Peters can be food for thought to discuss with participants about one's self-perception in the world and in relation to other countries, people, cultures.

#### Steps

Project a map of the world (Mercatore Projection, Annex 1). Ask participants to identify the "centre of the

world” on the map.

Then show Annex 2 and ask:

"Would you define your country as central or peripheral in the world?"

Show the Peter’s projection (Annex 3) and ask participants:

"Do you see anything strange in the second map? What?"

Show annex 4 and re-ask participants:

"Would you now define your country as central or peripheral in the world?"

"Which are the differences between the first and the second map? Which one is correct? Why?"

Show the annex 5 with the data of continents extension and highlight the inconsistency between the proportions of the countries in the first map and their real extension.

Show annex 6 and explain that, in red, the proportion between continents is respected, while in pink we can see the size “added” by the Mercatore projection to the “real” size of the continents.

Then show annex 7: here the two maps (Mercatore and Peters’) are overlapped. Comment with the participants the differences between them. Then ask:

"Which map better represents the world in your opinion? Why?"

"What do you think about the common representation of the world after this activity?"

Explain that, as both maps are a projection of a sphere on a plane, probably there is not a correct or a wrong one. Nevertheless, it is important to have different perspectives to see the reality, and the way the world is presented to us (by our education, culture, media) has an influence on the way we perceive it and how we relate to it.

Stress the importance to always seek for objective data and multiple sources of information when approaching to other countries and cultures, because the more information we have the more we can understand the world around us, our position in it, and the relationship among nations, people, cultures.

## Innovative aspects for the promotion of interculture

People, especially young ones, are often plunged in their cultural *milieu* and tend to perceive themselves as totally defined by this *milieu*. When understanding oneself uniquely as the product of this cultural *milieu*, and not considering that we are the fruit of the dynamic relationship between different cultures - that mutually and with different intensities influence each other - the contact and the encounter with people bearer of different cultures may become conflictive.

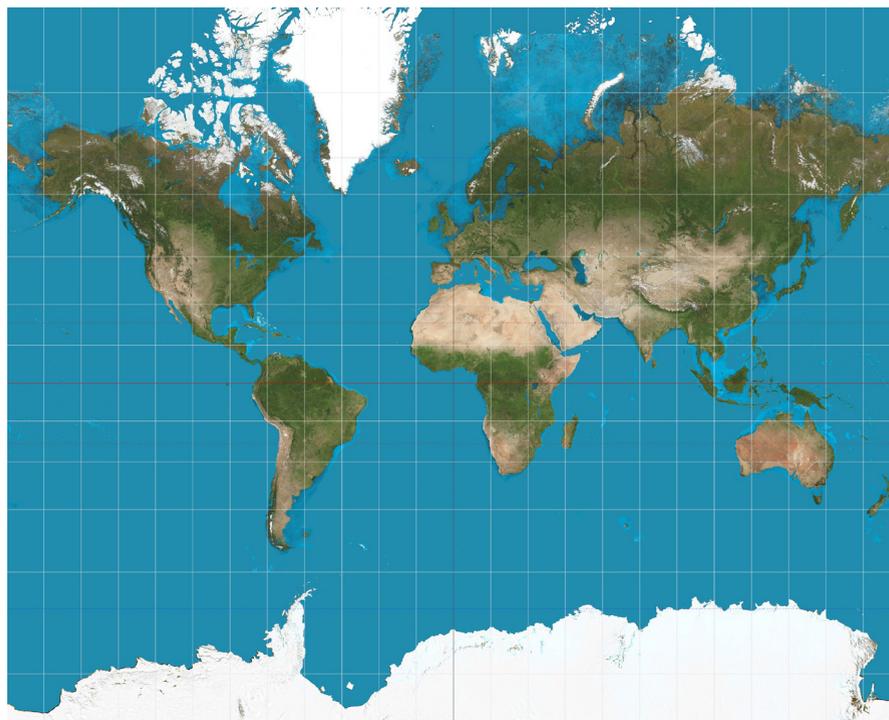
For example, when a young Neapolitan meets a young Berliner, the first will have the tendency to represent himself, and therefore to behave, as a "Neapolitan" - or as what he believes to be Neapolitan means - as opposed to the representation that he has of his peer from Berlin. By the sound of things, this attitude leaves no room for any other interaction dynamics, such as the exchange, the negotiation, the mutual recognition itself, as complex subjects, carriers of nuances that cannot be fossilised in being merely a "Neapolitan" or a "Berliner".

In this activity, pictures are a starting point to make a collective reflection on the cities we live in, beyond their stereotypical representation. The colours of the city are significant to understand how the cities we live in continuously change, thank to the coexistence and the contamination of different people, cultures, habits, lifestyles.

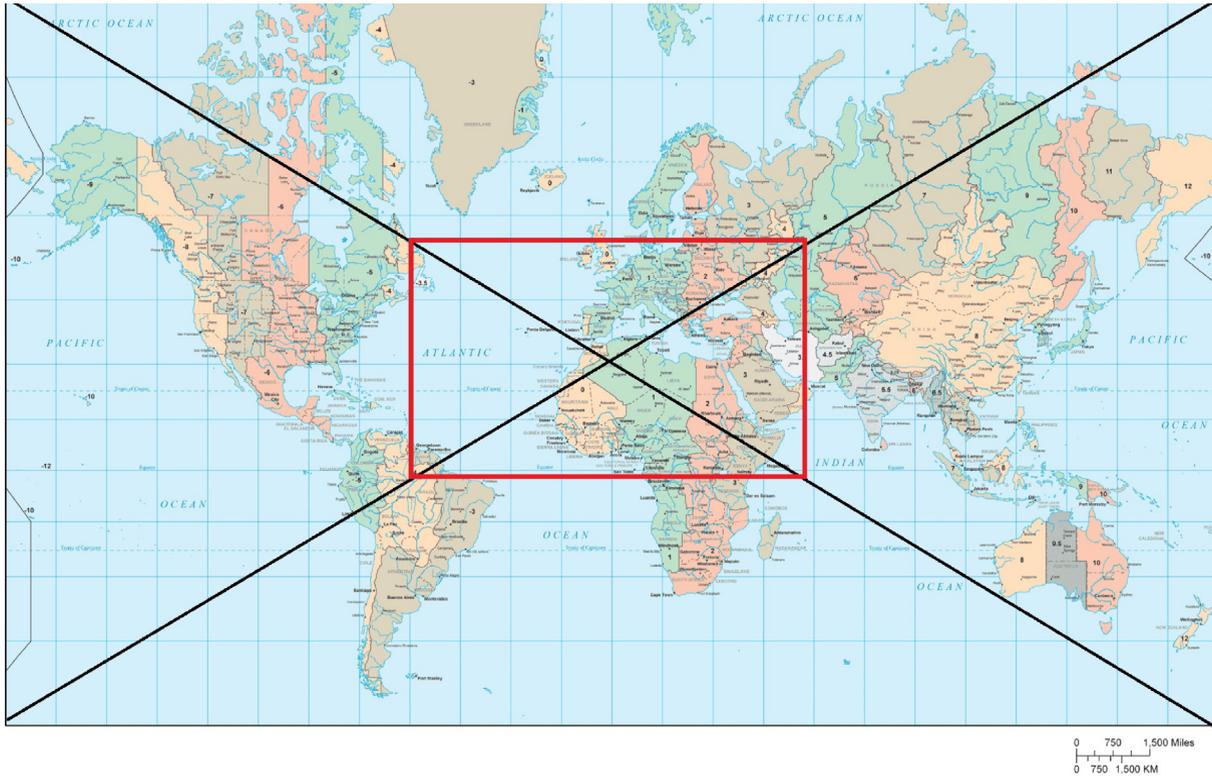
## Annexes



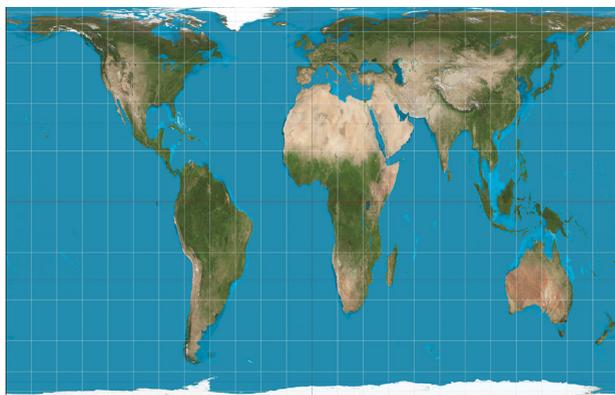
Annex 0



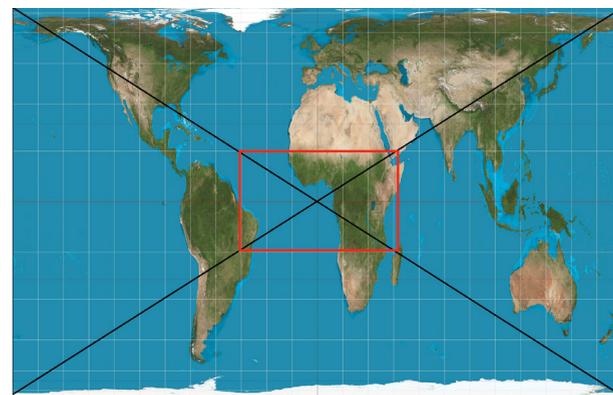
Annex 1



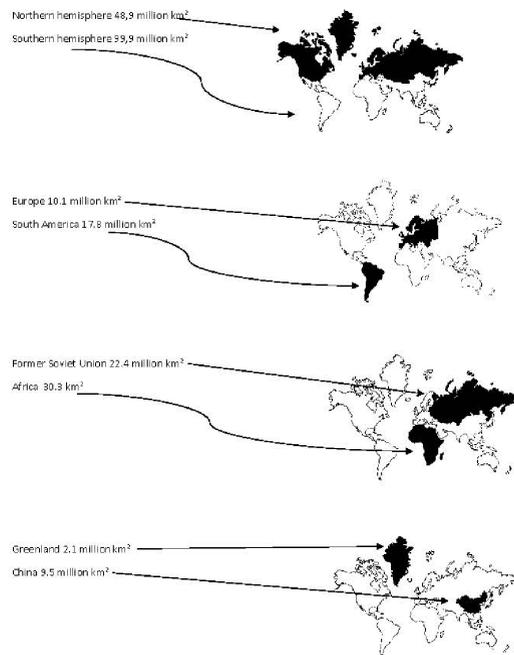
Annex 2



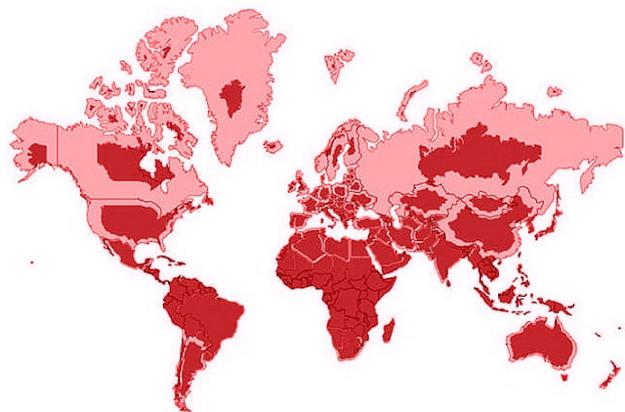
Annex 3



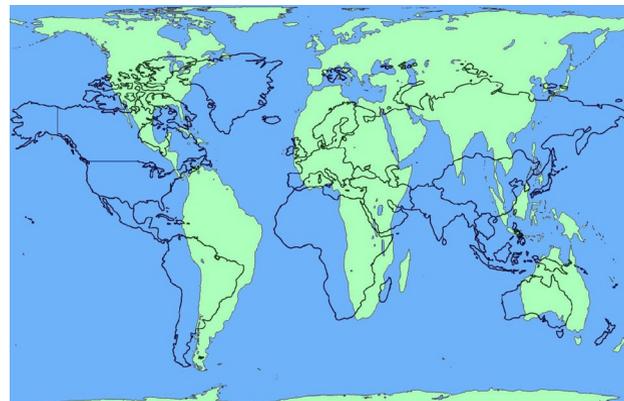
Annex 4



Annex 5



Annex 6



Annex 7

