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Introduction

The idea behind this Tool Kit

For the past 3 decades, our engagement in the field of organizing volunteering projects and trainings, which focus on the sensitization of EU citizens (especially young ones), lead us to believe that although there is a variety of methods and educational tools, more than enough info and materials concerning these most important factors of successfully completing volunteering projects, accessing them constitutes a privilege for a small percentage of young people.

The cooperating institutions of this particular plan, under the title "Volunteering: Action for active citizenship" are using volunteering projects as means to confront discriminations, xenophobia and biases. Voluntary work is the path towards peaceful coexistence between people of different ethnical and/or cultural background. It helps the volunteers develop their sense of solidarity, their tolerance against diversity, their respect of different ways of life and to be exempted from their subconscious racism.

Recently, especially the couple previous years, the increasing need for aiding voluntary action is obvious due to many and various issues that are emerging on local, national or international level. The surge of immigrants/ refugees from Asia or Africa in EU countries, the environmental pollution, the state's inability to provide social benefits for each and every citizen, unemployment and the increase of population which lives in poverty, all of the above result the need of a more active citizens intervention through undertaking of initiative aiming on social cohesion and on protecting the environment.

Several actions like integrating immigrant's families in local communities, organizing creative activities for children, aiding older people in functioning as active community members, planting trees, cleaning of public parks, supporting recycling programs are usually developing through initiatives by independent groups of residents or small volunteering organizations with limited or no access at all. Their efforts are fuelled by their will to accomplish a certain task which will maintain a decent standard of living, to improve the channels of communicating between all the people of a community and

to share similar activities with residents of neighboring towns or regions, a collaboration which sets in motion even more initiatives of the same kind.

Never the less, the positive results of these initiatives (in contradistinction with the volunteer's intentions) are eliminated due to lack of organization, careful planning and, especially, the rise of juxtapositions or unintentional "exclusions" caused by the partners' inability to comprehend their own cultural differences. People's ignorance about how to deal with immigrants/refugees coming from countries of different social structure, behavior, religion, dress code or the xenophobia (based on ill-founded rumors) which is cultivated by the media, lead them in raising walls.

Our efforts aiming in providing the chance, the ability for everyone, to make their primal volunteering steps and gaining access to knowledge and information so that they may implement their ideas without any fear. To organize an activity which excludes no one and which keeps intact the principals of equivalent participation, solidarity, tolerance and respecting any kind of diversity. This particular tool kit was created during the course of the educational seminars "Intercultural training: Beyond Tolerance" (Spain) and "Project management: From The Idea To Realization" (Italy). The participants, under the aid, support and guidance of their facilitators gathered the existing training material concerning the issues mentioned above and created the educational tool you hold in your hands, which present this training method while demonstrating the steps one should follow when he/she intends to organize a volunteering project without having the required experience.
In the tool kit are mentioned all the sources from which we draw our material.
We hope this will be a very useful tool for orgnasing volunteering projects.

Enjoy reading!!!

Intercultural learning
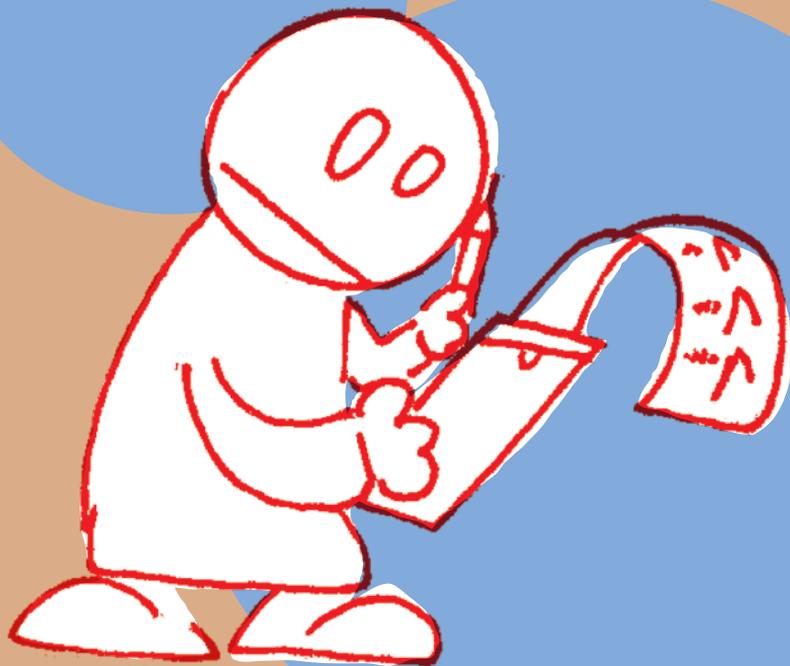
Introduction

What is learning

The concept of learning has been continuously changing in our society, due to the presence of different theories, findings in the field of psychology and development of educational science. The concept that our brain is simply a "tabula rasa" to be filled with knowledge coming from external sources is unacceptable and it has now been replaced by new approaches that consider the learner (and not only the teacher) as an active participant in the learning process. Such theories boosted the development of new ideas about learning and about the learning settings, and supported the growth of alternative frameworks like non-formal education. Though, most of the time that children and young people spend in schools or learning institutions is still rigidly structured by old-fashioned methods that do not allow the development of creativity, active participation of learners and independent thought. On the contrary, non-formal and non-institutional settings (like workcamps, intercultural training or seminars) provide trainers and facilitators the freedom to experiment and use cutting-edge methods that make the learning process more productive and, at the same time, even entertaining.

The role of the intercultural learning in volunteering projects

Intercultural learning is a subject that is gaining more and more attention and leverage in schools. The effects of globalization, matched with developments in technology, transports and communication are breaking barriers and reducing distances in our planet. Nevertheless, traditional institutions like schools are not always able to provide students with a real chance to live intercultural experiences (for example, institutions set in local or secluded areas meet more difficulties in including the intercultural dimension in their curricula). Such deficiencies can be gapped by intercultural associations active in the field of youth exchanges. Here young people do not play the role of students: they can be active as volunteers and can find out an additional dimension that will broaden their horizons and their activism in the community: experiences

such as international workcamp, youth exchanges, intercultural seminar are a chance to learn more about other cultures, strengthen solidarity and respect, and can have a powerful impact against racism.

Methodology

"Eliminate the whole degree-and-grading system and then you'll get real education". With such strong statement Robert Pirsig stressed the value of alternative methods of teaching and learning in his famous philosophical book "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance". Formal education is the official methodology in institutions such as schools and universities; its main features are a top-down flow of information, evaluation through exams and grades, limited interaction of the actors involved in the learning process, conventional settings; competition, rather than cooperation among students, often arises, and their motivation can be extrinsic (to pass the exam) rather than intrinsic (to increase their knowledge).
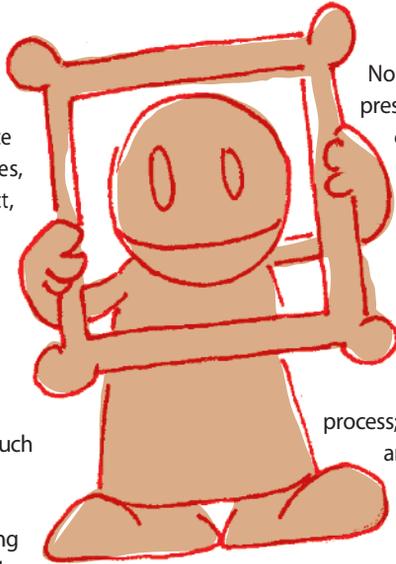
Non-formal education presents different characteristics: first of all, participants take part spontaneously to non-formal activities; their performances are not tested, and often they play an active role in the evaluation process; the methods used are not based upon a top-down approach, since instruments that facilitate a mutual understanding are preferred; visualizations, group works, alternative methods are used, sometimes involving also body contact, art, music and creativity; cooperation, inclusion and freedom of expression are valuable principles of this style.

It is easy to understand why non-formal methodology is much more suitable for initiatives taking place *outside* institutions, where conventional methods such as rigid standardisation of methods, performances

and results cannot be the rule. The main task of projects like interucultural seminars, training or workcamps is to give participants the chance to express their personality, to learn from each other through cooperation and solidarity, to overcome stereotypes and prejudices and to learn mutually through common experiences. Trainers are seen not as leaders or institutional figurers, but as facilitators of the above mentioned processes and as coordinator of activities.

The different sessions of a training

The contents of a training or a seminar depends of course on the selected topic: a training for trainers will focus on activities to share and gain new skills, capacity building activities, chance to learn games and to improve non-formal methods; whereas a seminar about environmental issues will be centred on specific ecological topics, discussions with experts, excursions to related sites.
In spite of all the possible differences depending on topics, an intercultural projects can be based upon common elements and structures. It is up to the facilitator or coordinator to propose the best activities in order to bridge the gap between participants and to get the ball rolling. Of course, the more tools in his or her kit, the more successful the activities will be. The following section will provide tips, hints, suggestions, guidelines that could be helpful in coordinating the different sessions of an intercultural projects. Let's try to look at them more in details:

Introductory activities: getting to know each other

Participants have formed a circle. Some of them are tired after a long trip, some are shy and cannot stare anywhere but at their feet, other giggle or laugh, other are just interested to see what come next and simply wait. For many of them it is the first non-formal educational experience. Silence reigns in the meeting room. Welcome to the typical beginning of an international project!

Many experienced trainers consider this part as the most sensitive in the training or seminar, and they are probably right: it is important to understand and to meet participants' needs, to make them feel at easy and to start creating that typical non-informal atmosphere of acceptance and understanding that, if well established, will produce positive results during the further sessions. This is not easy at all, and it is essential to possess a wide range of practical tools to be used according to the different scenarios. Let's see some of them, each belonging to a different category:

Name Games

In formal and conventional educational settings, names do not play an important role: the university professor gives a lecture and the "nameless" students listen carefully. Nobody is specifically addressed. In a non-formal education project, where participants spend often more than one week together and share their time, rooms, food, learning and free time, getting to know names from the very beginning of the meeting is essential. Is not a chance that one or more name games are the opening activity of a workcamp or international seminar.

Alphabetic chairs
Group size: unlimited
What you need: a chair for each participant; a plenary room
Duration: 10/15 minutes
Notes: not suitable for people with disability. Though, the setting can be modified according to their needs
Link: http://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/tool/alphabetical-chairs.21/

Put the chairs in a circle (close enough to each other) and ask the participants to stand on the chairs (with or without shoes depending on your arrangements with the cleaning staff).

When on the chairs you ask the participants to move into alphabetical order according to first name without touching the floor (it is a cooperation exercise). When done, you do a round of names to check if the order is correct and at the same time refresh all the names. You could add a second round asking participants to rank according to birthday (shoe size, experience in the topic of the course, etc).

Getting to know each other games
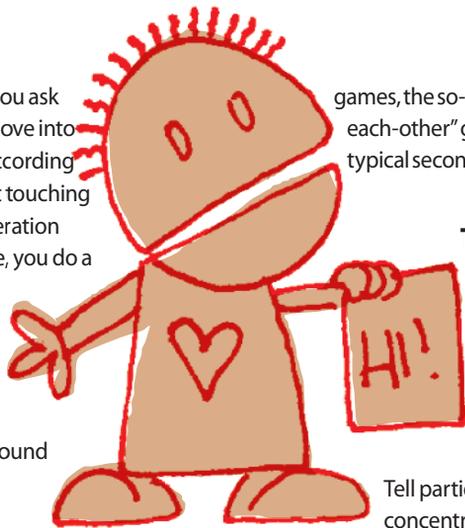
Now that participants have learnt all their names, they might be probably curious to know more about themselves: where they come from, what they do, how they live in their countries, they would like to exchange information about their families, how they spend their free time and so on. If name games are the opening games, the so-called "getting-to-know-each-other" games represent the typical second step.

Two Circles

Group size: even number, small-medium groups (up to 30 participants)
What you need: a chair for each participant; paper; large room
Duration: around 30 min.

Tell participants to arrange two concentric circles with chairs, each of them consisting of the same number of chairs, and invite participants to sit. People sitting in the inner circle receive a small book. Each page has a question. The number of pages depend on the number of chairs in each circle (example: if the chairs in the inner circle are 6, the book should contain 6 questions – and the total number of participants playing the game is thus 12). Here some examples of questions: "do you have any brothers or sisters?"; "is this your first intercultural experience?"; "Where will you be in 5 years" and so on. The activity starts and the participants sitting in the inner circle ask

the first question to the participant sitting opposite to them. After 2 minutes, the ones sitting in the external circle are allowed to ask to those sitting in the inner circle. After 4 minutes, the ones sitting in the outside circle move to a chair to the right. Question number 2 is asked, same procedure.

Ice breakers / Energizers

The main purpose of such activities is to allow participants to feel more comfortable inside the new group. Usually these games are proposed at the beginning of a morning session, possibly outdoor. They should be entertaining, dynamic, interactive, their instructions easy to understand and their duration short (no longer than 10 minutes).

Water melon game
Group size: medium (10-20 participants)
Duration: 10 minutes

Have the group stand in a circle. Invite participants to imagine to hold a watermelon slice with both their hands. We would like to share it with everyone but there are specific ways to pass the "watermelon" to the next person: if the person wants to pass the

watermelon to the right they use their left hand and move it across their face towards the right while making a slurping noise.
If they want to pass it to the left, they use their right hand and move it across their face towards the left while making a slurping sound. An additional option is to "spit up" the watermelon seeds to any person in the circle, by looking at this person's eye and simulating a seed spit. The first rounds can be played slowly, but the game gets more entertaining when participants are invited to play as quick as the can!

Team building games

Task of this kind of games is to help the group of participants overcome the initial barriers through fun and, often, physical contact, and to increase the sense of belonging to a group. In order to accomplish the task, the members of a group are required to work as a team, including each participant in the decision making process.

The cover
Group size: up to 20 participants
What you need: a blanket, a room
Duration: 15 minutes
A big blanket is laid down on the floor.

Participants are invited to step on it. Very easy at the beginning, but what if the playing surface gets reduced? After each round, fold a corner of the blanket in the inside, thus reducing the room where participants can step, and ask them to jump on board. No participant is allowed to place himself/herself outside the blanket. During the last rounds, when the surface is limited, participants have to develop out-of-the-box strategies in order to allow the whole group to solve the problem.

Geographical games

Geographic knowledge of participants is a topic that it is not always taken into proper consideration when organising an intercultural project. In fact, it is important to raise awareness about our planet among participant of a training or volunteers in a workcamp, considering that the members of a group come from different countries and sometimes even from different continents of the world. A proper geographic knowledge can trigger further discussions and strengthen common interests.

Euromap puzzle
Group size: up to 30 participants
Duration: 30 minutes

Prepare cards, each containing the name of European countries. Give one or more cards to each participants and ask them to place them on the ground or on a table according to the correct geographic position. When the "map" is completed, hand each participant one or more small flags and ask them to place them on the correct country. This game can be played also with cards of different continents.

Games for the whole projects

Games and energizers are very important during the first days of a project, but they can be played throughout the whole meeting too. Here is an example of a nice game that can start on the first day and can be concluded at the end of the project.

The secret friend
Group size: suitable also for large groups
Duration: the whole event
Link: www.sailorstraining.eu/admin/download/ b7.pdf (page 14)

Each participant draws a paper from the "hat" where all the names' players are collected, so that each participant has his or her "secret friend". During the training course or youth exchange participants makes various gifts to their secret friend while remaining incognito. Gifts can be the handmade and participants need to be creative, innovative and unique while preparing their gifts. Very often the gifts can be presented in the form of souvenirs, poems or in a form of simple access kindness messages. But in this case, the player needed intermediaries "postmen" who can pass the message to the recipient. The mandatory rules of the game are that the "Postman" or "Cupid" should not disclose the names of senders "secret friends" not under any circumstances. The game ends on the last day, when in the presence of all the names of all secret friends should be disclosed. (if participants agree)

Group splitting games

Quite often a coordinator meets the need to split the big group in smaller teams, in order to create working groups for different topics. Here is an example of a nice game that can be used for this purpose.

The Atoms game
Duration: 5/10 minutes
Group size: suitable also for large groups
Link: http://www.youthwork-practice.com/games/group-division-games.html

Participants are free to move in the large plenary room. They are invited to imagine to be crazy atoms moving in a vacuum. Music is played. When music stops, the coordinator (who does not play the game) says a number aloud. Participants must quickly create clusters according to the number provided by the coordinator (for example: if groups of 4 members are needed, the coordinator says 4). It is advisable to let participants play with different numbers before giving the number needed.

Further activities: Group dynamics

Is the group "energized"? Has the initial ice melted down? Do participants feel at easier? Did they learn their names? Do they know more about themselves? Ok, now we can go to level two!

An intercultural meeting is a unique experience: fun, creativity, learning, friendship and interaction are involved. In order to foster such processes, a facilitator should be aware that the intercultural dimension can cause misunderstandings and conflicts. They should be managed in the proper way, with dialogue, peaceful methods and mutual understanding. It is thus necessary to develop a suitable framework that will allow participants to enjoy the experience to the utmost. Here some suggestions that can be useful in this phase of a project.
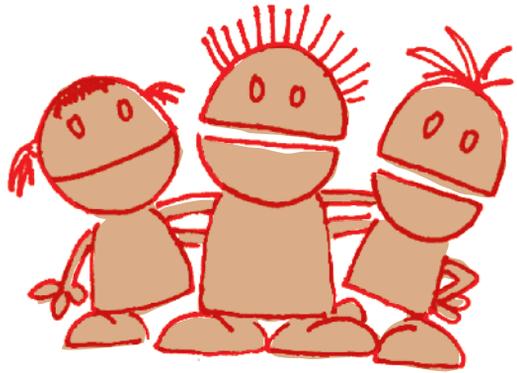
Rules agreement

Forming a circle, participants are invited to brainstorm a set of shared rules that will be applied throughout the whole seminar or training. Each rule can be discussed and adapted to the needs and preferences of participants. Keep in mind that the coordinator should not impose the rules: his/her role is only to facilitate the process. At the end, when all the rules are visualized on a flip-chart, participants are invited to sign the agreement. The flip-chart is hung on a visible place This method can proved very effective in case a rule gets broken: the coordinator can refer to the agreement, to remind participants to stick to the rules they have agreed together.

Fears, motivations and expectations

Before starting tackling the seminar activities, it is always very useful to ask participants about what they expect from the project. This sessions might include discussion about fears, special needs and motivation to join the meeting. This session should not be skipped, since it allows the group to share opinions and ask important questions before the project starts. According to their contribution, it will be possible to adapt the agenda, the methods and the contents considering their needs and expectations. The easiest way to proceed is to prepare a flip-chart and invite participants to write down on post-it their fears and expectations, and to stick them on the large paper. In order to facilitate the process, different categories can be created. For example, instead of asking general opinion, an expectations post-it can be stuck under the topic "Contents", "Free Time", or "Study Visits". At the end, the coordinator read the contributions aloud and involve the group in a discussion, providing more information regarding the project.

Reflection groups

Receiving a constant feedback from participants during the whole project is essential in order to make small changes to the programme or to solve unexpected problems that might emerge. Creating reflection groups at the beginning of the seminar is a good way to receive information that can be useful for the coordinators. When creating the groups, coordinators should be careful to form heterogeneous group, where participants can communicate without language barriers (do not form group where a member can feel excluded because of lack of language skills). Reflection groups should meet every evening after the working day (the size should be around 5/6 members). A member of each group should report right after to the coordinators.

Shaping up the activities: methods and tools

The non-formal education methodology encompasses different methods, tools and techniques which can be used to shape up the activities of an intercultural projects involving young participants. It si important not to use always the same method during a training, therefore the more techniques are used, the more entertaining and inclusive the participation will be. The following instruments can help facilitators to present their topics and ideas in an interesting way.

Brainstorming

This technique can be complementary to other method or can be combined with further activities. It is ideal if we want to introduce a topic or to involve participants in a discussion. On the other hand, facilitators should avoid using it too often, as it might have the effect of excluding participants (those who do not feel at easy to express their idea in a large group, for example, or those who need more time to reflect upon a specific topic).

Working groups

Group work could avoid the above mentioned problem. In smaller group, participants can express their ideas in a more ensuring environment and can have more time to discuss deeper about a theme.
This method is ideal to analyse a specific topic and to give each participant the chance to contribute. Be sure that a plenary session, where the result of each team are presented, is included.

Role play games

How about including some theater performances among your method? A topic can be discussed, analysed, brainstormed, but also performed! This method should be used with a proper preparation. Do not force participants to play if they do not wish and appoint clear roles at the beginning. You may decide, for example, to discuss about racism and xenofobia by simulating a TV show, with a host, panels, guests, journalists, audience. Give a limited time to perform (30/45 minutes) and conclude the activities with a debriefing session, to sum up the points discussed during the performance.

Silent Mind Mapping

This methods consists in giving participants a space to reflect and exchange opinions about specific topics. The facilitator prepares flip-charts, each with a heading related to the topic that will be analysed. For instance, if we intend to discuss about "Interaction with social networks", we could prepare a flip-chart with the sub-topic "advantages", one named "disadvantages", one named "risks". Each participant has the possibility to write down a comment related to the topic of the flip-chart, can "evaluate" the comment already written or start a "thread". No-one is allowed to speak. The activity can last 30/45 minutes. Relaxing music can be played in the background. At the end, the main resulting points can be read aloud and the flip-charts can be kept visible for further inspiration or discussion.

Follow-up and Open-space

Participants joining an intercultural programme take part to several activities throughout the event. The agenda is structured and sometimes it does not leave chances to be modified. It is thus advisable to provide members of the group a sort of "open space" where they have the possibility to exchange opinions, propose further topic of discussion or produce something related to the event.

The open-space consists in giving participant a session (usually one afternoon) during which they can freely discuss about possible projects or networks to develop in the future. Each participant (but they can also form groups, if the same topic is shared) first present their ideas in the plenary. Stands with material, leaflet, PC, pictures are prepared. A timetable is created with information regarding the beginning and end of each explanatory session. Finally, each participant is invited to join a stand.

The follow-up consists in one day dedicated to final productions related to the seminar: an article, a declaration of intents, a Facebook page, a new network of partners, a new project or initiative, a presentation in the participants' country to present what it was done in the seminar. Participants can work in groups. Their work can be monitored by the facilitators, and the output are presented in a final plenary session.

Concluding the project

Final Evaluation

After one week or more days of activities the project is about to come to its end. It is time for the evaluation, in order to collect data that can allow us to understand the strong and weak point of the programme, what could be improved, confirmed or scrapped in case of further similar events.

It is advisable to dedicate at least a couple of hours to this process, and to use a combination of formal and non-formal tools. A conventional questionnaire (to ba handed to each participants) belongs to the first category. If formal tools provide more time for reflection, non-formal methods give participants the chance to better interact with the group and with the facilitators during the process. Here below an example of non-formal evaluation techniques:
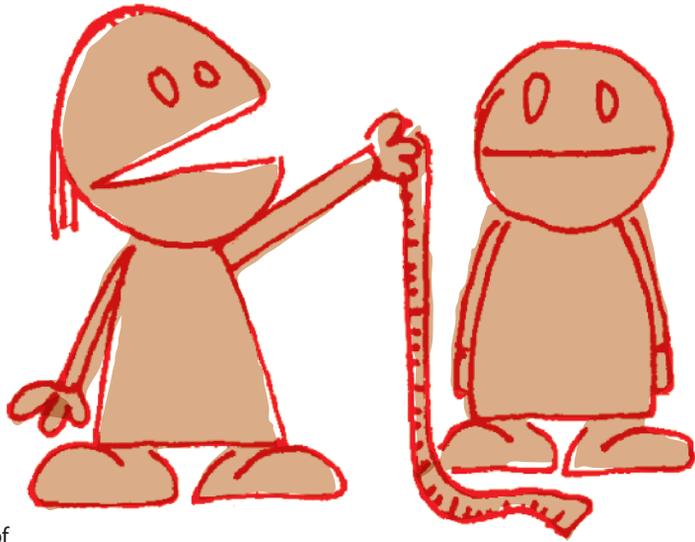
Water Evaluation

At the end of the event/training/meeting you have organized, select four/five aspects you would like to evaluate (i.e.: accommodation, food, free time, acquired skills, group dynamics). Write them down in pieces of paper and lay each ticket near an empty glass. Prepare a bucket or a big jug filled with water and give each participant an empty glass. Invite the first one to fill his/her glass and to share the quantity of water in the glasses according to his/her tastes/opinions (for exemple: if s/he thinks the

group dynamics were poor, s/he can pour just a few drops, or even none, in the respective glass). After sharing the water, each participant is invited to comment the choices, if s/he wants. At the end it will be clear, by observing the quantity of water in the different glasses, wich aspect was strong or poor. If a glass got filled, you can add a second one.

Closing activities

Tomorrow is departure time and many participants will not have a chance to see each other again. For this reason it would be nice to organize an activity that allows them to leave with pleasant memories from the project. The following game aims at this purpose.
Invite participants to gather in the plenary room. Stick a coloured A4 paper on their back and provide them with a pen. Participants are allowed to write down their comments and messages for their friends (of course they should be nice messages!). Put on some relaxing music and start the game. After 30 minutes stop the music and invite participants to take and fold their paper with messages: they will read it at home or on the way home.

Psychological and philosophical approach

Just like formal education is inspired and influenced by philosophical and psychological approaches, also non-formal education has developed specific principles and values over the years. Among the many different ideas and trends, the approach that maybe better represents such methodology is the Humanistic Psychology, mainly in the works of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. Acceptance, self awareness, intrinsic motivation, self realisation, mutual respect and common understanding are the strongest influences that helped non-formal methodology to strengthen its foundations. Last but not least, such values match with a political dimension where democracy, inclusion of minorities and people with disability, promotion of peace, respect of environment and fair distribution of resources in the planet are priorities.

Tips: Visualization methods and correct use of technology

Technology can be a real temptation for a trainer: animated presentations, videos with special effects, power point presentations and internet resources can replace the old-style marker and board. But are such tools always worth using? Are we running the risk of focussing more on the development of advanced methods of visualization, rather than caring on the learning process and on the flow of information? Although tempted by the latest development in technology, a good facilitator should always keep in mind that the main task of a non-formal education activity is to involve participants in the learning process. Sometimes technology can be a barrier or even exclude understanding and participation. A good balance between traditional methods of visualization (such as flip-chart combined with the classical brainstorming method) and the use of media, computer and projector will represent a suitable combination. It is important to stress that a well experience trainer or facilitator should be prepared to work also without technological support. What happens if, after preparing loads of power point presentations at home, we discovered at the seminar venue that our computer plug does not fit the sock?

Three examples of activities that can be played in an intercultural project

Iceberg of cultures
Duration: around 60 minutes
Group size: small-medium groups

In an attempt to explain culture more clearly, many intercultural trainers use the Iceberg of Culture when delivering cross-cultural training programmes. Culture is often compared to an iceberg which has both visible (on the surface) and invisible (below the surface) parts. Elements of culture which we can plainly see, such as food or clothes, are represented by the upper portion of the iceberg. Those elements which are not as obvious such as why someone eats or dresses the way they do are represented by the much larger portion of the iceberg underwater. The activity consists in inviting participants to discuss about the element placed in the part underwater.

Take a step forward

Duration: 30 minutes + 15 minutes debriefing
Group size: small groups

This activity is ideal to trigger discussions about human rights, access to resources, democracy, active participation, minorities. It is quite easy to play and entertaining. It is aimed at raising awareness about the risks of exclusion and discrimination in our society, and can be also linked to topics such as racism and xenofobia.

Whom would you like to live with? - Challenging prejudices

Duration: 45 minutes + debriefing
Group size: small-medium

An exercise to show the power of prejudices and to start discussing implicit values and preferences in a group and come to a common conclusion.

Intercultural Evenings

It is evening, and the group has worked quite a lot during the first days of the programme. Why not proposing an intercultural evening to better appreciate food, tradition and music of each participants' country? The intercultural evening is a common activity in international projects and has furthermore the added value of giving participants a chance to break the ice and improve the mood of the event. Participants should be informed beforehand to bring their typical food, pictures, flags, typical objects belonging to their tradition and culture. They can also be invited to present a short power point presentation. Music and dances are welcome. Facilitators should be aware that the main task of this activity is not the reinforcement of stereotypes (example: "Italians eat always spaghetti", "French drink only wine"), but to invite participants to make a proper research in order to present the typical features of their regions (which can help de-structuring national stereotypes). For example, a group of participants can freely decide to base their presentation upon an influential artist, a book, a geographic site or an historical event related to their region.

Two reflections: Europe and globalization. Are new united societies possible?

Europe is a continent with countless facets, traditions, cultures, languages. In the past, these elements were often used instrumentally to reinforce nationalism, protectionism and the idea that strong "cultures" had the right to prevail on others'. Now we are facing the challenge to find new ways to live peaceful, sharing resources and contributing to the global prosperity, although many see this as utopian. As a matter of fact, a general aim of any intercultural initiative should be to increase global solidarity and to solve conflicts using dialogue and peaceful methods. This is a recurrent topic of discussion in youth exchanges, where participants are confronted with issues such as national (or European) identities. Here are some suggestions that can be helpful in organising a discussion about this theme, after having played related activities:

- Do we "Europeans" share a common identity?
- Are national states and national identities still more powerful than "broader" identities?
- Are national identities an obstacle to global solidarity?
- Is it really impossible to fairly distribute resources, overcoming the national, regional and local interests?
- Is the disappearing of national identities a threat or an opportunity?

A debate about this issues can take a long time and requires good facilitating skills, nevertheless it would be interesting to include it in the programme in order to give participants the chance to express their ideas on the matter.

Beyond Tolerance: Myths and Truths

Toleration is "the practice of deliberately allowing or permitting a thing of which one disapproves. One can meaningfully speak of tolerating, i.e. of allowing or permitting, only if one is in a position to disallow". It has also been defined as "to bear or endure" or "to nourish, sustain or preserve". Toleration may signify "no more than forbearance and the permission given by the adherents of a dominant religion for other religions to exist, even though the latter are looked on with disapproval as inferior, mistaken or harmful". Toleration in modern parlance has been analyzed as a component of a liberal or libertarian view of human rights. As long as no one is harmed or no one's fundamental rights are violated, the state should keep hands off, tolerating what those controlling the state find disgusting, deplorable or even debased. This for a long time has been the most prevalent defence of toleration by liberals. Nevertheless, especially in relation to societies with a colonization background, it has been suggested that it is, and continues to be offensive to propose that any human is to be merely tolerated. That it is a gross misrepresentation of history to suggest that is it those oppressive colonizers, who captured nations by force, imposed their politics, culture and social systems on the 'natives' are now proudly in the business of tolerating! Therefore, it is debatable whether the idea of tolerance can lead to social justice in a pluralistic society, or it only perpetuates the type of social hierarchy it purports to eradicate.

Activity: Tolerating the intolerant – barometer

Statements

- Should we tolerate the intolerant?
- A just society must tolerate the intolerant, for otherwise, the society would then itself be intolerant, and thus unjust.
- While an intolerant sect does not itself have title to complain of intolerance, its freedom should be restricted only when the tolerant sincerely and with reason believe that their own security and that of the institutions of liberty are in danger.
- In exchange for toleration, minorities must

bear with the criticisms and insults which are part of the freedom of speech in an otherwise tolerant society.

- We should be unwilling to tolerate unjustified religious beliefs about morality, spirituality, politics, and the origin of humanity, especially beliefs which promote violence.

More

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Peterson, S., Tolerance (2003) @ http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/tolerance
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10 tips for an international volunteering project with an intercultural dimension

To conclude, here is a list of 10 tips that can be useful to sum up the most important element to keep in mind when organising a voluntary project with intercultural dimension. This last feature entails challenges and features that should addressed with proper instruments. In order to make the list easy to remember, we use the initials of the word "VOLUNTEERS": for each letter, a useful suggestion!

V – **Visibility**: before, during and after the project, it is important to communicate to the "outside world" what you've been doing. Specially in a small community, the presence of international participants has the power to attract interest and to involve locals in the activities.
O – Organization: an intercultural project cannot organize in a few weeks. A long preparation is required, to create the

network, to raise fund, to set up methods and contents.

L – **Logisitic**: hosting an intercultural group requires proper facilities: accommodation, a place where to eat (and sometimes where to cook), a plenary room for activities, open-space and free time. The more comfortable and "friendly" these places, the more productive the event will be.

U – **Use of proper tools**: there are plenty of tools available. A good facilitator, besides having a large number of them in his/her bag, should possess the sensitivity to adapt the instruments according to the different contexts (for example: which tools can we use if people with disabilities are present?)

N – **Non-formal education**: this methodology is to be preferred to more conventional and traditional teaching approach, considering the heterogeneity of participants. Less power point presentations, lectures, "static" activities, more dynamicity, energizers, group works, interactive methods.

T – **Trainers**: coordinating an intercultural group is not the easiest task. A previous theoretical and practical experience (or a training) in dealing with such groups is preferable: not only should a coordinator possess skills to shape up activities, but a specific sensitivity for group dynamics is also required.

E - Expression: a seminar, training or intercultural project is not only a list of activities that participants "must" play or attend. It is a unique chance to meet people from different countries, to exchange, share and find out differences and similarities. Do not forget to add a propoer "free" or "open" space in the agenda: a time dedicated to participants to interact, present themseleves and understand more about their lives and cultures.

E - Evaluation: The project is finished, but not the work! The evaluation process is

essential if your task is to improve your future projects, to understand the strongest and weakest points of the initiative and to give participants the feeling to be included in this process. Their feedback is important!

R - Respect: sharing one week with people from different countries is sometimes not that easy. Problems, conflicts and misunderstandings can arise. It is up to the facilitators and to the group to manage such situations in order to cooperate in a productive way. The best approach is to take decisions democratically, solving problems with dialogue sharing rules and respecting one another.

S - Sustainability: if we want to create a successful initiative, with a strong impact on the local community and active participation of volunteers, it is advisable to include potential follow ups or repetition of the project, in order to provide it with a long term dimension. Some initiatives, although brilliant, ends the very last day of the project and do not have any sustainability for the future.

Further internet links and resources

Here are two links that every trainer should know.

SALTO Toolbox is a collection of valuable instruments that make the trainer's life easy: hundreds of games, activities, tools with detailed descriptions and feedback. A real treasure!
http://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/

COMPASS is an online manual with plenty of games and non-formal education activities about human rights. A great resource for trainers and facilitators.
http://eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter_0/introduction.html
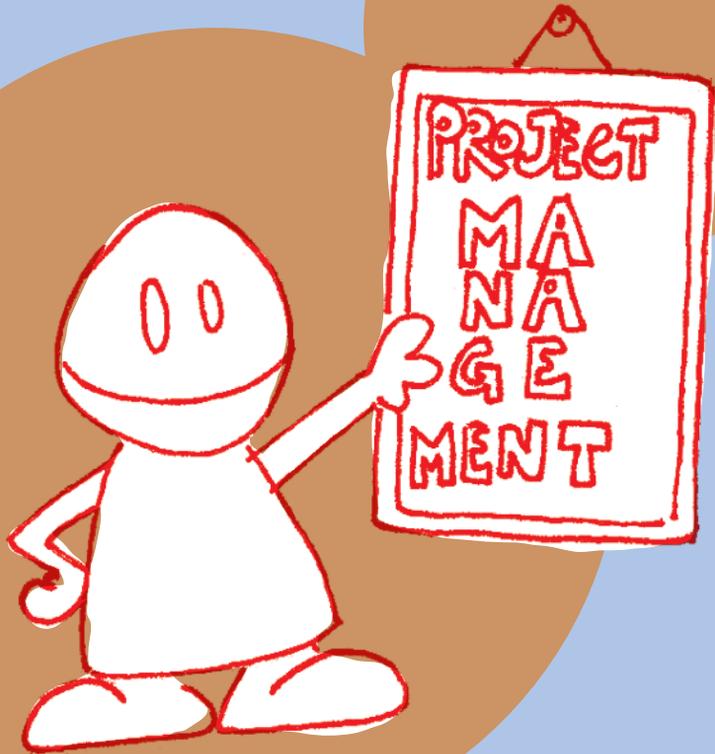
Introduction: how to organize a training on project management
(addressed to young people active in the voluntary field)

Project Management is a wide topic and the material available is huge: universities, companies, association provide courses, workshops, lectures about it, and countless internet sites offer infinite resources. Of course it is possible to use a non-formal education approach to learn how managing projects, and here you can find three activities that can be proposed to introduce the topic.

A team building game about Project management: The Bridge
To play this game you need two separate rooms, in which a group cannot see what the other is doing. The group is split into two teams and instructed to build half a bridge in a limited time (30 minutes). Each group is provided with the same items: paper, board, glue, scissors. Each group select a "speaker".

The two speakers meet in a neutral place at the beginning for 5 minutes. At the request of a group, they can meet one more time, for 3 minutes, in order to exchange updated information about the development of their works. After 30 minutes the activity stops. The two halves should create now a bridge! A debriefing sessions follows, in order to discuss about the following issues:

- Understanding and expanding your definition of team
- Developing your network and building relationships
- Strengthening team communication and decision-making techniques
- Expanding influencing and negotiation strategies
- Improving listening skills and learning the levels of listening

Visualizing project management elements: an Exhibition about worst and best practices

In order to visualize and to discuss about the mistakes to avoid and the elements to keep in mind when managing a project, an exhibition of best and worst practices can be organized. Each topic can be presented with pictures (to be hung all around the plenary room), short stories or performances, music, descriptions, data, clear examples related to project management. Participants can be actively involved in the performance of some situations.

For example, facilitators can show the picture of domino pawn, a butterfly or a snowball to talk about how small initial mistakes can cause devastating effects (if overlooked), about underestimation of details, lack of planning and management, lack of a plan B (the so-called Domino, Butterfly or Snowball Effects). Using metaphors is a strong method to catch participants' attention and to keep them involved in the discussion.

Can Hollywood teach us something about project management?

Watching movies can be an interesting and entertaining method to learn and understand more about a problem. Rather than showing hundreds of power point slides, a facilitator can insert in the programme agenda a movie evening, followed by a discussion with the participants. The topics of project management, intercultural communication and group dynamics can be found in some famous productions which are easy to find. Let's see some of them:

Crises Management - *Apollo 13* (USA, 1995, Ron Howard, 134 min.)

This is a 1995 about a failed moon mission. A short way into a moon mission a serious explosion prompted the famous message, "Houston, we have a problem." From that point the mission became a desperate effort to save the crew. The most important project management lesson may be that

sometimes it is essential to refocus the project. In this case, Gene Kranz, the flight director, redefined the mission as bringing the crew back alive. The story plays out with the mission team on the ground and the astronauts calmly and methodically solving one problem after another.

Group dynamics and communication - *Twelve angry men* (USA, 1957, Sidney Lumet, 96 min.)

This movie concerns the deliberations of the jury of a homicide trial. At the beginning, the 12 members have a nearly unanimous decision of guilty, with a single dissenter of not guilty, who throughout the play sows a seed of reasonable doubt.

Communication, working styles and team work

Project management is not only about planning and implementing, but it involves also communication skills: in order to keep a project running, members of a group need to find shared agreements, define and re-define objectives, strike compromises through dialogue and mediation. Besides the traditional sessions on project management, a related agenda should contain at least one activity about communication and team work. Specifically role play games suits this purposes and gives participants the chance to reflects upon their interaction styles, to learn or improve new skills. It is very important to stress the concept of "assertiveness", the ability of properly communicate and actively deliver your ideas and contributions to a team, respecting other people's feelings and avoiding a passive or aggressive approach.

Planning a project: the steps

Planning a project is a process that requires a logic approach. There are plenty of models available, which illustrate the different steps involved in the development of a plan. Here we propose a very simple model that can be used to design international projects targeted to young people.

1. Needs analysis
2. General aims and Concrete objectives
3. Resources
4. Methodology and Contents
5. Monitoring and Evaluation
6. Follow up

Needs Analysis

Usually the idea of a project come from a specific local need. For example, a group of young people, sensitive to the poor environmental conditions in their neighborhood, has the idea to set up an ecological initiative, and in order to give more visibility to the project, the members of the group decide to provide the initiative with an international dimension. This could be the sparkle for a youth exchange, a workcamp or an international seminar. This first step requires a reflection (needs analysis) about the reasons for implementing the idea: is the needs shared by other members of the community or is is just a "personal" need felt by the small group? Is there a potential to involve further actors in the projects? What kind of impact can the related activities produce in the neighborhood?
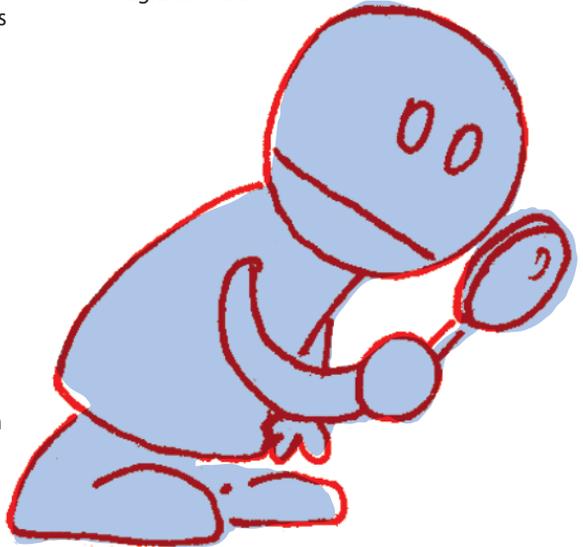
General Aims and Concrete Objectives

The reflection about the needs brings consequently to the question about what we want to achieve with the project. The general aims should be clear and easy to communicate, concrete and feasible. Furthermore, they should be broken down in more specific objectives. For example, the general aim of the above mentioned project could be to raise awareness about the environmental conditions of the local area, whereas the list of concrete objectives can encompass reaching out young people in the community, informing the families of the neighborhood, creating ecological associations in the area. Such objectives, if well identified, will work as guidelines for creating the activities of the project in the next phases. It is thus important to select realistic and clear ideas.
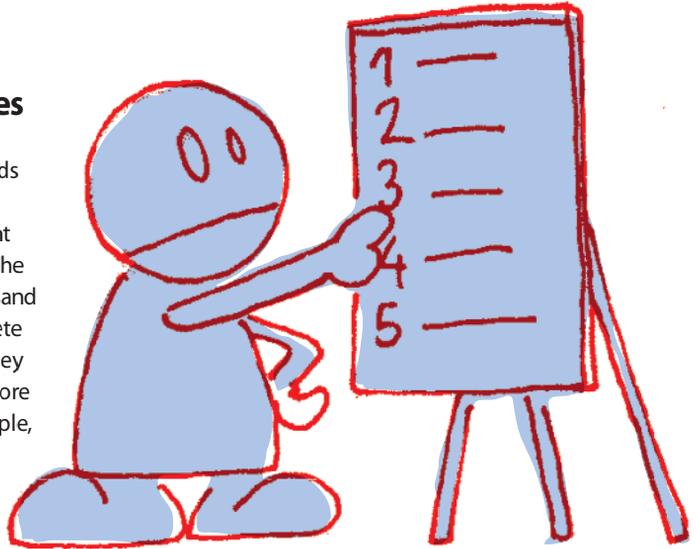
Resources

How can we fund our idea? Are there human resources available in our community? If we decide to give an international dimension to our project, how can we create a reliable network? How can we recruit participants? And what about logistic?
These are the typical questions that come to the surface during this planning phase. Such

step is quite technical, and requires often the support of an intercultural association or an institutional body with experience in the management of international projects. The Youth in Action programme and similar initiative from the Council of Europe offer young people and intercultural associations in Europe the chance to receive financial support for their intercultural projects. The options available are manifold: training, seminars, exchanges, short or long term voluntary initiatives can be organized. This step includes also the selection of partners by the creation of an international network, with associations taking part to the projects. This is a complex phase, that requires good planning and communication skills, patience and commitment.

Methodology and Contents

Once we have decided aims, objectives (according to local needs), the framework of the projects (funds, actions, network, partnership), we should develop the instruments that will allow us to turn the idea into practice. A reflection upon methodology will help us clarify *how* we intend to shape up our project: do we ant to include lectures from university professors in our agenda? Or shall we rather plan study visits and excursions? And of course we want to use non-formal education activities! Such reflection will lead us in the design of the contents of the
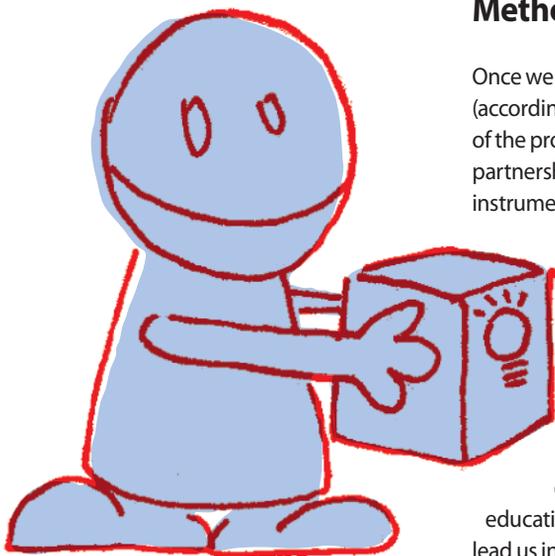
project: getting-to-know-each-other-games at the beginning, introductory sessions, team work, and so on.

This phase require a proper cooperation with the partners involved: the more active their contribution, the more interesting and richer the programme will be!

Monitoring and Evaluation

Before, during and after the project, it is essential to check if everything is going in the right direction. This is why monitoring is so important and should be include in the plan of actions. Even though the time available for designing and implementing the project is scan, it will be worthwhile to dedicate specific attention on monitoring the development of the phases before the project starts: are all partners involved in the work? Are we ahead or behind schedule? Should we redefine roles or appoint new ones? This process is very useful, in order to cope with unexpected problems that might rise before the implementation of activities. Also during the activity it is useful to include monitoring

spaces such as a middle evaluation with the group of participants, in order to propose changes, if needed. Last but not least, the final evaluation will give us inputs and feedback to understand the strong and weak points of the project and what can be improved in the future.
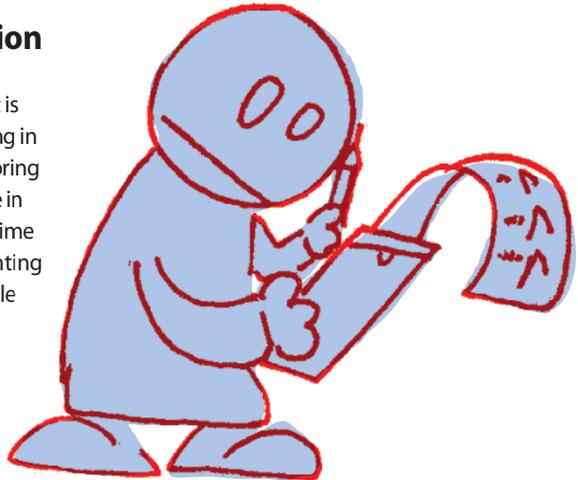
Follow up

The project was a success! Shall we repeat it? Shall we organize a "part 2"? The enthusiasm at the end of a successful initiative is always very high, and the days right after a project are usually very productive for further ideas. Follow up activities might include the publication of an article, booklets, CD, websites, blog, illustrating the contents and results of the project; or the creation of working groups interested in developing specific ideas emerged from the project. Such ideas have the power to strengthen the network and the partnership for future imitative and to give more visibility to the results.
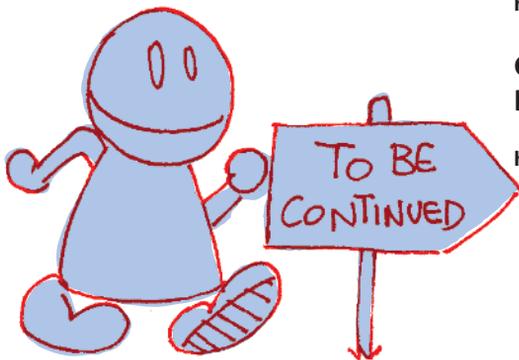
Links

Project Management T-kit

Published by the Council of Europe, this coomprehensive tool-kit offers a concrete 'step-by-step' approach, including hints and guidelines for monitoring a project. **http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/Publications/T_kits/3/tkit3.pdf**

Youth in Action programme

The Programme of the European Commission that offers financial contribution and support for youth initiatives: **http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/**

Council of Europe – Youth Departement

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/

Toolkit
on project management
and intercultural learning

Citizenship

Title of the project
Volunteering: Action for active citizenship

Partners organizations
Service Civil International-Hellas (Greece)
De Amicitia (Spain)
Association "Realization" (Croatia)
Associazione Informagiovani (Italy)