

Exploring quality in cultural diversity projects

SALTO-YOUTH
CULTURAL DIVERSITY
RESOURCE CENTRE



Education and Culture



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks to 'Self-fish' for permission to use the pictures from their Networking project 'Rintintin' (<http://www.self-fish/rintintin>)

INTRODUCTION

There are many international youth projects that are run in the field of Cultural Diversity in European youth work today. This booklet aims to help you reflect upon your own experience, as well as provide you with ideas taken from the best existing practice which can contribute to quality in future cultural diversity projects.

The inspiration for this booklet came from the '[Quality in Cultural Diversity Projects](#)' Seminar (April 2007), in cooperation with the SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre and the Turkish National Agency for the Youth in Action programme. Several project stakeholders were brought together to deliberate over their own practices and experience, in order to contribute to the future direction of Cultural Diversity projects on an international level in the youth field. Their contributions held value, and we want to share this with a wider audience. Their ideas and suggestions have been taken a step further by broadening the topics and highlighting the further issues.

During a previous needs assessment done by SALTO-YOUTH in cooperation with National Agencies across Europe, it was requested to focus on how to implement 'quality' cultural diversity projects and to share existing best practice. This need, combined with the priority of the European Commission to evaluate and spread the results of the projects already running, resulted in a combined strategy of looking at the quality in activities run through the Youth in Action programme.

This booklet, therefore, is the sister publication of 'Quality in Training'. Why not read that one too? Download it from: www.salto-youth.net/diversityresources

The events were developed according to the target audience: one looking at '[Quality in Training](#)', which focuses on [training activities](#) to support those that work with young people and the other, '[Quality in Projects](#)', which focuses on [young people](#) and [cultural diversity projects](#).

We hope this booklet provides some inspiration and new ideas for you and your future projects

Monomita Nag-Chowdhury and Susie Green

SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre

p.s. please tell us what you think of this booklet, or any other feedback, by writing to:
diversity@salto-youth.net

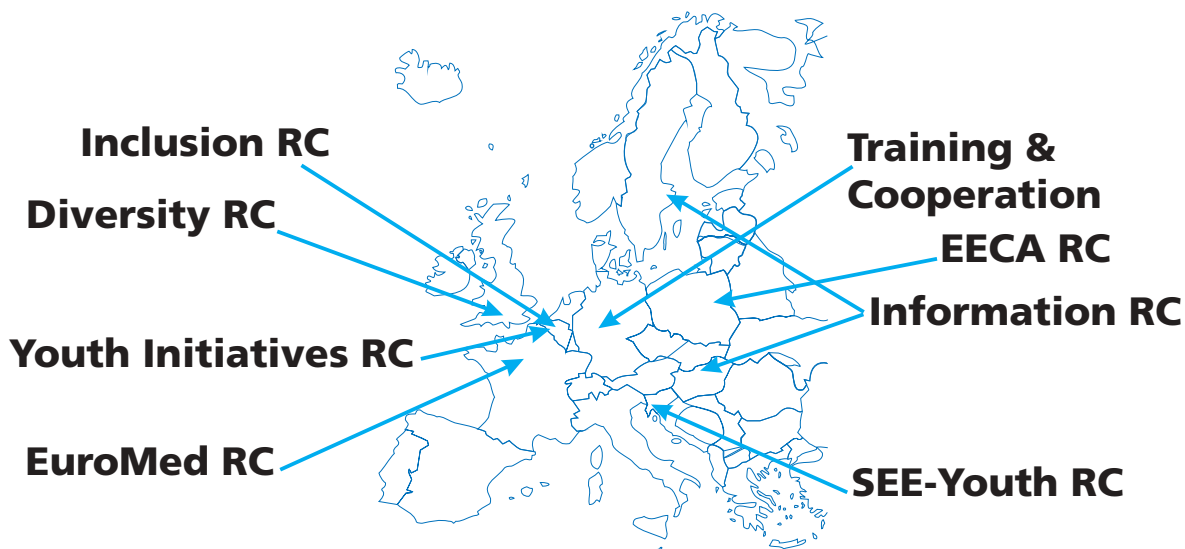


SALTO stands for Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities.

SALTO-YOUTH.net is a network of 8 Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. It provides youth work and training resources. It regulates training and contact-making activities to support various organisations and National Agencies within the frame of the European Commission's YOUTH in Action programme and beyond.

SALTO-YOUTH started in 2000 and is part of the European Commission's Training Strategy within the YOUTH in Action programme. It works in synergy and complementarily with other partners in the field.

The [SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre](#) is based in the UK-National Agency, Connect Youth at the British Council, London. It provides support, information, and training courses on Cultural Diversity issues relevant to different countries and regions in and around Europe.



Words from contributors

You are now reading a booklet which was inspired by the international seminar 'Quality in Cultural Diversity Projects' (April 2007) and comes from a need to collect and share good practice of cultural diversity projects in European youth work. The seminar gathered experienced project organisers and young people from across Europe.

Our role in this seminar was to facilitate the sharing of experience among the participants of the seminar. We encouraged them to reflect on what makes a youth project good with a focus on cultural diversity. The event was also an opportunity for us to collect good practice examples of preparing, implementing and evaluating cultural diversity projects organised in the frame of the Youth in Action programme and to use the best of these examples in this publication.

So, while reading the booklet you will find several references to the event and outcomes which were brought by the participants in the seminar.

Having experience in international/local youth work with young people from different cultural backgrounds, we decided to use in this booklet, examples from our work and the shared knowledge of international youth work across Europe that we have. We hope that you will find our thoughts and ideas beneficial for your practice too.

In our practice and understanding we use the term 'youth project' to refer to our experience of working with young people where they have the main role and benefit during the learning process. Also in this booklet we have in mind cultural diversity whenever we use the term 'youth project'. We invite you when reading to actively reflect and make links with your own experience and understanding of working with young people. We believe that people know more than they are aware of!

When contributing to this publication we felt it was important to lead you through a personal learning pathway. Therefore we tried to incorporate [different ways](#) of sharing the thoughts and ideas in this publication:

- You will find references to the [theoretical knowledge](#) and models which will help to develop your understanding of cultural diversity as a subject in the life of young Europeans. You will find the links to reference materials and other publications in order to read more about different subjects appearing next to the main text.
- [Visual models](#), graphs and mind-maps will support you in linking the theoretical knowledge with your practice and diverse realities across Europe.
- Questions will encourage you to [reflect](#) on your own working experience in international youth work and will lead to certain answers and new directions in your working practice.
- By sharing the best practice of project organisers and experience of young participants, you will get an overview of [experiences, tools and methods](#), which can be used in your next practice in working with young people in the cultural diversity field.

This booklet explores the theme of 'quality in cultural diversity projects' and has three main parts:



- ⦿ In the first part of the publication, 'youth' will be looked at through the reflection on the [understanding](#) related to culture, cultural diversity and quality in youth projects aiming at cultural diversity.
- ⦿ The second part of the booklet will focus more on [best practice](#), tools and methods, recommendations and tips for working with cultural diversity in youth projects implemented in the frame of Youth in Action programme.
- ⦿ The last part will provide you with guidance and tools for [personal learning](#) in cultural diversity and approaching it in your [working practice](#).

Based on your needs you may decide to start reading the booklet at different points:

- ⦿ If you are interested more in reflecting and developing your understanding and are looking for references to support your experience, then go to the first part '[Diving into cultural diversity](#)' (pages 5-15)
- ⦿ If you are interested more in looking for examples from projects, need to know concrete ideas, methods and tools of approaching cultural diversity in youth projects, then jump to the second part '[Best practice in cultural diversity projects](#)' (pages 17-33)
- ⦿ If you are interested more in planning your learning and next practice stage of your youth project linked to cultural diversity go straight to the third part in the booklet '[Next practice in cultural diversity](#)' (pages 35-39)

What ever your starting point, we hope that you will enjoy reading it and that you will use it both for your personal learning and your practice in youth work.

Nerijus Kriauciunas, Eylem Certel and Ufuk Atalay



DIVING INTO CULTURAL DIVERSITY

In this chapter you will be able to explore the different types of understanding connected to quality; cultural diversity; and quality in cultural diversity projects. We invite you to reflect on your own understanding of cultural diversity. We hope that the thoughts, ideas, questions and description of experiences in this chapter will help you do this. It is important that we translate theory and practice into reality by exchanging and sharing our experiences among one another.

Understanding culture

Prepare for a journey into the 'waters' of cultural diversity using a 'mind boat' to explore the surface of culture.

Why waters? This could be explained through the widely used Iceberg concept of culture. Consider an Iceberg floating in the water, where only 1/7 of an iceberg can be seen above the water. If the Iceberg is representative of a culture, then that 1/7th surface of the culture is what you see. At this floating peak, so to speak, you easily appreciate what people from other cultures/Icebergs look like, how they dress, the sound of their music, or the look of their architecture.

Still, there are many things about people from another culture that are not seen and are only possible to discover if you spend much more time with them. These are the remaining 6/7ths of the 'Iceberg' which remain 'under water'. So why not go deeper and explore the 'underwater life' of other cultures?

To practise a bit we invite you to look at the pictures below and try to work out which countries are reflected in which pictures?

See more in the T-kit "Intercultural learning" available for downloading at <http://www.training-youth.net>.

You can find the same pictures but larger size in pages 4, 16 and 34



A



B



C



D



E

For answers see page 39.

How many places did you guess correctly? If you managed to guess all of them correctly you could still ask yourself what are they like, the people who live and work in these places? What kind of life do they lead? How is their life different from yours? Most probably the best way to get your answers would be to travel there and spend some time discovering the places, the people and the culture.

If you jump out of the 'mind boat' and dive deeper into the culture you will discover many more aspects of it. The same model of culture gives the idea about unseen elements of culture, which is sometimes only possible to discover when living with people from the different cultures. The unseen part of culture could be the history of the group of people from the same culture; their norms and values; the ways that relationships are practised; the perception of life and the worldview; the daily life behaviour and other aspects.

Here's an example of a youth project where 'diving under the water' gave some unexpected surprises:

Best practice: during a multilateral youth exchange we were organising a meeting with the local community inviting them to meet at a café to share the impressions and results from our youth exchange project. For local people the biggest surprise came when, we didn't speak 'schoolbook' English that they were familiar with despite the fact that we were from England. We had dark hair and were not wearing clothes that they associated with England. It came as a positive learning point for people who came to the event as it broke some stereotypes about us coming from England. It allowed them to explore the cultural diversity of our country and it gave us the self-confidence to express our background and origin.

Try to involve young people from different cultural groups in your country group when going on an exchange because it just might bring a different flavour of cultural diversity and be really interesting.

Participant in a Youth Exchange project

Try to think about your own experiences of meeting people from other cultures and remember the ones when you were positively surprised about people and their culture. It can help you if you would think of places and occasions when you met different people - maybe in your workplace, when studying or during your free time. What about your negative experiences when you perhaps discovered that the things that you see don't correspond to what you feel? Sometimes it might be that what you feel is not real too.

Next practice: when you are asked by someone to present your culture, think about how far your life is based around your culture, what your experience is and what interesting things you would like to share with others. During your project invite young people to think about how their culture is reflected in their daily activities.

When we come to youth projects the **concept of culture** we carry in mind is the one of discovering not only the visible part of it, but more importantly getting to know better the invisible part. It is not enough during the project just to teach traditional dances, to taste different kinds of food offered, and to present facts and figures about the country. Even more important is to get insights about who the people are and their lifestyle or worldview, raise awareness of own culture and develop sensitivity towards our differences. And the reasons for that lie in the reality that misunderstandings and tensions arise because of the cultural differences that people hold - sometimes not even being totally aware of them.

Understanding cultural diversity

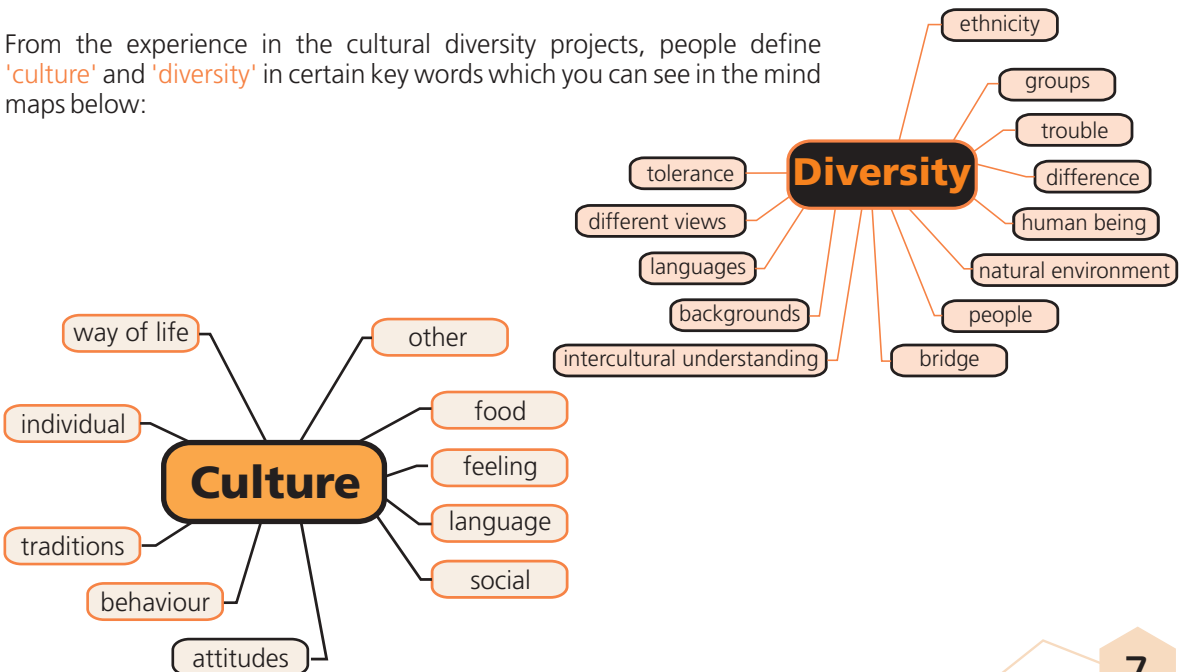
Let's continue with a simple task, which can help you to practise your senses. Look at the two drawings below and find as many differences as you can:



How many differences did you manage to find? If you managed to discover all the differences in two drawings imagine how many differences you can find in two people that even come from the same culture! Now reflect on this small experience of identifying differences in two drawings and think about your motivation. What kept you interested in finding differences during this exercise? What kind of efforts did you put in this task? What feelings did you have when you reached a certain result in this task? Now try to see what parallels you can find in discovering cultural differences among people?

For answers see page 39

From the experience in the cultural diversity projects, people define 'culture' and 'diversity' in certain key words which you can see in the mind maps below:



Combining it together then 'cultural diversity' can be referred to a person:

- ⦿ **Physical outlook** - how young people dress, what symbols they choose to wear, their expressions of body language and other physical features
- ⦿ **Identity** - how do young people see themselves, how do they reflect on their identity, self-development phase in their life
- ⦿ **Background** - family of a young person, country or region of origin, senses of belonging, life experiences, educational pathway
- ⦿ **Nationality** - sense of belonging which young people have and associate with a particular group of people of the same nationality
- ⦿ **Religion and beliefs** - which of the beliefs or/and religious young people are influenced, follow and is practising, what are their needs and concerns based on their religious background and their beliefs
- ⦿ **Other...**

And some of the ideas can be associated with the interaction between the people from different cultures:

- ⦿ **Living context** - social relationships of young people, community and surroundings where they live and act
- ⦿ **Tensions** - negative feelings and emotions appearing when young people are faced with cultural diversity and (in)ability to deal with it
- ⦿ **Cultural sensitivity** - ability to feel the cultural diversity, identify the needs caused of the cultural diversity and ability to choose the adequate response to them
- ⦿ **Prejudices and stereotypes** - the images which young people have in their mind about people from different cultures
- ⦿ **Other...**

We believe that you could continue with this list of ideas, adding from your own understanding of cultural diversity. In simple terms **cultural diversity** is about who you are, your background, origin, identity, nationality, other characteristics - in relation to the other people who differ from you because of their background, origin, identity, nationality and other characteristics. Cultural diversity is about your being, interacting and relating to people who differ from you and valuing differences you have. Think about your own understanding of cultural diversity, what it means to you and how you would explain it in simple language. There is no single correct definition of cultural diversity!

What is interesting about cultural diversity is that quite often it comes from daily life experiences. But if it is appreciated honestly and taken into consideration it could bring benefits to everyone as illustrated in the following example:

For more definitions see
Wikipedia at
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_diversity

Best practice: We were planning a multilateral Youth Exchange project during the advanced planning visit. The main issues that arose were the timing of meals, food quantity and preferences in taste. Depending on partners the meal times differed from lunch at 12.00 to 16.00 and dinner from 17.00 to 21.00. Food 'quantity' again varied between a heavy and light breakfast as well as consideration towards particular dietary needs.



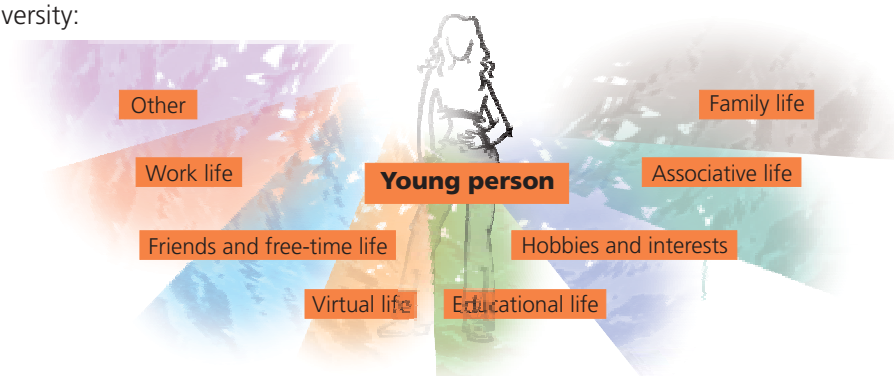
Finally, after an 'open sharing' discussion, we made a decision to try to start the exchange programme by agreeing to a compromise for meal times, serving both a traditional meal provided by hosts in combination with different tastes and foods corresponding to preferences of people from other countries. We also provided the opportunity to have small snacks prepared by young people themselves. The result was that people were grateful for good quality food, and there was less tension.

Organiser of a Youth Exchange project

The example reflects a very common situation which can happen when people experience cultural diversity. If they have an opportunity to reflect on their experience and discuss this with others they can then understand the diversity better. Young people learn about cultural diversity when it becomes clear to them what and why some strange things are happening to them or around them. Clarity can come if cultural diversity is linked as close as possible to the needs and reality of young people. You can only support young people to have a better understanding of cultural diversity in their life if you are aware of the reality in which your young people are living.

In the seminar, in order to clarify the concept of 'cultural diversity', the participants were invited to reflect and share about the reality of young people in their countries and in the environments where they live. They tried to identify the ways in which young people face cultural diversity. It differs from country to country and even between different regions and towns of the same country. In most cases it would be difficult to find a young person nowadays who is not 'touched' by cultural diversity.

Looking at the drawing below, think about your young people and note in which areas of their life and in what ways young people experience cultural diversity:



Think of the challenges young people are facing when coping with cultural diversity in their life? Or what they benefit out of living in the culturally diverse environments?

When reflecting on the situation of young people it is good not to generalise but to try to **identify with the situation** of each person in your working practice. This might help to avoid wrong assumptions - but the best way is simply to get an answer from young people directly

Next practice: invite young people with whom you are working to describe their experience and reality of facing cultural diversity by preparing a collage. Use magazines and other creative material, which you might find around. Through the conversation identify what young people are concerned about or interested in. This activity can be used as preparation activity for a project

During the seminar, participants gave examples from their practice of how young people **experience cultural diversity** in their life:

- ⦿ **Family life** - a young person is born and grows up in a family, which had moved from another country. Family members associate themselves with a cultural group, which is not necessarily belonging to the majority in the country or the region: the family is of mixed nationalities or cultural backgrounds; communication in the family is bilingual; the family has an immigration story
- ⦿ **Friends and free-time life** - a young person may be friends with another young person who associates themselves with a different culture than his/her own. They have different backgrounds, speak other languages or come from another country. Another example would be a young person who spends time in environments which allow them to experience cultural diversity (e.g. eating places, meeting places, travelling abroad for holidays or festivals, watching movies and television, reading youth or travel magazines)
- ⦿ **Educational life** - school and student exchanges, schools' networking, study related international conferences, international exchange of the students and teachers/professors; non-formal education activities after school hours, youth exchanges, volunteering, visits abroad
- ⦿ **Associative life** - belonging and/or being active in international organisations, NGOs, which promote and work with cultural diversity on local and international levels, international and intercultural project experience, the staff of the organisation is of diverse backgrounds
- ⦿ **Hobbies and interests** - playing in a football team with young people who differ in cultural background, participation in international art festivals, sport competitions, performing in international concerts
- ⦿ **Work life** - working in international team and/or international organisation/company, internship experience abroad, dealing with costumers from abroad (e.g. work at the hotel, café, exhibition centre), work and travel programmes abroad, (il)legal work experience abroad
- ⦿ **Virtual life** - participation in virtual communities, communication with people from abroad and other cultures, browsing web-sites, playing computer games, downloading music and movies, web publishing (web-sites, discussion platforms, blog sites)
- ⦿ **Other...**

As you can see, for young people it is hardly possible to escape from cultural diversity in their life. Therefore possibilities to experience cultural diversity and learn from this experience are essential for young people. In many examples experiencing cultural diversity is also often linked with mobility.

European programmes offer great opportunities for mobility to gain this kind of experience and to develop intercultural competences empowering young people to deal with cultural diversity in their daily life. Youth in Action is one of the European Union programmes which offers different mobility opportunities both for young people and those who are involved in working with young people:



For more information about different European programmes visit <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/index.htm>

For more information about Youth in Action programme visit http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html

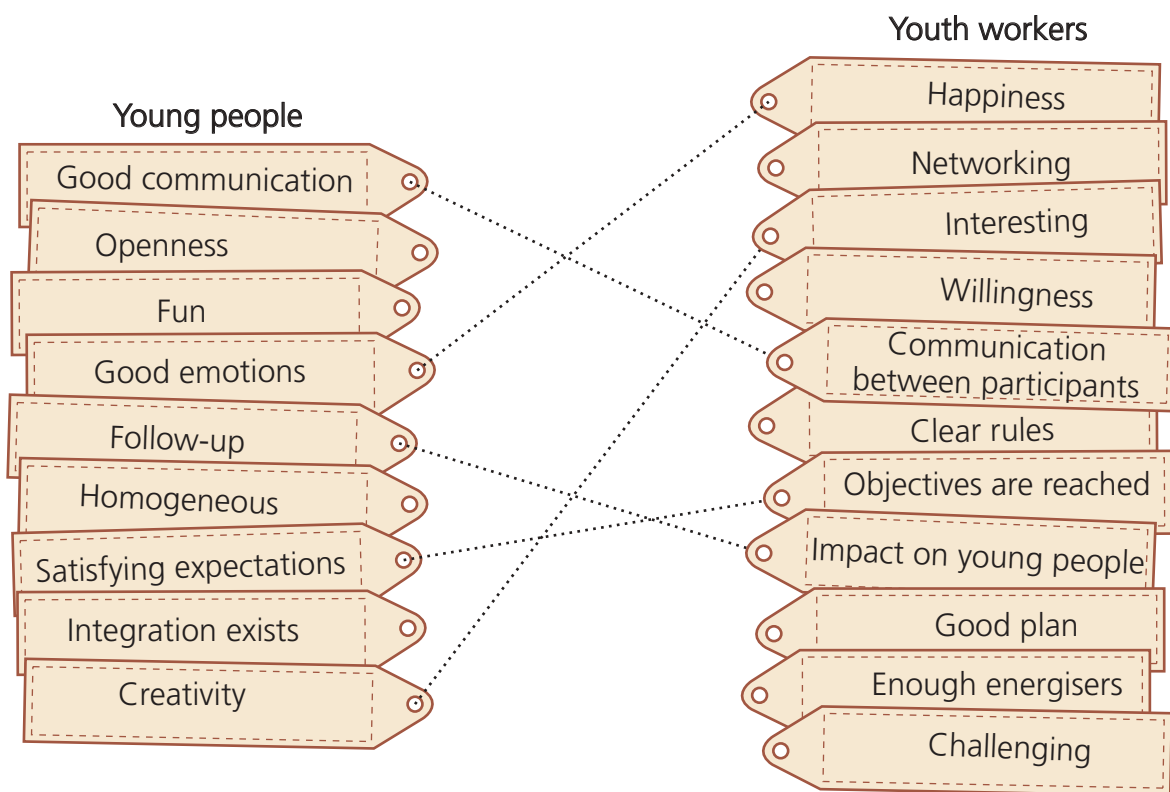


You can use the opportunities yourself and open them to young people around you. With your support and experience the next project can become a cultural diversity project, enriched with many discoveries, for you and young people.

Understanding quality in cultural diversity projects

Every youth project implemented in the frame of Youth in Action programme has the potential to experience, explore and learn about cultural diversity across Europe. But it is still not necessary that every project aims to achieve this directly, or is good enough to provide this kind of learning experience. When speaking about 'good' and 'could be better' projects we start the discussion about quality in cultural diversity projects. So what makes a good quality cultural diversity project be it a Youth Exchange, European Voluntary Service, Training Course or other kind of activity?

In the seminar young people and youth workers, in separate stakeholder groups, were invited to put into words what they mean by 'good quality cultural diversity project?' The results for your curiosity... (are in the next page):



What is particularly interesting is that when you put these thoughts together, you can see that there are aspects, which are perceived as being good by both young people and youth workers. But there are points, which seem to have a different importance for young people and youth workers. Lines in both tables connect aspects, which were identified by both young people and youth workers as being similar or very close.

Experience from projects shows that it is important and quite often beneficial to confront our understandings of what is a 'good' and 'bad' (quality) project. When doing this with young people, make sure you **try to speak and understand** their language, as sometimes we name the same ideas or concepts in different ways, which leads us to misunderstandings. Another role we have when working with young people or running a project with our peers is helping to translate youth language to the language used in youth work as it is described in the example:

Best practice: when supporting an informal youth group in the application process for a Youth Initiative project I was helping young people to formulate what they expect from the project and what they want to happen during it. It was interesting to find a way of introducing them to words such as 'intercultural learning', 'aims and objectives', 'evaluation' or 'European dimension'. I was helping them to translate all these "slang" words by asking simple and clear questions referring to their experience with cultural diversity and past learning experiences. It helped them a lot when I provided very concrete examples from my practice of other projects as it helped young people to get an understanding of what they are asked in the application.

They were successful in submitting the application and received a grant; they went through the learning process of implementing the project, and succeeded with all the reporting. A few of them later helped other groups of young people to successfully apply with Youth Initiative projects and receive grants. I bet that people from the group I was supporting got the understanding of quality!
Coach in a Youth Initiative project

Think about young people you are in touch with and the way they express themselves. In what way do you consult with them about the quality of the work? In what way do they have a chance to say what they like and dislike when being involved in a project activity?

The Programme Guide is available in all official languages for downloads at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/yia/index_en.html#guide or you may contact the National Agency in your country

Earlier we focused on quality in cultural diversity projects based on the experience of young people and youth workers. But it is definitely worth familiarising ourselves with the quality requirements for projects listed in the Programme Guide of the Youth in Action programme. It gives you reference points and some hints on where to focus when preparing, realising and evaluating your projects.

In the guide, regarding cultural diversity in projects, the emphasis is put on 'intercultural working methods' and promoting the 'awareness of different cultures' through the programme activities during the project. It is expected that the project 'reflects common concern', 'promotes European values' and 'provides young people with intercultural learning experience'. The preparation is needed to be ready to meet with people from 'different backgrounds and cultures'. These are the minimum quality criteria for any type of project implemented in the frame of Youth in Action programme.

For more, see the document 'Working with Young People from Disadvantaged Backgrounds in Transnational Voluntary Service' available by request at info.creativecop@schlesische27.de

If you want to work more on quality connected to cultural diversity in the EVS projects you may find the inspiration in the recommendation document contributed by the European networks of organisation active with EVS project.

They emphasise the importance of knowing the 'volunteers experience' and background making it an integral part of the learning process during the project. The support for volunteer is mentioned addressing the 'need to value the 'cultural shock'', being 'sensitive for intercultural issues' and having the role of translating 'the new environment to the volunteer'.

The Council of Europe is an active actor in European youth work, which promotes and support intercultural youth activities and strives in achieving quality in European Youth Work. For more visit their web-site http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/Youth/

From the experience in EVS projects, partners admit the need to 'understand and trust one another' and be clear and open in the communication, in this way being able to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

Another reference you may address comes from The Council of Europe activities. It provides a discussion document based on the evaluation of the Long Term Training Course on Intercultural Learning and recent research activities focusing on quality in youth projects.

The experience shows the need in projects to 'address the multi-cultural realities of young people' and provide the learning experience in the areas of tensions and conflicts brought by cultural diversity. The project should empower young people to overcome 'social exclusion, oppression, discrimination or isolation'. Again the projects should be based on intercultural approach and in the aims and objectives clearly show how they contribute to 'understanding intercultural dimension'.

As you can see there is concern and attempts to ensure quality in youth projects on European level. And of course you contribute to this process by making some time for reflection, and for evaluation of quality in your cultural diversity project.

In the seminar we developed and used the Honey Comb model to work on the quality in cultural diversity projects. It is important that there are many

models that represent these things. This is only one model amongst many, which reflects the reality and it might help you to visualise things - although you might not agree with everything about it. Have a look, see what you think. The model highlights 'visible' and 'less visible' elements in a project, and draws attention to quality in cultural diversity projects:

TEAM



ENVIRONMENT

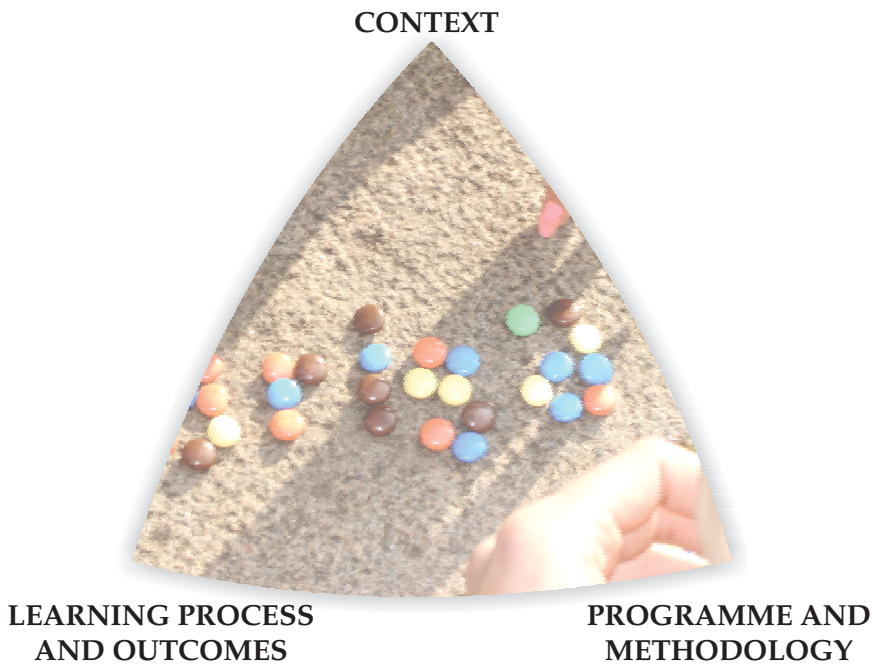
PARTICIPANTS

Visible elements are the aspects in the project which are possible to notice, even if we are not a part of the project or not there for the full duration of it:

- **Participants** - do the participants come from diverse backgrounds and represent cultural diversity? Is the group balanced in terms of cultural diversity? Does the group, and/or individual people, have different experiences in dealing with cultural diversity?
- **Team** - is the team balanced and does it involve people who come from different backgrounds? Does the team reflect cultural diversity? Is there a different experience of working with cultural diversity issues present in the team? Do people have the knowledge and abilities to work with multicultural groups and different young people?
- **Environment** - does the project take place in an environment, which allows for participants to explore and learn about cultural diversity? Does it ensure the impact both for participants and the local community to understand and promote cultural diversity in a positive way?

Think of your last experience with youth projects and try to identify which of the elements mentioned above contributed to exploring and learning cultural diversity, and in what way? Or think of your next practice and identify the areas where you would like to improve, trying to include more cultural diversity in your youth project? Maybe by having partners from more diverse countries and cultures? Maybe by inviting young people from different background to develop a common idea? Or maybe by running an activity in an environment which has never been visited by people from different cultures and countries?

The less visible elements are the ones which you mostly need to experience yourself and it takes time to discover them:



- **Context** - are there clear needs to work on cultural diversity? Is cultural diversity reflected in the aims and objectives of the project? Does the programme of the activity focus on cultural diversity directly? Is it expected that the project will bring learning in cultural diversity issues as a result?
- **Programme and methodology** - is the working approach based on intercultural learning? Do the chosen methods take into consideration cultural diversity, allowing participants to experience it and learn from it?
- **Learning process and outcomes** - is the learning process based on trust and does it take place in an open and safe atmosphere? Is the learning process balanced and does it involve learning on different levels (e.g. emotional, practical, rational)? Does the project succeed in reaching learning in cultural diversity issues?

By grouping elements into two groups - visible and less visible - we wanted to emphasise that it is not enough to just bring people from different backgrounds, cultures and countries. It is also important that the content, methodologies and learning support is part of the process of enabling young people to experience and learn about cultural diversity. There should not only be presentations of different cultures but rather **interaction** between people coming from different cultures followed by a reflection on this experience. Integrating 'Cultural diversity' into projects can involve a lot of effort, but it can certainly be very rewarding in return!

In the next chapter you will be able to focus more on how to achieve quality in cultural diversity projects in practice.



BEST PRACTICE IN CULTURAL DIVERSITY PROJECTS

In this part, you will be able to reflect upon the different aspects of projects that enrich cultural diversity and create opportunities to experience and learn about cultural diversity. We will cover the different phases of the project, including preparation, implementation and evaluation activities.

There are three main areas: examples of experience of people who are working on cultural diversity through youth projects, explanation of tools and methods, conclusions and recommendations coming from the reality of cultural diversity projects.

The text is structured in a way to follow the Honey Comb model, which was briefly introduced in the previous part, and provides guidance ideas for working on cultural diversity within your own projects. Hopefully, you will be inspired by new ideas to work with in your next practice.

Setting up the quality criteria in cultural diversity projects

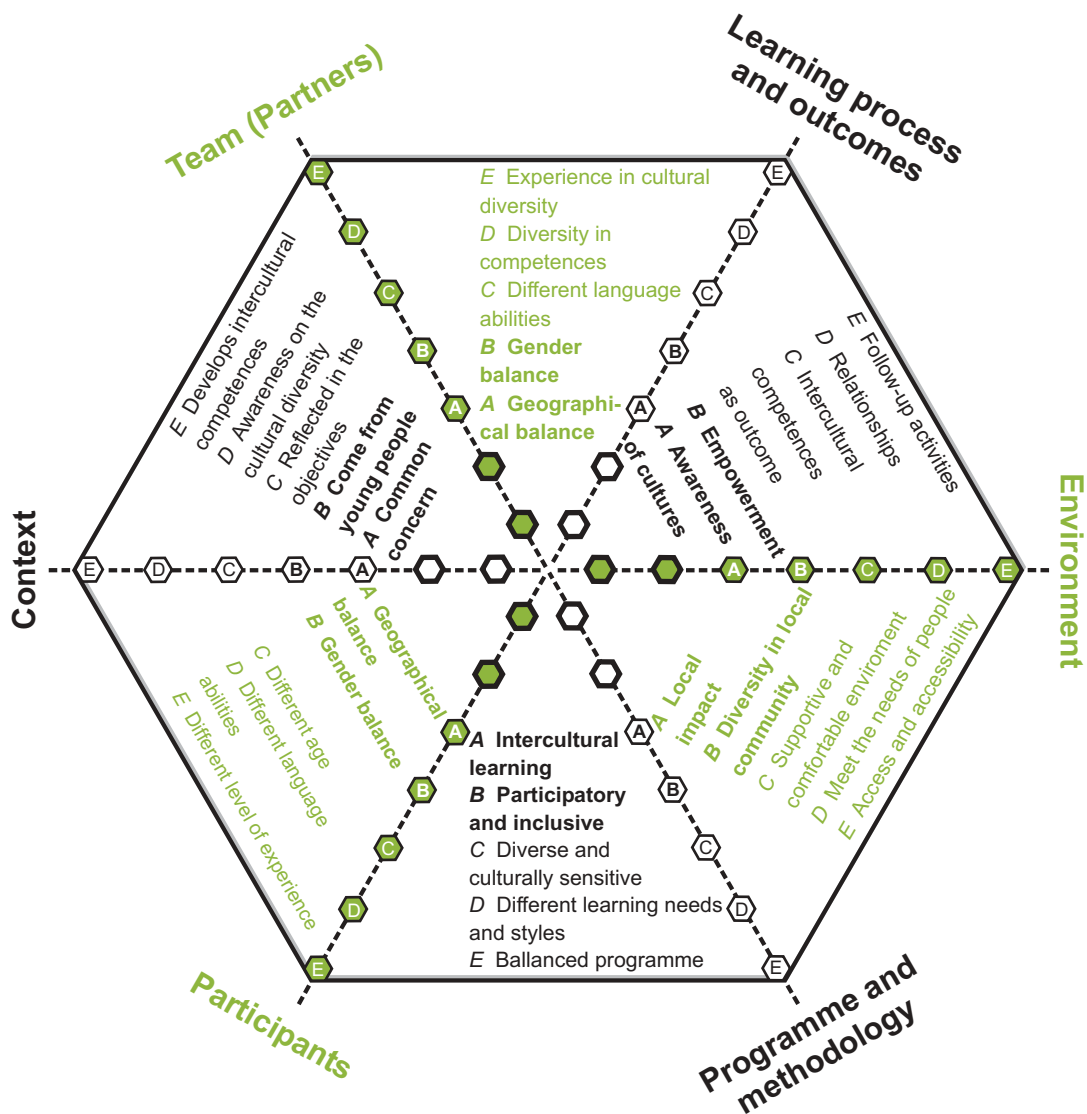
Bearing in mind the notion that 'quality' is subjective, we appreciate that every time you begin to work on a concrete project you also need to reflect upon what a 'good' project means - not only for the participants, but also for you, your partners and also the funding institution. Below you will find a few statements reflecting on 'quality' issues. We invite you to circle your own response, and take the opportunity to think about what a good cultural diversity project is for you?

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> YES | It is enough to bring people together from different countries to achieve 'quality' in cultural diversity projects | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| <input type="radio"/> YES | People learn the most about cultural differences if there is a workshop included in the programme on intercultural learning | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| <input type="radio"/> YES | The team has to have extensive experience in cultural diversity to be able to work on cultural diversity projects | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| <input type="radio"/> YES | Cultural diversity exists in all forms of environments | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| <input type="radio"/> YES | It is good to target cultural diversity in a project because it is a priority in the Youth in Action programme | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| <input type="radio"/> YES | Learning about cultural diversity needs to be a long-term process | <input type="radio"/> NO |

It might have been difficult to find some clear answers to the statements because for some you need a concrete project and situation. It is best if you would take any of your own projects as example to reflect on quality then reading further.

Next practice: You can also share the statements with your partners or in creative ways with young people. After the different people express their answers try to find common points for a good start!

Consider the **Honey Comb** model. We put together the visible and less visible aspects of the project, as described in the previous part into the model of a hexagon shape:

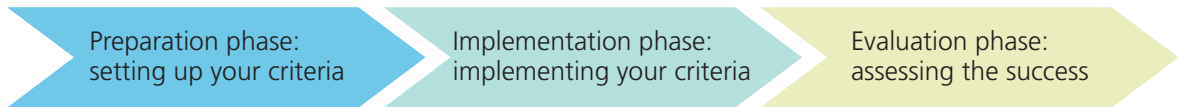


For more details you may have a look at the Programme Guide or consult with your National Agency

In the proposed model, the first 2 criteria closest to the centre are taken as the minimum expectations for quality within cultural diversity projects in the Youth in Action programme. Minimum criteria are needed if you want your project to be granted. In any project, however, and depending on the needs of young people, you may decide to go for more enriching cultural diversity areas of criteria.

This model is just one way of looking at quality in a cultural diversity project, and you may decide to opt for another, or even create your own.

If you decide to use the model in practice just follow the steps:



We will continue using the **Honey Comb model** as a reference to describe quality in cultural diversity projects. Focusing on each of the aspects in the project, we will describe criteria used in the model, allowing you to create a picture of quality in your project(s).

Participants

Young people contribute within project work because they create and live the situations, gain experience and learn from it. They are the main actors and the resource for cultural diversity in the projects.

Cultural diversity in projects starts from the **geographical balance** in the group of participants. When you are planning an activity and during its implementation, think about how to ensure a more equal number of participants coming from different countries.

Then applying in practice:

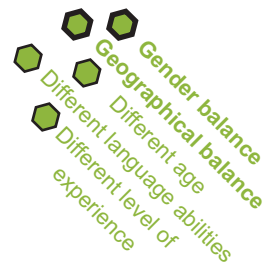
- Allocate equal time and space in the programme for each group to share about themselves.
- The more countries involved, the richer the cultural diversity. But mind that optimal size for a group from each country is 4-5 people.
- If there is a group work, whilst it is important to ensure that people are working in mixed groups but still voluntarily choosing with whom to work with.
- Then hosting a project and if organise cultural visits consider how other groups can share information about similar places of interest. Make the experience of exploring cultures real. Share the living space with people from other countries, interact and exchange.

If you want to make the project more diverse you may think also of inviting young people from different cultural backgrounds who live in the same country or region. This gives an extra opportunity for young people from the very beginning of the project to become aware about cultural diversity in their own living environment.

Best practice: in an international training course focusing on the cultural diversity and minority/majority issues we decided that each of the partners would try to involve in their own group people from different backgrounds. This resulted in people talking about their real situation avoiding general discussion on country situation. By giving less general opinions they could better understand others and even come up with concrete cooperative ideas. Why talk about things when you can experience them?

Organiser in a Training Course.

In the preparation stage, it is good to be aware of the cultural backgrounds of people as there may even be a few surprises when people come from one country but consider themselves to be of another culture. You may find this out when communicating with partners by asking in a sensitive way about the participants, who they are and what are their needs?



Youth Exchange, EVS or training courses can be the first time when for a young person to stay and work with people who come from different cultural backgrounds and with different understandings of life. In this case, support and reflection is needed to understand 'what is happening with me and in relation with others?'

In EVS projects, young people have a chance to experience a long-term learning process. Even in short-term activities such as a Youth Exchange or Training Course the experience is intensive and a great deal is learnt. In any kind of project where there is a diverse cultural dynamic, there is the potential for cultural maturity to arise.

Gender balance is another important criterion. If you managed to achieve a balance of gender in the participating groups, then more chances are created for people to learn about the role and relationship gender plays in different cultures. It also develops an understanding about the different perceptions of life in participating countries.

Next practice: invite young people to perform a short sketch of the situation in different countries or cultures: "what happens if a girl or a boy falls in love?" You could let people share in mixed country groups, and then perform within national groups, while reflecting upon the similarities and differences

Going further with cultural diversity, you may encounter the situation of having participants from **different age** groups. Being 'young in different cultures and countries means different things.

When applying in practice:

- ⬢ **Be conscious about the age of participants and take their diverse needs into consideration when planning activities in the programme.**
- ⬢ **Provide a wide choice of activities during the implementation phase in the project according to different needs and interests.**

For your awareness you could do some research by surfing the Internet to find out what the ages of young people are according to the youth policy legislation in different countries? Perhaps even ask people at what age they felt young, and how long they thought their youth lasted - be careful though because some people are very sensitive about their age!

Best practice: I was one of the oldest in the project but never once felt outside the group. It was interesting for me to take part in the video group activities as it was matching my interest to try things. I chose this group while having in mind the other choices available for me.

Participant in a Youth Exchange project

Different language abilities are always an issue in the international projects. Language is one of the biggest concerns for young people when meeting someone from another country. Abilities in foreign languages should not be a barrier for a participation in projects.

When applying in practice:

- ⬢ **During the preparation meeting with participants, spend time focusing on the language(s) during the project**
- ⬢ **Invite young people to come up with the ideas on how to overcome challenges in languages**
- ⬢ **Motivate them to support each other during the project.**
During the implementation phase, consider using several languages
- ⬢ **Spend some time to learn the most important words in different languages.**

- Use different ways for communication such as non-verbal communication, creative expressions and activities

Consider the specific words, which you learned when you were in a youth project? Which words do young people learn when they are with other young people in a project? What motivates them to learn specific words? What can you use for motivating others to learn languages?

For more on using languages and intercultural communication look at SALTO publication "Language and culture" available from <http://www.salto-youth.net>

Next practice: during your preparation, collect some words which young people want to learn during the project. You can do it by inviting them to write down on paper, record words or even draw. Be ready for unexpected words and fun. You can move on with conversation towards the learning of other languages or self-confidence in speaking different languages and what support they need/can provide during this process

Language is a tool for communication but it is also a source for miscommunication. Have fun using different languages in your project.

It may be beneficial to balance the group of participants by having people with **different levels of experience** in cultural diversity. Knowing how people are experienced helps to choose the right challenge and creates opportunities for personal development.

Think of your young people and their experience in cultural diversity: Do they often meet with people who are different than themselves? How are they aware of cultural differences? How sensitive are they towards different needs? Do they have participation experience in cultural diversity projects or similar activities? What are their interests? What are their challenges with cultural diversity?

Next practice: if young people from your group have experience in cultural diversity, think of the next step forward together. Perhaps they would like to invite partners from more diverse cultures than their own? Maybe they would like to develop a project which involves more partners?

Then applying in practice:

- Consider the different experiences with cultural diversity young people have and create opportunities to support each other by sharing experiences
- Challenge experienced young people to take other roles in a project - become a group leader, a co-organiser, a mentor or a peer coach

Focussing on cultural diversity in a group of participants allows people to benefit from it and learn from each other. The group of participants is also a small model of society. By being in groups young people learn how to interact and deal with diversity.

TEAM (partners)

The role of the team and partners is to contribute with knowledge, experience and positive attitudes when accompanying young people in their learning process. They are there to support them in dealing with cultural diversity. Some people say that participants are the mirror of the team. In other words, the way the team deals with situations and relationship during the project is the way it will be perceived by participants. It is worth investing both time and effort into cultural diversity with the team and partners of the project.



What applies with the participants is the same for the team if respecting the **geographical balance**. Cultural diversity in the team allows for different points of view, experiences and approaches. People in the team can gain a better understanding of the participants who come from the same country and culture. They can support them in their learning process, particularly in difficult situations or when tensions appear.

When applying in practice:

- ⦿ Spend time to discover cultures in the team as this leads to understanding better the needs of participants from the same culture
- ⦿ Choose partners who seem to be different as this decision makes cultural diversity rich
- ⦿ Allow young people to choose partners for projects because it is linked with existing interest or stereotypes among them
- ⦿ Invest time to get to know each other in the team personally as it influences the quality of your work

International teams implement international projects. This is a great potential for focusing on different cultures. By being involved in a work with partners you benefit from this process a lot.

Meeting **gender balance** for the team is important because of different perceptions and points of view people can bring in work and free time influencing the learning process of the participants.

When applying in practice:

- ⦿ Take different roles in the team because young people will see female and male members in practicing different role models
- ⦿ Participants may feel more comfortable approaching a male or a female team member to discuss some personal issues
- ⦿ Be aware that in some cultures there are certain rules on how people of different genders behave and live in relation to others

Different language abilities of the team make it possible to use ranging dialects and languages in the project. It is especially beneficial if there are participants who are in doubt of their own language ability. If you use different languages you can adjust according to the needs of participants and help in their learning process.

When applying in practice:

- ⦿ Pay attention to language in a team and language skills people have
- ⦿ Be patient while also investing time and effort into including everyone in team discussions and communication
- ⦿ Support each other in the process of communication and in learning other languages
- ⦿ Involve young people in team communication as they might feel more confident in foreign languages

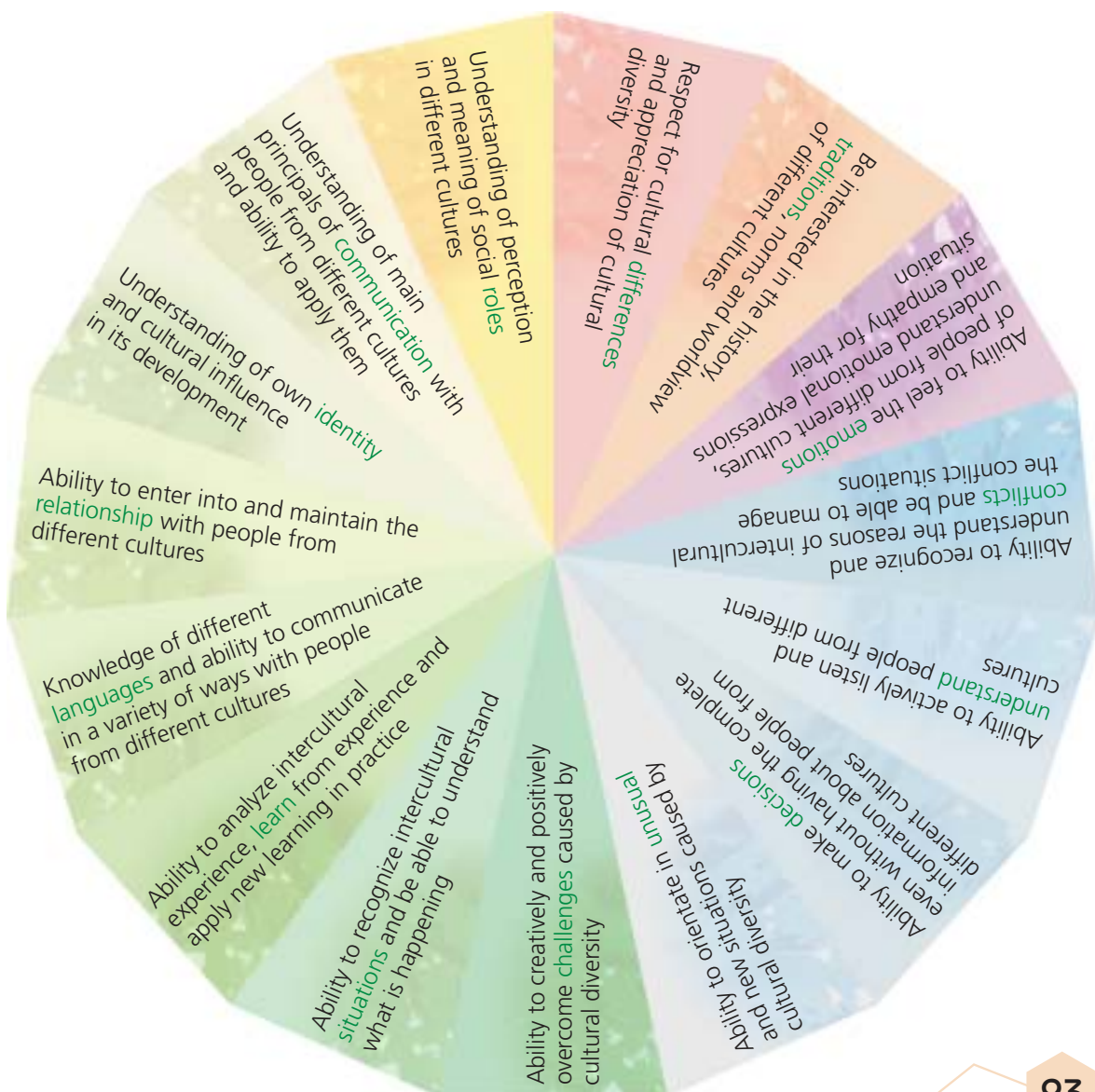
Remember, a foreign language to someone is strange and new, so support is very important in the learning process.



Different competences among members promote team collaboration and keep the balance of knowledge, skills and attitudes in different areas. Having different competences the team should have a certain level of intercultural competences. A list of intercultural competences you can find below:

Best practice: during the Feasibility Visit for a Youth Exchange project we were working in a team of 12 people, including young people. During the idea development we shared our initial idea for the project and we invited people to draw a symbol of the project. After the round of sharing we collected different ideas trying to look for common points. During the sharing everybody could express her/himself and others could ask additional questions to clarify. I was writing the keywords explaining different ideas on one big paper sheet. One group leader did not feel very comfortable speaking English and with translation of a young person could contribute to the discussions. Be creative when using language as a tool for communication!

Facilitator of the Feasibility Visit



Think of which areas you feel competent in? What are you good at? Can you link these areas to the competences listed in the previous page? Where would you feel you would like to improve?

When applying in practice

- ⬠ During the preparation phase map the experience people in a team have
- ⬠ Discover what the main areas of work are in which partners are involved in
- ⬠ Use the competences and experience of partners then implementing activities in the programme
- ⬠ Develop a shared ownership of the project with all the partners using their competences.

In the Youth in Action you may use different opportunities to meet your partners, e.g. Feasibility Visit, Advanced Planning Visit, Partner Building Activity and other. Find out more in the Programme Guide or by contacting your National Agency

Next practice: when you start the partner meeting take time to map the experience and expertise people and partner organisations have. You can do it on a big paper in different colours supported with some symbols or drawings. After the round of sharing you may try to find common points between different people and link it to the idea of the project and what is needed

It is often the situation that hosts take the initiative and responsibility of deciding and doing things in the project. In this case, other partners begin to feel more like guests, meaning that they may complain about anything they like! To avoid this kind of a situation, it is better to involve your partners as much as possible in decision-making, and the sharing of tasks and responsibilities.

Best practice: During the Advanced Planning Visit we were mapping our experiences and came to planning concrete activities in the programme. It was a really good feeling when partners started to share their ideas of what they could do in the programme together with young people from their countries. It worked out later very well as it was a balanced contribution from each of the partners letting us in the team to exchange experiences and methods.

Group leader in a Youth Exchange

By the end of the project you may like to reflect in a team upon the working experience and consider what made it one of cultural diversity. A round of sharing may bring a lot of joy and fun but also a lot of learning points for you and your partners.

The team and partners, together with all the expertise and experience they bring, enrich cultural diversity projects. Undoubtedly, the way the team works and acts together will ultimately influence the quality of the project.

Environment

Even though it is an international project, it should be connected to the local reality. The environment in which the cultural diversity project is taking place involves a variety of things, such as people, living and working conditions, region.

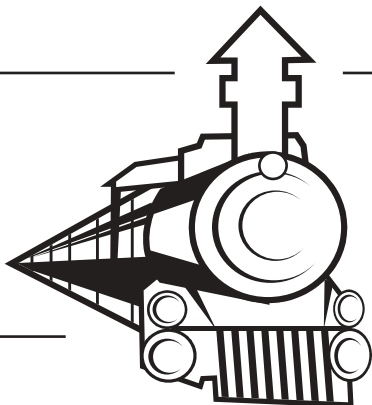
There are a lot of good examples from projects when young people have made an impact in their environment by preparing and implementing international projects. It seems that foreigners attracts attention from anything from teenagers to politicians on local level.

The **local impact** of the project can differ from the nature of the activity and can be of different scope.

- ⬠ Local impact
- ⬠ Diversity in local community
- ⬠ Supportive and comfortable environment
- ⬠ Meet the needs of people
- ⬠ Access and accessibility



- Just by **running** the project in a local community you can be sure that it will be noticed by people from the local community because they will pay attention to what is going on.
- By **informing** the local community about what you are doing, you can share the information about the idea of the project and the activities by using different means: information activities in the community, local media, information points and stands.
- By **organising activities** in the programme, which involves interaction between participants and local community.
- By **running together** the project with the local community you can prepare and run your project with the involvement of local people whilst taking into consideration their interest and contribution.



Advertisement:

Next month we are going to an exchange project in a far away country. To say goodbye you may go to the main bus station, from which we leave at 9 a.m. A group of youth exchange participants

When applying in practice:

- Consider what impact on a local level you may reach with your project
- Plan and implement activities during the project with local community because interaction increases curiosity about other cultures.

If there are people from different cultures around you, and there are already many activities involving different cultures, you may think of connecting your project activities with the events and people in the local community.

Cultural diversity in the local community can become a source of experience and learning for participants. It can be interesting for them to spend time exploring cultural diversity in the hosting community.

Best practice: I was very interested to know that during the youth exchange project on tolerance and borders of tolerance we will need to cross the real border between 2 countries. One day in a programme we visited the town, which is divided by the border of neighbouring countries. In mixed groups we were interviewing people first on one side of the border. Later in the afternoon we crossed the border and continued interviews with the people on the other side of the border. By the end of the day I had a different picture of the same town, which was divided by border. It made me think of the borders we have and create in our minds.

Participant in a Youth Exchange project.

Different visits and activities in a local community rich with cultural diversity can provide a really impressive experience for people - both the ones who are visiting the country and the ones who are hosting.

Then applying in practice:

- Keep the connection between the visit and the objectives of the project.
- Spend some time to reflect upon the experience because personal reflections can deepen the understanding of cultures - both the visited one and yours.

The environment also affects how people interact with each other in the project. In cultural diversity projects you should invest both time and effort in creating a supportive and comfortable environment for cultural diversity. A supportive environment can contribute towards discovering cultural differences and valuing them. A comfortable environment can allow everyone to feel safe, to freely express their culture with no judgement.



Best practice: Best practice: The main idea of our project was to learn lots of typical dances in a multicultural environment. It was not necessary to have any dancing skills before. It was a good project because the activities in the programme developed step-by-step, people could voluntarily join different activities at any time because of a clear timetable. There was no competition at all. The environment made you feel equal because every single person had a different way of dancing, not better or worse, just personal and original.

Organiser in a Youth Exchange project.

Applying in practice:

- Structure well the activities of a project to create a supportive and comfortable environment.

- Check time to time with people how they feel being in an intercultural group or environment.
- Use personal talks or a whole group reflection.
- Pay attention not only to the positive aspects but also to what disturbs people.

Then it comes to the more practical side of the environment: it should **meet the needs of the people**. Food, accommodation and all the other facilities should allow people from different cultures, and therefore with different needs, to take part equally in the project.

When applying in practice:

- At the beginning of the project, spend some time getting to know the needs of people
- Make an effort to find a middle ground by trying to answer different dietary needs.

In international project people from different countries and cultures live together they need to share a common space and time together. They can quite quickly become aware of the differences and start expressing what they like or dislike. If this process is constructive they will find solutions that meet the needs of different people.

Best practice: We expected to host people from Muslim, Pakistani, Indian backgrounds and had already talked during the Advance Planning Visit about dietary needs. In order to meet the needs we contacted different local cafes and restaurants, which served food from these participating cultures. Several cafes and restaurants offered us good discounts and a good menu too. Later participants were happy to visit the cafes and restaurants as they could eat food to their taste, speak with people from their country but living in our city, get to know their reasons and story of arriving to the country and make good contacts. For us it was also interesting as we could discover the cultural diversity of our city and benefit from it practically.

Group leader in Youth Exchange.

If the environment meets the needs of people then it should not distract them from participating in the project activities. Also, by making an effort to answer the needs of people you clearly demonstrate that it is important for you to take into account their diverse culture and even you may benefit from it!

The choice of where to implement your project and from which countries and places participants are arriving might influence their experience in another culture. **Access and accessibility** of the place might enrich experience and learning for participants even from the very beginning of the project.

Think about your most challenging experience when arriving at the event place. What made this experience challenging? What different means of transportation could you use? What did you discover about your hosting country and culture? What did you need to know to feel safe when arriving to the event in another country?

When applying in practice:

- Provide participants with clear directions of how to get to the place and let them experience real life with local public transport
- Make sure you communicate the important visa information in advance to allow people to arrive to your project, and to stay the entire time.



- Include people in your project even if their arrival needs more time and efforts from your side
- Consider travel experience to be learning experience too

Projects take place in a certain environment and are not isolated. There are lot of opportunities to contribute to and benefit from the environment when implementing your projects.

Context

Cultural diversity is about people. It is not enough just to bring people together and think that they will experience cultural diversity and moreover they will learn from this experience. Our youth projects are non-formal learning experience and this needs to be reflected in the theme, objectives and expectations of the project.

Often a project's main theme is not necessarily one focusing directly on cultural diversity. Still, by bringing people together from different countries, it is already a great opportunity for people to experience and learn in this area. If the theme of the project is of **common concern** and of interest to participants, experiencing cultural diversity is of added value.

- Develops intercultural competences
- Awareness on the cultural diversity
- Reflected in the objectives
- **Come from young people**
- **Common concern**

Best practice: I got on well with other participants from different countries because of common language, common aims, common problems in our countries ecological life and also our experiences in social life. We all have chance to show and learn the others' life especially in terms of ecology.

Participant in a Seminar

When applying in practice:

- The theme of a project should be of interest to more than one nationality, cultural group or country.
- Encourage participants to find their own interest and carry on exchanging and learning from each other.

Ideas for the project should **come from young people and their realities**. If young people think it is important to learn about other cultures and how to deal with cultural diversity it is important that this is **reflected in the learning objectives**.

Not in every project you aim to learn about different cultures. However, if it is a cultural diversity project then at least a few of the learning objectives should clearly say that people would experience and learn about each other cultures.

When applying in practice:

- Formulate concrete and specific learning objectives coming from the expectations of young people
- 'Translate' the objectives to be understandable for young people

Here are some examples of how people define the learning objectives. Compare with the objectives you put and think which of them are realistic to achieve during a project and possible to measure the results by the end of the project:



TO SHARE AND EXPLORE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MUSIC AND PERSONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY.

TO EXPLORE THE CITY LIFE IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND EXCHANGE THE ROLES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

TO ENCOURAGE THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS BUT COME FROM THE SAME COUNTRY.

TO PROMOTE THE IDEA OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY THROUGH INTERACTION WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES.

TO REFLECT ON OWN IDENTITY AND FOSTER SELF ESTEEM.

Next practice: during the preparation with a group, organise a „radio interview“ where people in pairs make interviews with each other about how they imagine the project, their role, what seems interesting and challenging for them, what do they expect to achieve and gain by participating in the project etc. By the end of the exercise invite people to formulate a few things that they would like to achieve personally and share with the rest of the group. Talk with them about the project and opportunities to discover cultural diversity.

Learning objectives are guiding points for educating cultural diversity during the implementation of the cultural diversity project.

In international projects almost every situation is a good learning point for people. It may be that you are running an activity with a topic that doesn't necessarily touch upon cultural diversity as a subject directly. However it is important to recognise that with people coming from different cultural backgrounds the project may just happen to turn into a learning process about different cultures and people. **Awareness on cultural diversity** should always be on the agenda.

Best practice: with a team of group leaders in a Youth Exchange project we were planning and preparing the next day in the programme. Suddenly one of the leaders came with a question if we consider Jesus being a white person or not. At the beginning I was really surprised about this question and could not understand the reason for asking the question especially because in any case I could not relate it to the content of our conversations on the day. But after we shared our thoughts on the questions most of us saying that for us Jesus is a white person, our team member explained that in their culture people consider Jesus is not because of his birth place and parents. A difference arose from his country's belief about Jesus' ethnicity to my own. For me, it was a really strong learning point on how we are influenced by our culture and the impact on being subjective in our thoughts and actions. Our conversation on this issue during the team meeting lasted more than an hour and I feel I learnt a great deal from the experience.

Group leader in a Youth Exchange

When applying in practice:

- 'Have' open eyes and ears, an open heart and a curiosity in other cultures
- Share this with others during the project making others more aware and enriching with discoveries
- Ask others for explanation what seems strange in their culture. Sometimes „stupid“ questions make people laugh and create a good atmosphere.

In any cultural diversity project people should expect from the very beginning to experience and learn about diversity. In other words, the project should develop intercultural competences.

See the list of intercultural competences on page 8.

Think about your next project. What would you expect to learn about cultural diversity during it? How would you formulate your expectations into learning objectives? In which areas of intercultural competences will you improve in if you achieve your objectives? Ask similar answers to young people who will be part of your project.

In conclusion, if people appreciate that there is a clear intent to explore cultural diversity from the very beginning of the project, then these participants will be better equipped to learn more from the experience on the whole.

Programme and methodology

The way you plan activities in the programme and how you work during the project affects learning in your project.

In cultural diversity projects, methodology is based on intercultural learning. Intercultural learning is learning about your own culture and other cultures based on interaction and exchange between people from different cultural backgrounds and origins, identities and nationalities or ethnic belonging. If the project aims at cultural diversity, the starting point in methodology is intercultural learning - allowing learning to develop and carry on the relations with people despite the cultural differences.

When applying in practice:

- Encourage participants to discover differences and value them by seeing benefits not challenges
- Use the international evening in the programme not only to taste different foods or learn traditional dances, but to reflect own identity and discover deeper layers of culture
- Be sensitive to people who do not feel they belong to the same culture as the country they live in
- Support the participants and accompany them in finding the answers to the questions 'who am I' and 'how do I live in my country / culture'
- Be aware that intercultural learning might arise also from the fact that people are living and working together not only because of activities in the official programme
- Allow people to have enough free time during the project for interaction with each other
- Take time to talk with them about their learning about themselves and others in terms of cultural diversity

Next practice: it sometimes happens naturally in a project that if you have people coming from neighbouring countries food and beverages are often similar or the same - dances and games too. Maybe it is worth trying something more interesting and prepare the cultural evening together? This way of preparing and implementing will be more interactive and will allow for people to see what they have in common but as well to feel what is different amongst them.

Intercultural learning
Participatory
and inclusive
Diverse and culturally
sensitive
Different learning needs
and styles
Balanced programme

To learn more about intercultural learning see the T-Kit "Intercultural learning" available for downloading from <http://www.training-youth.net>

Working methodology in a project should also be **participatory and inclusive**. We deal a lot with different needs and a wide diversity of experiences and interests. It is good to think from the very beginning about how to ensure that all the participants will be interested to take part in the project activities and will find their role and place in the group.

When applying in practice:

- ⦿ **Make efforts to ensure that everyone can take part regardless of different abilities, cultural backgrounds or level of experience**
- ⦿ **Value the achievements based on individual progress and not by comparing different people**

Think who from your group may face difficulties in participation? What are the reasons for difficulties and how would it be possible to overcome them? What are your expectations towards different people in the group? What expectations do people have towards them?

During the project, methods and activities should be **diverse and culturally sensitive**. General methodology should respect **different learning needs and styles**. All together this creates many opportunities for different people to learn during the project.

Cultural diversity projects should have a **balanced programme**. The following aspects are important in designing the programme of a project. Group dynamics in a Youth Exchange and Training project and in the individual life cycle dynamics in an EVS project are the basic starting points for designing the programme.

For more on group dynamics in learning see in the T-kit 'Training Essentials' available for downloading at <http://www.training-youth.net>

When applying in practice:

- ⦿ **See each group as unique because people are different - they come from different countries and cultures**
- ⦿ **Leave enough space for individual time to clarify motivations, interests, share personal story**
- ⦿ **Take into account all the basic needs of a person - physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual**
- ⦿ **Choose the methods and/or activities that would lead to equal and active participation of all participants.**

For more on individual life cycle in learning see in the T-kit 'International Coluntary Service' available for downloading at <http://www.training-youth.net>

The main goal is to create harmony between the individual, the group, the theme explored and the environment in which all of this takes place. During the programme there should be a continuous flow and counter-flow from the individual needs to the group needs to the topic to the individual, and so on.

There are other important aspects to take into consideration. Below you will find a table which emphasises the most important aspects in balancing the programme. Take a look at it and if you are planning the programme in your project see there is a balance:

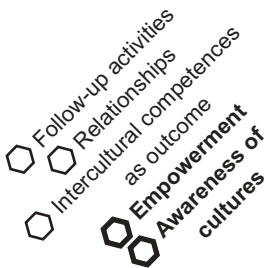
Working time					Leisure time
Expectations					Results
Taking out of reality					Coming back to reality
Training					Learning
Frames					Improvisation
Process					Result
Fixed					Flexible
Equal partnership					Unequal partnership
ICL (methods)					ICL (real situations)
Team decide					Participants decide
Other...					

Think where you would like to change the balance in the programme and why? You may use this tool with your team to evaluate the programme.

It is most important to ensure that intercultural learning is present- i.e. everyone is included and is taking part.

Learning process and outcomes

Learning in projects is the most important aspect. This should be promoted from beginning till the end. International projects should raise the awareness of their own and different cultures.



Best practice: My EVS project was culturally diverse because it allowed me to understand different cultures and ways of working, living habits and other. It was a long-term project so it meant that I could start to unlock the deeper cultural meanings behind behaviours. We had various trainings during the project, as well having a mentor - this was important. They could explain some of the situations or behaviours I encountered. They advised me on how I should deal with them, learning in a positive way.

EVS volunteer

Cultural diversity projects should empower young people to deal with cultural diversity in their life. In simple terms, it promotes confidence in multi-cultural interaction. In return, young people can respond to the complexity of the world in a highly positive and constructive way.

Learning in international projects is challenging because it means that you need to make a step from your 'own culture' and interact with people who might be very different from you. It also means that you will deal with the situations, which does not seem familiar to you or are even new to your previous experience.

Then applying in practice:

- Encourage people to make a step forward from 'own culture' and to be more sensitive and curious in other cultures.
- Invite people to ask each time if they do not understand why some things are happening or people do the way things from different cultures.

- ⦿ Provide space, time and structure for people to reflect on own learning and self-assess the progress of learning.

Empowerment is linked to what and how people learn during the project. Prepare for the learning experience and think about concrete targets from the very beginning. In preparation, it is worth developing a sense of ownership about the learning process as in many cases what you will gain, will depend upon your ability to reflect upon what you have learnt.

- ⦿ Think and remember when you learnt: the English language, computers, dancing, cooking or...even kissing?!!
- ⦿ Do you know how good you are in: the English language, using computers, dancing, cooking or...kissing?!!
- ⦿ Think in which areas you would like to improve and what support you need.

This exercise was taken and adopted from the training course for multipliers. To know more visit <http://www.salto-youth.net>

Next practice: use this exercise with young participants to raise their awareness on the importance of reflecting upon what has already been learnt. Divide them in groups of three-four people and invite question by question to share their learning experience. At the end, discuss with them about learning and ownership of learning relating this to learning about cultural diversity during the project.

Some people say that they measure the quality of the project by the number of international couples that got together during it. Maybe it is too subjective but for sure the **relationship** aspect is important in cultural diversity projects. And it is not only about love or affection. Relationships cover also the friendship based on exchange and interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds and countries.

Best practice: first I met my friends in a Youth Exchange abroad. Next year they came to my country and we had an excellent time! We shared the room and we had a lot of fun together. Now I am studying in their town and till now we are really good friends.

Participant in Youth Exchange project

People stay connected with each other if they enjoyed the time during the project.

Then applying in practice:

- ⦿ Try to follow-up the development of the relationships created during the project.
- ⦿ Ask your participants with whom they are still in touch and how they interact after the project

A good cultural diversity project is one which people apply the experience afterwards in their daily life activities. **Follow-up activities** show what actually people took from the project with them. Again sometimes it is not easy to track the follow-up activities as it is not so visible or you are not keeping permanent contact with all the people who were involved in your project.

In conclusion, this chapter focused on how to achieve quality in cultural diversity projects- whilst trying to give examples on what makes a good project. We hope that you now have at least a few ideas and a clearer picture on how to work on cultural diversity within your own project. With the help of the next chapter you will be able to prepare yourself for your next practice in cultural diversity.





NEXT PRACTICE IN CULTURAL DIVERSITY

In this part of the booklet we will try to help you to summarise your thoughts and ideas from this publication and prepare you to put them into your working practice incorporating cultural diversity.

You will be guided through the thinking process of your personal learning in cultural diversity, will be provided a structure for planning your next practice in your youth project and will get ideas for more opportunities in the field of cultural diversity work.

We hope that by reading this part you will start your next practice, be it your new learning objectives, planning a new project or going for new opportunities.

Personal learning in cultural diversity

It might be that you are reading this booklet just before your next project is starting and you are desperately looking for some answers on **how to approach** cultural diversity in your project - it would then be best for you to focus on point A below. Or if you at the moment have more general interest of knowing what cultural diversity is and you are curious of **how to implement** it in your working practice, it would be better to look at point B in the text below. Both tools will help you to put your thoughts in some order enabling you to work on your personal learning in the cultural diversity field.

You may read more in the parts 'Diving into cultural diversity' (pages 5-15) and 'Best practice in cultural diversity projects' (pages 17-33).

A) If you are planning to have a youth project...

In the previous parts of this booklet you were able to reflect on your understanding of cultural diversity and think about how to approach it in youth project practice. The table below will help you to make the link between your understanding and your next practice in youth projects:

'Cultural diversity' in youth projects is about...:	How does it work in youth project practice...?	What methods and tools can I use to approach it...?
Example: facing different cultural backgrounds	Young people from different cultural backgrounds meet and learn about each other while living and working together	People are working in mixed groups, during the reflection people are asked to share what they have discovered about each other, drawing a 'flower' of their own background and sharing this with others
1.		
2.		
...		

Now after you have reflected on how you can implement the concept of cultural diversity in your next project, practice identifying where you see:

Opportunities to work with cultural diversity...:	Challenges to work with cultural diversity...:	My needs to improve to be able to work with cultural diversity...:
Example: we are planning to host a youth exchange project, which will involve partners from 6 different countries.	<p>How to manage cultural differences during the hosting of the project and common work?</p> <p>How to overcome the language barrier and grouping according to the languages people speak?</p>	<p>To know what the cultural differences between the people in my project are.</p> <p>To be able to encourage people to learn about differences and appreciate them.</p> <p>To know what tool we can use to support the use of different languages.</p>
1.		
2.		
...		

Now think how you can improve being able to answer the needs you identify arising from your next practice in cultural diversity projects. It might be that you will need to search for some information on the internet or in some relevant books; or you can decide to attend a training course if you have enough time, which focuses on the subject of your interest; or you can arrange a meeting with your colleagues to exchange experience and ask for certain advice; or you can find other ways of learning in areas you need to improve.

B) If you have a more general interest to learn...

In the previous part of the booklet we provided a list of the intercultural competences, which are essential to be able to approach cultural diversity in your work or personal life. Take time to think and choose areas of intercultural competences where you feel confident to use them and the ones where you need to improve (you may choose as many as you see relevant to your needs):

The full list of intercultural competences you will find in the drawing on page 23.

I feel confident to perform (I have knowledge, I am able to do, I feel it's importance):	I feel confident to perform (I have knowledge, I am able to do, I feel it's importance):
Example: Respect for cultural differences and appreciation of cultural diversity	Example: Ability to actively listen and understand people from different cultures
1.	1.
2.	2.
...	...

Then you identified areas of competence where you wish to improve on thinking about 'what' and 'how' you want to work on in developing certain competences:

What exactly do I want to improve?	How will I work on my personal development?	Who can support me in my personal development?
Comments* after the conversation with my colleague:		

* This part you should fill in after the conversation with your colleagues. While talking to them, explain why you want to improve in certain areas of intercultural competences and what support you have for your needs and if they are able to provide them (if applicable).

No matter what your reasons are to work on personal development the important point is to keep being curious about different cultures and to learn about each other.

Next cultural diversity project

If you are already half way into preparing your next project within the Youth in Action programme, you can see how you can focus on cultural diversity during the project by looking below at point C. If you are still keen to open new opportunities for you and your young people, it would be best to concentrate on point D in the text below.



C) If you are preparing your project...

By using the Honey Comb model, identify the criteria you want to focus on during the project. Make a list of criteria next to each explaining your reasons and ideas of how you can achieve it during the implementation of the project:

The model is explained on pages 13-15 & 18 of this booklet.

Criteria I want to focus on...	Why is it important to work on the selected criteria...?	How will I achieve the success in selected criteria...?
Example: Different language abilities during a youth exchanges project	In my group there are people who feel confident in speaking different languages and it would be better to use several of them as main working languages	In preparation we will use different languages to present our group to others. Then we will meet with other groups we will identify different language abilities during a „Molecules“ game We will encourage people to use different languages in group work and during the presentations of the results
1.		
2.		
...		

During the implementation phase of the project, come back to the criteria you have identified in the preparation phase to see how it is working. If you need to, adjust your activities and ways of working depending on the reality in your project.

D) If you want to open up the opportunities...

The 'Youth in Action' programme provides different opportunities for young people and the ones who work with young people to gain experience and learn in the area of cultural diversity. In the previous part we just listed a few of them. Think about your experience and experiences of young people with whom you are in touch. Depending on how much experience the young people have in taking part in international projects, it maybe time to set up a 'Youth Exchange' project. Or if they have already had an intercultural experience then maybe some of them would go for 'European Voluntary Service'. Or maybe they are involved in local work but would like to make contacts and have exchanges with peers from abroad. In this way ' Trans-national Youth Initiatives' would be an ideal way of starting new actions. The following questions will help you to plan the first steps:

To know more about existing opportunities turn to page 11 or see the programme guide available for downloading from.

Activity we want to start...:	Why do we want to be involved in this kind of activity...?	What do we need to do for starting...?
Example: Trans-national Youth Initiative	During the past year we were doing local theatre shows involving other young people. We have experience and we want to exchange it with other young people across Europe. Also it could be chance to record a DVD with our shows.	Find a similar group who is interested in theatre and make contact with them Discuss what we want to do exactly and what we are interested in Make contact with National Agency
1.		
...		

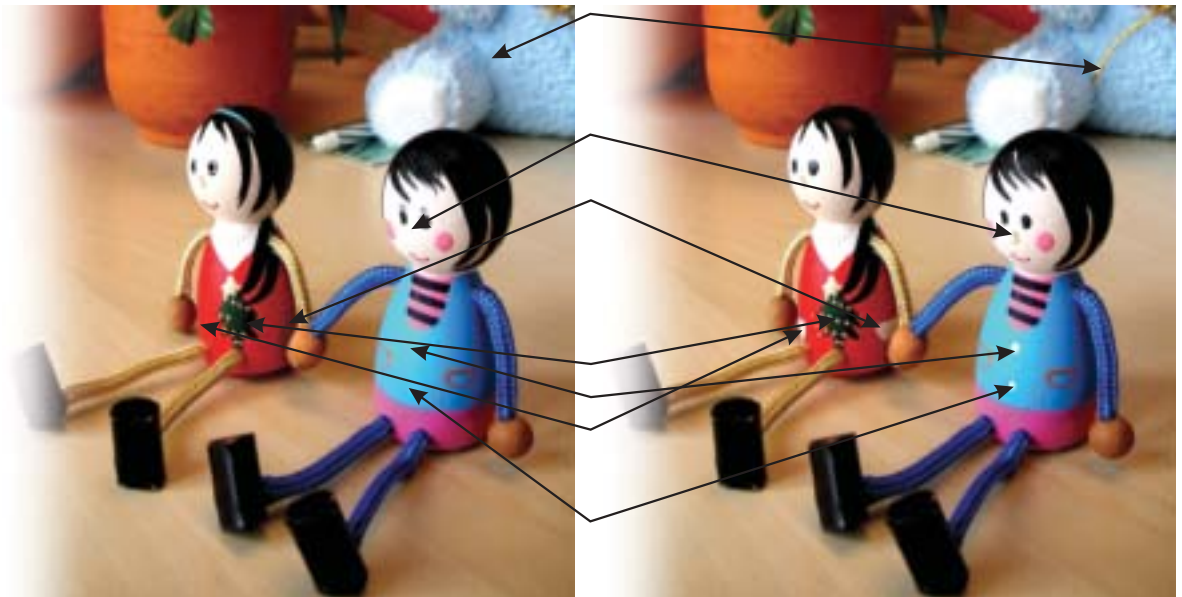
We do believe that big things start from small steps. By already reading this booklet, this might be your first steps into entering into the new waters of cultural diversity. Let it be joyful and exiting!

Answers to page 5.

The pictures on page 5 is from: **A** - Estonia, **B** - Spain, **C** - France, **D** - Russia, **E** - Italy.

Answers to page 7.

Differences on drawings.



Where do you stand???

- Yes It is enough to bring people together from different countries to achieve 'quality' in cultural diversity projects, No
- Yes People learn the most about cultural differences if there is a workshop included in the programme on intercultural learning No
- Yes The team has to have extensive experience in cultural diversity to be able to work on cultural diversity projects No
- Yes Cultural diversity exists in all forms of environments No
- Yes It is good to target cultural diversity in a project because it is a priority in the Youth in Action programme No
- Yes Learning about cultural diversity needs to be a long-term process No

Search for your answers in this publication!!!



Participants

Programme methodology