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YOUTH
TOGETHER
FOR
REFUGEES

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH: THEORY AND PRACTICE FOR YOUTH WORKERS ASSISTING REFUGEES

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ITAKA
TRAINING



K.A.N.E.



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The toolkit is available in an open source format and is intended as an aid tool for youth workers and practitioners in the field of migration.

Last review, May 2020

THE TOOLKIT

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Youth Together for Refugees is a project funded by the ERASMUS+ Agency and designed by a consortium of partners actively involved in the reception, education, and advocacy for asylum seekers and refugees, especially the very young.

In Europe, services for the care of young refugees are generally possible thanks to large numbers of youth workers and volunteers who dedicate their time and energies, usually on a voluntary basis, to a right cause, improving the level of integration and wellbeing of the target group they are working with.

However, young volunteers are usually not equipped with the right training and tools to work with vulnerable individuals such as young refugees; and they often operate in contexts where budget and structures are at low level. We define these places as “high pressure environments”.

This project was born from the observation of the working and living conditions of youth workers and young refugees within reception, accommodation, and recreational centres.

We believe that youth workers are crucial actors in promoting socialization and inclusion, in order to help develop inter-subjective skills for the refugees’ future life as European citizens. Thanks to their age, energy and enthusiasm, they are frequently able to build trust relationships and become exceptional role models for young refugees.

The youth workers we have met throughout years of practice often point out lack of adequate time and sufficient budget, and the need of training focused both on the individual worker and on their target group. With this

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toolkit, our purpose is to answer these needs, since we believe that bridging these gaps is not only possible, but also the right thing to do.

This toolkit is a collection of best practices from 4 European countries, Italy, Greece, Spain, and the United Kingdom, to obtain the right tools to address daily work life, promoting multidisciplinary approaches and empowerment for a positive social change, in line with the European values of democracy and active citizenship.

WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

This toolkit is dedicated to all youth workers, volunteering and employed, in the field of migration, and particularly those working with young refugees and asylum seekers at recreational and educational facilities, including refugee camps and migrants' centres. We want to address the most important matters they need to be aware of regarding the needs of the people they work with. This toolkit also represents valuable support for all workers involved in these activities, such as social workers, coordinators, and their managers.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT?

The toolkit is divided in () 3 main sections, that cover and explore different topics: Growing up in Diversity; Mental Health and Wellbeing, Assisting Refugees; and Diversity, and Interlanguage. At the end of each section, you will find a useful part dedicated to practical activities that can be implemented in your daily work routine, without requiring consistent budget or structure. The last part of the toolkit is dedicated to guidelines explaining how to design and put in practice a role game activity with young refugees. They are based on an event carried out in a cultural centre for migrants in Athens, the ANKAA PROJECT, where it was tested and evaluated.

The present version of this paper is in form of a draft. It will be tested during events organised by Youth Together for Refugees partners in 4 different European countries and it will be updated to its final version by

collecting all feedbacks from youth workers and workers in the field of migration. Thanks to the contributions of the youth workers who have tested this version, we will produce and publish a final edition, containing their suggestions and ideas. The final version will come in form of open source and will be available at no cost for another 2 years after the project has ended (in May 2020). This is to ensure that it will be as accessible as possible and available for every youth worker.

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INTRODUCTIONARY CHAPTER: YOUTH WORKERS AND REFUGEES IN EUROPE

According to the Council of Europe, youth work is a broad term, covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually.

Youth work is delivered by paid and voluntary youth workers, and it is based on non-formal and informal learning processes, focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, since their work focuses on young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating their active participation and inclusion in decision-making and in their communities.

However, still today, there is no common definition among and within each European country (or in the rest of the World) regarding youth work and what it entails.¹ . Thus, to develop the project *Youth Together for Refugees*, which this toolkit is a part of, we have generated our own definition of youth work in the area of refugees' assistance and protection, defined by what we have observed, especially during the period of the rise of arrivals in 2015 ²

In fact, many refugees and asylum seekers in Southern and Northern European countries are waiting for their application process to come

¹ The Socio-economic Scope of Youth Work in Europe, Council of Europe: 2013

² UNHCR Report: Dead and Missing in the Mediterranean Sea, August 2015.

to an end, while hosted in generally overcrowded refugee camps and facilities, with hardly anything to do there. A high number of asylum seekers are children or under eighteen years old. Some of them are coming with their families, others alone.³

Due to the complexity of the situation, the lack of resources and answers from central governments in dealing with the crisis, this year many European citizens have decided, to apply for and join volunteering programs, both with NGOs and local or European institutions.⁴ A substantial proportion of these volunteers are under 35 years old and directly assist young refugees and asylum seekers.⁵ The proximity of age between the workers and the young asylum seekers has a positive effect on one another. Sharing the same youth culture, it is often easier for the workers to keep them company, thus promoting their wellbeing. Youth work activities also provide many informal learning opportunities, as young people learn while simply being active, being a volunteer, or just being with their peers. They learn informally in their daily life and leisure time, just as they learn informally in school, at work, and in family life, merely learning by doing; it is typically not structured, not intentional and does not lead to certification. It provides specific learning opportunities, in particular of social, cultural and personal nature, usually called "soft" skills.

Furthermore, engaging positively with youth is also a way to improve our entire society as a whole. The Council of Europe emphasises the fact that youth work, coupled with effective government policies, is invaluable in ensuring that young people are given opportunities to

³ UNICEF Report: Protecting children affected by migration. February 2019.

⁴ Eurostat: Social participation and integration statistics: September 2017.

⁵ Ibidem.

acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes they need for civic engagement and social action. When the right government policies are in place, young people are supported to realise their full potential as autonomous members of society, which in turn enables them to develop life plans and enjoy fully their democratic citizenship.⁶

All learning in the field of youth enables young people to acquire essential skills and competences. It also contributes to their personal development, to social inclusion and to active citizenship, thereby improving their employment prospects. Youth-related learning activities - and youth work in general - provide a significant added value for society, economy and young people themselves. Youth work lies between the social sector, pedagogy and civil society. For the past years, many programmes and mission statements have been developed to support and encourage youth work, such as the "*Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe*" (2011, FR, DE), "a Working Paper of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth. It was elaborated jointly by the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, the European Youth Forum, the Directorates responsible for Youth in the European Commission, and the Council of Europe. It replaces the milestone working paper "*Pathways towards validation and recognition of education, training & learning in the youth field*" (2004)."⁷ The purpose of this work is to improve and activate ways for strategies and best practices to recognize the value of non-formal learning in youth activities and of youth work in general.

⁶ Youth Portal of the Council of Europe:
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-work>.

⁷ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/pathways-paper>

As stated above, participation in voluntary activities enables young people to become active citizens, agents of solidarity, and to trigger positive change for communities across Europe. For this reason, EU member-states have committed in the EU Youth Strategy to promoting support schemes and capacity-building of organisations active in the field of volunteering, raising awareness of opportunities, and providing information about rights and benefits. Moreover, the establishment of the European Solidarity Corps aims at increasing youth participation in cross-border volunteering schemes.⁸

Under the European Union Work Plan for Youth (2016-2018), expert groups looked into the specific contribution of youth work, as well as non-formal and informal learning:

- Fostering active citizenship and participation of young people in diverse and tolerant societies as well as preventing marginalisation and radicalisation potentially resulting in violent behaviour;
- Responding to the opportunities and challenges raised by the increasing numbers of young migrants and refugees in the European Union.
- Addressing risks, opportunities, and implications of digitalization for youth, youth work, and youth policy.
- Defining youth work quality systems in EU Member States and the role of common indicators or frameworks.
- Outlining youth work's specific contribution in addressing the challenges faced by young people, in particular the transition from education to employment.

The Youth Portal and Youth Wiki, among other resources, provide information and advice on how to start volunteering. Moreover, this is where to search for opportunities and organisations actively looking for volunteers.

In addition, there are initiatives to recognise Youth Work, such as the European Training Strategy to support competence development of youth workers to work abroad and to support young people in learning mobility projects. In the course of this process, a competence model for youth workers, training offers, and platforms to exchange knowledge will be offered.

Yet, the very complexity in managing facilities for refugees, especially when their situation is precarious and emergency-led, leaves volunteers lacking specific tools to establish the best possible relationships with young refugees and asylum seekers. That is why we believe that this toolkit represents significant support for those working in this field. Furthermore, it has the added value of being highly specific and tailored around a specific field of intervention.

We decided to rely on a multidisciplinary approach that gathers different forms of art and art-related activities. As a matter of fact, art can reach people beyond linguistic and cultural barriers. Furthermore, it is accessible and can convey universal messages.

As we are certain that the reader will be able to gain important help and knowledge from this text, we invite you to contact us and give us feedback, and to help us produce the final version of the present paperwork via info@itakatraining.org

⁸ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/national-programme_en

PART 1

By Federación Andalucía Acoge

GROWING UP IN DIVERSITY

‘On the one hand I must attempt to change the soul of individuals so that their societies may be changed. On the other I must attempt to change the societies so that the individual soul will have a change’
Martin Luther King

INTRODUCTION

We live in a diverse world, within diverse and plural societies, constituted of people with numerous and unique characteristics.

DIVERSITY exists even when we do not mention it. From our own person, which is diverse in various aspects, at different points of our lives, in different places, with our past, the circumstances we find ourselves in, and our beliefs, which are unique and expressed uniquely, to the recognition of diversity in relation to others and in the construction of societies.

Everyone has dreams, expectations, and hopes, and also despairs, fears or frustrations, which are all different and exclusive to each of us.

Diversity implies recognizing the other person, a task for which we must understand that they have their own “I” which is different from ours. I can only recognize myself in the relationship I establish with other “I” s who are different from me (my parents, friends, neighbours, teachers...). This is also true for the other person, who

looks at me to discover their own self. Then, both the other person and I are complementary. But the other person and I are not myself. This recognition of my identity, which requires a relationship with other people, necessarily involves making ourselves available to the Other.

This process leads to recognition and therefore to acceptance.⁹

Culture forms part of our identity. But “who I am” goes beyond where we were born, the values we learnt in contact with others, the beliefs transmitted through generations, etc., which at some point of our lives helped us adapt to the context.

People are not just cultural baggage; we are a multitude of related aspects and circumstances.

Part of this reality has been demonstrated by migratory movements, which have characterized human beings throughout history, from regional movements to travels across countries and continents.

The “looks” in migratory processes, the eyes of those who migrate and the gaze of those who “receive” in the country of destination) Some may be filled with stereotypes and prejudice, emanating from each person’s own perceptions of the other: the way the person who has emigrated and reached another nation perceives its people, the way they feel, how they think other people view them, what might shock them, what they might like from the other culture, and what they discover overall. The unknown can trigger in each person emotions such as fear and uncertainty.¹⁰

⁹Ricoeur, Jean Paul Gustave (1996)

¹⁰ Laureano, María A. (2011)

When we share with others, when we meet people, their traditions, their cultural references, their ways of interpreting life, the unknown becomes known, the two parties (the person who emigrated and the person who did not) experience transformations, they expand their learning, they are enriched by each other and group harmony is favoured; not from mere tolerance, but from celebration of our cultural diversity.

"...We must realize that all cultures have their own coherence that each one identifies as the truth. Therefore, intercultural reflection must lead to the realization that the truth is plural and relative, and that each culture must work on overcoming its own horizons if it wants to understand the values of the other more freely and objectively."¹¹

To be open to this way of seeing the other requires a significant level of acceptance and empathy towards other people, starting from the beginning, with our own identity.

LIGHTHOUSE PROPOSALS

For action, participation in multicultural contexts, and growth with regards to the other, useful theoretical framework and concepts can be found in Carlos Giménez's *Multifactorial Method* (2002, 2010) and in Margalit Cohen-Emerique's *Intercultural Focus* (, (2013).

1. **Multifactorial Method:** It includes the identification of three factors or variables, interrelated in a complex, dynamic and open manner: personal, situational and cultural factors, thus integrating the wide range of circumstances and processes that make up human reality.

¹¹Weber, Max (1996:22)

- Personal: Features and attitudes linked to the idiosyncrasy (The Merriam-Webster defines it as "*a peculiarity of constitution or temperament: an individualizing characteristic or quality*"¹²) of a person's own characteristics. It entails self-perception, perception of the other, usual behavioural guidelines, personal skills, affective structure, emotionality, "scale of values", etc.
 - Situational: Characteristics of the context where people develop, environmental, political and ideological factors. Family, economic and professional situations, gender system, age, social status, prestige, as well as other factors that are generally relevant with people of foreign origin, such as legal status, economic responsibility towards family members and other people at origin, migratory project, strategies and expectations.
 - Cultural: Behavioural guidelines and modes of significance of reality that the person has acquired during learning and group validation, mostly shared with people in the same ethnic, social or identity group. Rules, prohibitions, structure and hierarchy of values, roles and stereotypes of age and gender, language, and verbal and non-verbal communication guidelines, beliefs and religious practices, ethnic identity, symbols, relationships, etc.
2. **Intercultural Focus** recognizes that relationships lie between people and groups rather than between cultures, going beyond simple knowledge of cultural codes to come into contact and interact with individuals and communities.

¹²<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/idiosyncrasy>

Phases in the process:

- Decentration with regards to oneself: Observing and recognising our own cultural references in order to leave our identity on the side, which does not imply denying it, but instead facilitating relativisation of points of view.
- Understanding the Other requires an attitude of openness, curiosity and patience, in order to approach the other's system and codes.
- Negotiating in the relationship, which implies finding solutions to conflicts where both parties reach mutual agreements and improvements.

If we pay attention to ourselves, in direct or indirect interaction with others, we can find our **"SENSITIVE AREAS"**. They can be defined as topics or issues that have a significant effect on us and can interfere in the way we communicate, as the issue in question is related to our personal history, our beliefs, values, social standards, what we consider to be untouchable, non-negotiable, taboo, etc. In the phase of understanding the other, we also encounter some difficulties. Reaching a meeting point is a way of solving differences and conflicts of values and rules.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is a communicative process which goes beyond hearing what the other person has to say. It rather means understanding why and for which purpose they are saying it. We are thus placing ourselves in their shoes, without judging them nor interrupting, and with interest. Thus, we create a space for dialogue, to narrate our own stories and to form bonds, recognising that what is verbalised is as important as what is not verbalised, i.e., the words and gestures or behaviours, as a message is always linguistic, physical, and symbolic. This diversity leads to a richer interaction.

EMOTIONS ARE IMPORTANT TOO

In **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**, psychic processes intervene on three levels: cognitive, physical, and affective, as emotions are a fundamental part of our lives, of our relationships with others, and are related as well to our desires and vulnerabilities. In the same way, discovering the other may cause emotions which may, in turn, facilitate or impede the interaction.

For a long time, emotions have been relegated to a secondary level, giving greater importance to thoughts, to intelligence, to the rational part of human beings. However, as they are so closely linked to the acquisition of culture, they must be brought into play regarding intercultural relationships.

EMOTION is an affective status that we experience, a subjective reaction to our surroundings, accompanied with organic (physiological and endocrinal) changes of an innate origin, influenced by our experience. In our organism, emotions have an adaptive function to our environment. It is a status that appears suddenly and sharply. Emotions are intense and short-lived, preceding feelings and depending on sensations.

Among human beings, the experience of an emotion generally involves a set of cognitions, attitudes and beliefs about the world (thought), that we use to assess a specific situation. Therefore, emotions influence the way we perceive this situation.

Emotions indicate internal personal statuses, motivations, desires, needs and even objectives.

Basic emotions are universal, but emotions are expressed differently depending on the people and their culture.

Emotions associated to personal growth and resilience, which have

important psychological and social benefits, are:

- Emotions in the present: joy, peace, enthusiasm, euphoria, pleasure, elevation and serenity.
- Positive emotions in the future: optimism, hope, faith and trust.
- Elevation¹³ is a positive emotion that is experienced as a strong feeling of affection in the chest. It occurs when we are witnesses to acts that reflect the best of human beings and provoke a desire to be better people.¹⁴
- Experiencing this emotion makes it more likely for us to want to be present, to cooperate and to help others.¹⁵
- This positive spiral has beneficial social effects in terms of charity, altruism, cooperation, etc. It effectively contributes to the creation of social networks of support and cohesion within society. In short, it allows for the improvement of quality of life within communities, groups and organisations.¹⁶

MINDFULNESS: STAY YOURSELF

In every interpersonal relationship, we involve our perceptions, our stereotypes and prejudices, and our ethnocentric trends. These are usually operative in everyone and are tremendously influential, as they constantly mark what we think, say, or do.

These elements are revealed thanks to this technique, which helps us become aware of ourselves and of what is happening to us in the present, the here and now. It also opens us up to an attitude of

receptiveness, non-judgement, and acceptance of all thought. It can also have a highly beneficial impact on our relationships. **MINDFULNESS** is a practice of full or meditative attention (awareness) that favours our ability to come into contact with the present, increases our overall awareness and helps us with the challenges implied by the need to adapt, intercultural relationships, and contacts with the “other”, through emotional self-management and empathy.

Increasing our awareness of our own emotions will help spot and fight preconceived ideas that we have of ourselves and of others.

The necessary attitude and mind-set to practice meditation consists of the following elements¹⁷ :

- **ACCEPTANCE:** serenity to leave things as they are, in the moment they are in.
- **NO EFFORT:** not seeking for specific objectives during practice, the only objective is to be present, and to accept whatever happens.
- **LEARNER’S MIND:** being curious and open to the flow of events, without drawing conclusions.
- **LACK OF JUDGEMENT:** not judging positions us as (almost) impartial observers of our own experiences.
- **PATIENCE:** accepting the rhythm of life as it comes, not as we would like to make it.
- **TRUST:** in yourself and in your intuition.

¹³Jonathan Haidt (2000, 2002, op.cit.

¹⁴María Luisa Vecina (2006), Gonzalo Hervás (2009) and Ahmad Ramsés Barragán and Cinthya tzel Morales (2014)

¹⁵Ibidem

¹⁶Fredrickson, Barbara L. (2004)

¹⁷Jon Kabat- Zinn, (2009)

- **LETTING GO (OR YIELDING):** trying not to become too attached to anything.

Transforming society is always possible, but it invariably starts by transforming ourselves.

To understand the other, one must place themselves in the same position; everyone must have the opportunity to speak, to dialogue with others, and to express themselves. We can only enter a dialogue if we recognise the other as our equal.¹⁸ If people want to express themselves, and there are barriers such as language for example, their message can be shared, in this case, with a broader vision of the word, using their body and the symbolic nature of the word.

“Communication is not just an exchange of messages. It is, above all, a construction of sense¹⁹.”

TOOL-KIT FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

It is necessary to carry out prior analysis of the profiles of the participants and the context in which the activity will take place, in order to select the most suitable options, taking into account the heterogeneity of the people, including within categories and sub-categories.

1. WEAVING OUR NETWORK

INTRO: Presentation of the activity

DURATION: 20 min

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Any number

MATERIALS: Spool of wool.

INSTRUCTIONS: People in the group sit in a circle and introduce themselves: why they are participating in the activities, what they expect from the group, what they will contribute with, and what positively defines them, or what they like to do. When they are done with their presentation, they pass the spool of wool to another person in the group who will then do the same. When everyone is done, a network will have been created, representing what has been constructed by the group and what will continue to be built through their experiences, knowledge, etc. It also represents what brings them together as a group. Once there has been reflection on this, the network will be lifted above their heads and there will be discussion about how what is built among them serves as support.

2. THE MIRROR

INTRO: What the other reflects in me and what I reflect in the other; I know that I am myself because I am different from the other. It is in relation to the other that I discover myself, my values, my codes, my behaviours, my thought pattern, etc.

DURATION: 45-60 min

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 6 to 15 participants

MATERIALS: paper, colours, clay.

INSTRUCTIONS: First, participants write, draw, or create a sculpture of things that differentiate them from others. Secondly, they repeat the same procedure, but with things they have in common with others. Lastly, participants discuss the differences and similarities they found, analysing common characteristics of people.

3. BODY FIGURES

INTRO: Activity which uses the representation of oneself in relation to their body and their integration within the space and time.

¹⁸Jürgen Habermas, (1991)

¹⁹ Miquel Rodrigo Alsina, (1999)

DURATION: 60 min

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 6 to 15 participants

MATERIALS: Any

INSTRUCTIONS: Participants form pairs, one is A, and the other B. A makes a shape with their body (it can include physical postures, expressions, use of symbolisms, of proximity-distance, etc.). Two options:

Either they represent how they feel, which impulse or thought they have in relation to having reached a new country or in relation to receiving others in the host country; Or they simply represent the way they feel now, at the moment.

B observes A and makes a movement, taking a position or making a shape, in relation to what is expressed by A. If they wish A does another representation with their body, without saying a word to the other person, and then finishes. Afterwards, B carries out the same procedure.

Take some time to observe the shapes. Photos can be taken if permitted by the participants. In a large group, discuss the experience; you can guide the discussion with questions like: How did you feel? What have you discovered about yourself? How was the meeting with the other person?

(It can be positive/negative, easy/difficult/there was interference, etc.)

TIPS:

- Another option: The person is guided regarding the emotions or thoughts they can depict: I feel rejected, excluded, curious, surprised, lonely, isolated, hopeful, excited, afraid, alienated, concerned, empathetic, welcome, appreciated, that people look at me the wrong

way, that they don't understand me, that I understand other cultural codes, etc.

- Before starting this dynamic, it is necessary to do a relaxation exercise.
- It is important to take into account that there will be people who do not want physical contact, to make clear that it is ok, and that everybody should respect that.
- Gestures and expressions can mean different things, depending on the culture. This will be analysed before, during, and after the final discussion of the activity.

4. PRACTICE OF MINDFULNESS

INTRO: This consists of drawing attention on the breathing process: inhaling and exhaling. Do not put a strain on your breathing, let it happen naturally. If it is not calm, let it be, just take notice of it, and after a while, the quality of your breathing will improve on its own. The present moment is the only moment that is real. The most important task is to be present here and now, and to enjoy it. This simple exercise brings our mind back into our body.

DURATION: You can gradually increase the amount of time. Start with meditations of 3 minutes and finish with 15 minutes.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Any number.

MATERIALS: None. Music or candles can be added if preferred.

INSTRUCTIONS: The participants are sitting in a straight but not rigid position, in a comfortable posture. Having our eyes closed will help us connect with our inner-self; if not, you can also look downwards. The facilitator will ask the questions, explaining that the purpose is not to answer the questions, but for the question to deeply permeate. . After completing the practice, ask how the participants felt, what they thought of the experience, and explain the benefits of meditation.

Guiding questions:

- a. Do I want to change something in my life?
- b. Am I who and where I want to be?
- c. In what way do I identify with my cultural references?
- d. How do I experience the world?
- e. What frightens me about the other?
- f. What does diversity imply for me?
- g. What do I find difficult to accept about the other?
- h. What is my “sensitive area” in intercultural communication?

TIPS:

-Other option: mindfulness focused only on breathing, without the guiding questions.

-Benefits of meditation: favours calmness, facilitates empathy, understanding of the other, and harmony in relationships with people, increases the capacity to enjoy the present, fosters creativity...

5. WE SET THE PACE

INTRO: Activity which uses the representation of oneself in relation to their body and their integration within space and time.

DURATION: 20 min

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Any number

INSTRUCTIONS: The participants stand up in a circle. The music of reference will be We Will Rock You²⁰, by Queen.

The person in charge makes the emblematic beat of this song - which is very clear when you listen to it -, hitting both palms of their hands on their thighs two times and clapping their hands once. The

²⁰ (available notably on

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhTRhAX_QBA).

following person will continue playing that characteristic sound; they will do it in the same way, or another: jumping, dancing, following the rhythm but in their own way, making a sound in another way, and repeating it three times.

First, this will be done one by one, with a minimum of two laps, so that each person can choose if they go back to making the same sound-movement or not, and then it will be over, putting the music back, but all together at the same time, each in their own way while forming an integrated and cohesive group.²¹

6. KALEIDOSCOPE

INTRO: Activity to create together. At the end, a didactic support material is made. The kaleidoscope is used as a metaphor for “diversity of perspectives”.

DURATION: 90 min

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 8 to 25 participants

MATERIALS: Internet, cardboard, colours, glue, paper, scissors

INSTRUCTIONS: A cardboard tube is created which is then decorated as a kaleidoscope. ²²Different cards are introduced, that each contains activities to be developed next:

- The story of the 6 wise women and the elephant. This will be represented by the group.

Six wise blind Hindu women, dedicated to study, wanted to know what an elephant was. As they were blind, they decided to find out by touch. The first to reach the elephant bumped into its wide and

²¹ This exercise is based on a dynamic carried out in the course African Feminism and decoloniality (March, 2019) organised by MAD Africa in collaboration with the Pablo de Olavide University in Seville.

²² <https://www.handmadecharlotte.com/make-cardboard-kaleidoscope/>

hard side, and said: "I see, it's like a wall". The second, feeling its tusk, shouted: "This is so sharp, round and smooth, the elephant is like a spear". The third touched its twisted trunk and said: "Help me! The elephant is like a snake". The fourth reached out her hand to its knee, felt its shape and said: "It's obvious; an elephant is like a tree trunk". The fifth, who happened to touch an ear, exclaimed: "Even the blindest woman would realise that an elephant is like a fan". The sixth woman, who touched its wagging tail, said: "The elephant is very much like a rope".

And so, the wise women had a long and detailed discussion, and even though they were all partially right, they were also all wrong.

Reflection to lead to: we generally see "the truth" from our limited perception and then try to impose it on others, without listening, neither looking for other ideas or solutions, nor thinking that perhaps we are all partially right, but not completely.

- Divergent thought for problem resolution:

First, ask the group, what is divergent thought? The participants write a definition. Later, all of the definitions are put together and a card is created.

Exercise to put divergent thought into practice:

Create your display:

Using three elements, you must create a display. Choose a colour, a drawing or symbol, and an item of clothing; for example: yellow, birds, and a hat. The participant must relate these elements to one another and say what they suggest to them, what country, culture, or community they identify them with and why. Possible alternatives will arise from group conversation.

- Photographs to describe:

Participants are asked to explain what is happening in the pictures. They need to reflect on how our interpretations and our own codes influence the story. Our mind interprets reality. We will have as many interpretations as participants in the group. Later, there can be a simple description of what we see in the photo.

- Photographs of optical illusions (figure-background drawings):

They are asked what they see in the picture.

In the same context: Is the zebra white with black stripes or black with white stripes?

Reflection: There is no single reality; it depends on the individual's perception.

Question: Are maps territories?

Reflection: The lines, the stripes, limit areas, separate... Drawings are not reality, neither are maps, and therefore lines, as symbols of borders that do not actually exist, are man-made.²³

7. BUILDING TOGETHER

Dynamics that favour overcoming fears and insecurities: outdoor activities with young people such as rock climbing, etc.

Sentences that can inspire people, based on rock climbing: "If you can manage this, you can manage anything (work, family, studies...)". "Without rain, there couldn't be a rainbow".

Reading stories: *The chained elephant* and *The red tree* are stories based on situations where people feel that they have no control and that what they are doing is useless.

Show a video about the concept of learned helplessness. After the readings and/or watching, start a group conversation.²⁴

²³Part of the activity inspired by a work of art (2019): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6CM-limWJ0> min. 1.03

²⁴ Jorge Bucay, "The chaine delephant". Video on Learned Helplessness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtB6RTJVqPM>. Shaun Tan, "The red tree".

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Creating positive stories through one’s own experience. Common elements from personal experiences in the group can be used as a basis for creating the story; you can for instance chose to work on identity with young people.

You can start with narrating and/or representing:

- Situations of exclusion or xenophobia that have been experienced.
- Feelings they have had regarding the positioning yourself towards one culture or another; at school, with friends, romantic relationships, etc.
- When they emigrated: What did they expect from the country they arrived in? How did they feel? What did they want to do? Where did they want to go? What did they see?

They can represent these situations through the creation of images, using their body. From there, they can be asked whether they want to change the image, or if they want to build another story. The viewers can participate, if allowed by the person creating the image, or simply be observers, in order to later share their reflections.

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By Itaka Training

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ASSISTING REFUGEES

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma can generally be defined as an emotional and psychological response to a deeply distressing event. However, witnessing or experiencing a traumatic event does not necessarily mean developing a post-traumatic stress syndrome. Everybody can develop their own way to overcome difficulties and thus reacts in different ways.

The term is broadly used nowadays, in many different contexts. In the case of refugees and war victims, this reaction takes place after experiencing or witnessing particularly violent events.

Trauma in refugee population is not only linked to their pasts in their home countries (events linked to wars or natural disasters, such as famines, etc.,) but also linked to events that took place during, or after, their travel to a safer country.

This is why refugees usually experience complex trauma: the accumulation of different, prolonged, and repeated traumatic events.

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How trauma is perceived depends greatly on various factors, and everyone has their own way of coping. There is a level of individual subjectivity and personal history, but also of cultural beliefs surrounding health, care, violence, memory, and loss. Therefore, cultural factors always have to be taken into consideration.

WHAT IS PTSD?

PTSD, short for “post-traumatic stress syndrome” refers in Western psychology to a condition or disorder caused by experiencing traumatic events.

It is associated with an acute stress reaction. It is diagnosed when certain symptoms last more than a month.

The symptoms are manifold and divided in 4 main categories:

1. RE-EXPERIENCING the trauma through nightmares, flashbacks, memories, and more.
2. AVOIDANCE of places, people and activities reminding of the trauma (triggers), and more.
3. EMOTIONAL NUMBNESS, difficulty in establishing trust relationships, and in engaging in pleasant activities, and more.
4. INCREASED AROUSAL, feeling jumpy, hypervigilant, having difficulties to concentrate, being easily irritated, and more.

PTSD is often connected with a natural human reaction called “flight or fight”: when we encounter danger, our brain quickly answers, preparing our body to either fight or flee. This response should last only for the time needed to face the danger, but with PTSD, this answer persists in time. It also has tangible effects on the body:

- heart rate increase;
- distorted vision;
- muscular tension;
- sensitive hearing;
- sweating;
- and more.

These symptoms correspond to a series of neural (brain) and physiological (body) mechanisms that release stress hormones - adrenaline and cortisol. The excessive release of these hormones can have long term side effects such as insomnia and diabetes.

TRAUMA AND CULTURAL RELATIVITY

ETHNOPSYCHIATRY and transcultural psychology study how diseases are perceived and treated in different cultures.

This approach is fundamental when assisting people from a different cultural background. In fact, disease, health, and therapy in general are specifically culturally driven processes. People have their own vocabulary, expressions, intonations, and metaphors when talking about health. For example, in many cultures, mental health is related to spiritual identity.

Also, the role of the community is of great importance, while for others individuality matters more. For example, some people might want to include family\community members during therapy meetings, while others might prefer to come alone. Moreover, there are influencing cultural factors such as traditional medical practices, faith, and the way violence and its aftermaths are perceived.

HOW IS PTSD TREATED?

There are many ways practitioners, psychologists, and psychiatrists treat PTSD. Some of them concentrate on first response (ex. Narrative Exposure Therapy ²⁵) some on long term treatments (ex. Cognitive Behavioural Treatment²⁶); while others try to integrate intercultural elements of East-Asian beliefs to the Western approach (ex. Soul Healing Therapy). Some focus on stress management (ex. Grounding²⁷); others focus on reintegrating memory (ex. EMDR²⁸).

They all have similar goals:

- Restoration of safety (eliminating fears);
- Traumatic experience integration (generating a positive biographical narrative);
- Relational re-engagement (improving socialisation);
- Positive affect enhancement (improving interpersonal relationships);
- Restoration of control (planning the future); and
- Restoration of dignity and value of the self (celebrating accomplishments). **HOW CAN WE HELP?**

There are many ways in which you can help people you are assisting to reach these goals, but you have to remember that you are not a therapist and you should not try to act as such, engaging in co-dependent relationships.

Remember:

You should always follow the guidelines on conduct provided by your organisation. This is to protect not only the people you assist, but

²⁵ [https://www.vivo.org/wp-](https://www.vivo.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Narrative_Exposure_Therapy.pdf)

[content/uploads/2015/09/Narrative_Exposure_Therapy.pdf](https://www.vivo.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Narrative_Exposure_Therapy.pdf)

²⁶ <https://psychcentral.com/lib/in-depth-cognitive-behavioral-therapy/>

²⁷ <https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding>

²⁸ <https://www.healthline.com/health/emdr-therapy>

also yourself. In fact, it is important that you take care of your own health and wellbeing when volunteering, avoiding burnout.

Allow time for yourself to relax and rest. If needed, take a break of a few days to take some distance from difficult situations. Rely on your team and communicate with them when feeling uncomfortable or overstressed.

If you think someone is experiencing PTSD, or that their symptoms are getting worse, talk to your coordinator before taking any action.

WHAT CAN I DO?

There are many activities that have beneficial impacts, as they foster healing and provide the conditions and tools for a positive environment and good relationships.

Generally, any activity involving relaxation and stress relief can be helpful. Furthermore, all activities performed in open air are reported to have positive effects, for example, listening to relaxing music or using relaxation techniques such as diaphragm breathing, etc. Activities including artistic techniques (painting, sculpting, photography etc.) and creativity (theatre games, creative writing, cooking, and more) are proven to provide moments for socialising, in a safe and calm environment.

SOME TIPS

Here are some suggestions when running activities with refugees suffering from PTSD:

- Do not group them together just because they have PTSD, include different people.
- Provide a safe and predictable environment (arrange the place to be cosy and welcoming, but also quiet).

- Avoid arranging chairs giving their back to doors (people with PTSD feel more comfortable when the exit is visible and in front of them).
- If you notice they are feeling stressed, give them the possibility to step out and take a break.
- Write down important information, as they might struggle to remember them.
- Dedicate moments for gratifications, where personal achievements are celebrated.
- Include participants in the decision-making: ask them what they would like to do (making a list of suggestions could help as well).
- Introduce them to the local context and talk about them with the local community (organise public events).
- Do not ask questions too specific about their past or their home countries.
- Do not victimize them; they are actually very strong and resilient people.
- Prepare them well ahead to changes (especially when a member of the staff is leaving).
- Sometimes mental health could be perceived as a taboo, therefore avoid using medical jargon.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Below, you can find some ideas of activities that are easy to perform and inclusive of people of different ages and cultures.

THE TREE OF LIFE

Introduction: The tree of life is pretty simple and straightforward. It is a visual metaphor in which a tree represents your life and the various elements that it consists in: past, present, and future.

By labelling parts of the tree, you begin to discover aspects of yourself, shaped by your past, that can then reflect the kind of person you want to be moving forward.

Duration: 45 min

Number of participants: 6 to 18.

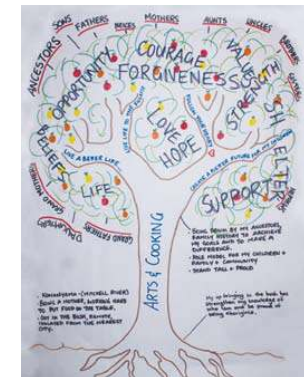
Materials: paper, coloured pens/ felt-tips/ pencils, etc.

Instructions:

First, participants start by drawing their tree. The tree must be composed of roots, trunk, branches, leaves, fruits and flowers. Then, participants will label each part, starting with their own life story.

The roots represent the person's origins (home country\ town\ culture etc.). The trunk symbolises the fundamental skills and values of each person (cooking, freedom, etc.). The leaves are people who have a positive role in your life (family, friends, mentors, etc.). Flowers and seeds will be the legacy you would like to pass on to others (values such as love, strength, wisdom etc.).

At the end, participants will have a meaningful idea of their life and will look at it as a complex system of conceptual support. Participants might share their tree with others but the outcome of this activity is



meant to be personal. You can start a conversation about how they felt during and after drawing their tree.

1. DIAPHRAGM BREATHING

Intro: Diaphragmatic breathing (deep breathing) is a method involving the contraction of the diaphragm, which is a muscle located between the thoracic cavity and the abdominal one. In this breathing exercise, it is the belly that expands, regulating the flow of air and maximizing the amount of oxygen into the bloodstream. It is a natural and relaxed form of breathing among all mammals and it is proven to be an effective way of relieving stress and of interrupting the “fight-flight” response.



Duration: 10-15 min

Number of participants: Any number

Materials: None needed, just warm and cosy settings.

Instructions: Participants can lie down or sit. Ask them to close their eyes and to focus on their normal breath. Then, tell them to put one hand on their chest and one on their abdomen; this will help them to understand if they are doing the exercise correctly. Tell them to breathe-in slowly through their nose. The air going into the nose should be moving downwards, and participants should feel their stomach rising under their other hand. They should not contract or push their abdominal muscles outward. The movement and the airflow should be smooth, and it should ideally involve mainly the abdomen area. It should not feel as if they were forcing their lower abdomen out by clenching their muscles. The hand on the chest should remain relatively still. Exhale slowly, through slightly pursed lips. If participants find belly breathing awkward at first, it may be because they usually breathe with their chest. Although the

frequency of this breathing exercise varies, the sequence is often done three times when beginning. Most people can do it up to 5 to 10 minutes, one to four times a day. If anybody feels lightheaded at any time, discontinue the breathing exercise.

2. BE A JOURNALIST FOR A DAY

Introduction: In this activity, participants will be asked to be a journalist for a day and to explore their local area, taking pictures, interviewing locals, and then write down a simple text to present what they observed. This will increase their knowledge of their environment, boosting their level of trust, and providing a safe structure to engage others and socialise. For the locals, it could be a moment to get to know your organisation’s activities.



Duration: 4 hours

Number of participants: 4 to 15

Materials: notebook, pen, camera and recorder (optional)

Instructions: Begin the activity by explaining that this will be an opportunity to go out together and explore the local area. Go out with the group and then ask them to spread around the neighbourhood and observe life in the local area. For example, they can go to the library and ask how the service is organised and if there are any events planned. Or go to the local GP and ask how many people go there every week; or to the main bus stop and ask people where they are going, etc. You can go with them and show support. If they feel shy, they can just observe and simply write down what they notice. If it is possible, provide them with a camera so they can take a few pictures. At the end, you can edit their material, to be presented to local events such as exhibitions.

3. THEATRE GAME: THE HUMAN KNOT

Introduction: Theatre games have multiple benefits. They provide a moment to explore relationships with others, with our environment and ourselves, through our own position and movement. To be confident with our body is very important and helps gaining self-confidence. These games also help create a sense of belonging, as participants share an intimate and creative moment with others.



Duration: 20 min.

Number of participants: 6 to 20

Materials: None

Instructions: Participants circle up together and join their hands to form a knot that they will have to untangle, without letting go of the hands they are holding.

First, once they are standing close to each other in a circle, ask them to close their eyes, to make a step forward and to raise their arms. At this point they should touch each others' hands. Ask them to hold the first pair they can touch. Once everybody is holding a pair of hands (you can help them if they are not able to reach any), ask them to open their eyes. At this point they will have formed a human knot. Take a few minutes to have a look at it and at the way it is composed. Players should be ready to bend, twist, and move in any ways that would be required to untangle the knot. Try to facilitate the game by helping participants to move without feeling uncomfortable.

4. THEATRE GAME: Mouse and Cat

Intro: This game involves a necessary level of trust and acting skills. It is a good way to experiment fun and sociality in a safe environment.

Duration: 30 min

Number of participants: 8 to 25

Materials: None

Instructions: participants will circle up and, in turns, 2 of them will be chosen as cat and as mouse. They will be blindfolded, using a scarf or a piece of fabric. Make sure they cannot see anything. After that, they will be placed at opposite sides inside the circle.

The goal of the cat is to reach the mouse; the goal of the mouse is to escape from the cat. The cat can understand where the mouse is by asking: "mouse, oh little mouse, where are you?"

At that point the mouse will have to answer: "I'm here my cat!" After calling each other, both of them will be allowed to make one step each, the cat towards the mouse, and the mouse away from the cat. The group will ensure the players' safety while walking blindly in a limited space. Allow more participants to play the roles, which do not necessarily have to respect the participants' gender. If some participants do not want to be blindfolded, do not insist or force them. This game requires trust between the group's members as they will have to keep the two at the centre of the circle, safe at all time.

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WHAT IS INTERLANGUAGE?

Second language learners develop an internal linguistic system, called “interlanguage”. The Interlanguage theory is credited to Larry Selinker, an American professor of applied linguistics, whose article "Interlanguage" appeared in the January 1972 issue of the journal *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*.

Interlanguage refers to a unique system, which is neither the first language (L1), nor the second language (L2), but something in-between. This system draws in partly on the learner’s L1 but also from the target language. More specifically, interlanguage is the type of language (or linguistic system) used by second- and foreign-language learners who are in the process of learning a target language. An interlanguage is an emerging linguistic system that has been developed by a learner of a second language (L2) who has not become fully proficient yet and is only approximating the target language: preserving some features of their first language (or L1) in speaking or writing the target language and creating innovations. An interlanguage is uniquely based on the learners' experiences with the L2. The learner creates an interlanguage using different learning strategies, including language transfer, overgeneralisation and simplification.

Interlanguage is based on the theory that a "psychological structure latent in the brain"²⁹ (FOOTNOTE?) is activated when one attempts to learn a second language. Larry Selinker proposed his theory of interlanguage in 1972, noting that in a given situation the utterances produced by the learner are different from those native speakers would produce, had they attempted to convey the same meaning.³⁰ This comparison sheds light on a separate linguistic system. This system can be observed when studying the utterances of the learners who attempt to produce a target language norm.

INTERLANGUAGE THREE KEY PRINCIPLES

Interlanguage theory revolves around three key principles.

1. L2 learners construct a system of abstract linguistic rules.
2. L2 learners' competence is transitional and variable at any stage of development.
3. Interlanguage development is affected by cognitive and communicative strategies.

The concept of interlanguage has been influenced and examined from three main perspectives: linguistic, psycholinguistic, and discursive.

²⁹ Larry Selinker, *Interlanguage*, 1972.

³⁰ Larry Selinker, *Interlanguage*, 1972.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF INTERLANGUAGE

To study the psychological processes involved, one should compare the learner's interlanguage with two things:

1. Utterances in the native language to convey the same message made by the learner;
2. Utterances in the target language to convey the same message made by the native speaker of that language.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

People learning a second language may not always hear spoken L2 words as separate units (Altarriba, Jeanette; Heredia, Roberto R., eds. (2008)). The learners might blend some words together and these words become a single unit in the learner's L2 system. These blended words are called "prefabricated patterns" or "chunks". Generally, these chunks are not immediately obvious to the learner, or to anyone that listens to them speak, but may be noticed as the learner's L2 system becomes more developed and they start using the chunk in a context where it does not apply.

Example of an English language learner:

They may associate the sentences beginning with "do you" with a question, but not as two separate words. For these learners, the word is "do you". They may thus say "What do you doing?" instead of "What are you doing?" Eventually the learner will learn to break the chunk into its component words and use them correctly.

When learners experience significant restructuring in their L2 systems, they sometimes show a U-shaped learning pattern. According to Patsy Lightbown (1983), a group of English language learners moved, over time, from accurate usage of the present progressive morpheme "-ing", to incorrectly omitting it, and finally, back to the correct use. Jeanette The Altarriba and Roberto R. Heredia assert in 2008 that the period of incorrect usage is seen as a learning regression.³¹ However, it is likely that when the learners first acquired the new "-ing" morpheme or "chunk", they were not aware of all of the rules that applied to its use. As their knowledge of English tenses expanded, it disrupted their correct usage of the morpheme. They eventually returned to correct usage when they gained greater understanding of the tense rules in English.

There is data providing evidence that learners were initially producing output based on rote memory of individual words containing the present progressive "-ing" morpheme. However, in the second stage, their systems included a rule according to which they should use the bare infinitive form to express present action, without a separate rule for the use of "-ing". Finally, they learned the rule for the appropriate use of "-ing".

The "chunking" method enables a learner to practice speaking their L2 before they correctly break the chunk into its component parts. According to the Interlanguage theory, this apparent progression and regression in language learning is an important and positive manifestation of the learner's developing understanding of the target language's grammar.

³¹ The Altarriba, Jeanette; Heredia, Roberto R., eds. (2008)

HOW CAN WE CONTRIBUTE TO HELP?

In order to run successful activities which will assist refugees with learning a new language through the interlanguage method, youth workers need to believe and accept that non-formal education is a necessary element for human development. Contemporary scientific research shows that activities which contain drama games, visual arts, bodily practices, etc., are a source of culture, and today there can be no integration without art and culture playing an integral part.

THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH WORKER

The youth worker's role is decisive. Depending on the activity, the youth worker acts on many levels.

On the pedagogical level: The youth worker must devise various ways for youth to mobilize and discover a various range of codes of communication and expression.

On the artistic level: The youth worker must help youth discover their creativity, their imagination and their acting skills (in drama games).

On the psychological level: The youth worker must help young people feel safe and confident, using group building activities, energizers, etc.

On the expressive level: Youth workers must give the necessary instructions, tools and materials to refugees, in order to express as individual and in collective actions.

SOME TIPS

The youth worker is the co-player and co-creator of the activities. Here are some suggestions for youth workers who run interlanguage activities with refugees:

The youth worker:

- ✓ Participates, (not rule);
- ✓ Follows the youth,(not control them);
- ✓ Plays with the children, (not teach them);
- ✓ Does not remain impartial and immune to emotions and events.

To play their role properly, youth workers must:

- Leave their body unbothered. Release themselves from inhibitions and tensions;
- Be able to stand in front of youth, in a relaxed, friendly, human manner, without any formalities or teachings.
- Be able to inspire the group, motivating them rather than leading them to a specific point; instead, guiding them to discover the joy in playing and creating.

Dear Youth Worker, please remember!

There are many ways in which we can contribute to help refugees learn a new language, but you have to remember that you are not a teacher and you should not try to act as such and engage in this kind of relationship. If the activities are turned into a lesson, it is certain that they will not be resonant in young refugees.



SOME IDEAS

Below you can find ideas for running activities that are easy to perform and inclusive of people of different ages and cultures.

1. BODY ALPHABET

Introduction: The Body Alphabet activity is pretty simple and straightforward. It is a visual help for refugees to understand the different letters the L2 contains. The participants will form letters, making shapes with their own bodies.

In this activity youth workers will use drama games, performing arts, improvisation, and applied improvisation.

Theatre games have multiple benefits. They provide a moment to explore our relationship with others, with our environment and ourselves, through our own position and movement. To be confident with our body is very important and helps build self-confidence. These games also help creating a sense of belonging, sharing an intimate and creative moment with others. Improvisation in the performing arts is very spontaneous, without specific or scripted preparation.

Applied improvisation is the application of improvisational methods in various fields, like consulting, facilitating (workshops, team trainings, meetings, conferences etc.), teaching, coaching, researching, generating or evolving ideas and designs, theatrical training and playing, medical and therapeutic settings, or social work.

Duration: 45 min

Number of participants: 6 to 30

Materials: Colour papers, markers.

Instructions: The youth worker will explain the activity to the participants beforehand. First, participants will form a circle and hold hands. The youth worker will be part of this circle and will start by picking three (or as many are necessary) of the participants in order to shape the first letter of the L2 alphabet in the centre of circle. The outcome, that we can call “human letter”, must be in the centre of the circle, in order to be visible to everyone.

The rest of the team will say the sound of the first letter loud and clear. For example, in English the first letter is “A”, so they will say all together “Aaaaaa”.

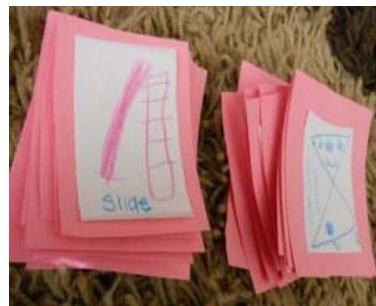
The team has to think of a word starting with “A” in L2, with the assistance of the youth worker and using the materials they are laying next to the “human letter”, writing the rest of the letters of the word on paper, one letter per sheet.

In cases where participants do not know a word starting with the specific letter, they can say a word in their L1, which starts with the same letter or with the sound of this letter. The participants have to try to explain the word to people who do not have the same L1, through Improvisation. The youth worker must translate the word and put it in the “translated words” box. The content of this box can be used for another activity with the same group.

Tip: You can make a picture of every letter and use it for another activity.

2. STORYTELLING WITH HANDMADE CARDS

Introduction: Each participant will paint or draw a specific object, animal, food, or whatever they want, which they believe will be useful to tell a story. The participants will narrate



their story (true or imaginary) by using the handmade cards crafted by the group.

In this activity youth workers will use painting, narrative art, and theatrical improvisation. Narrative art is an artistic mean through which one tells—or narrates—a story through imagery. It manifests itself in every kind of medium, in every culture, in every form you can imagine. The power of a story is in how, and what, it makes us feel.

Duration: 40 min

Number of participants: 10-30

Materials: Board, colours, markers, A5 white paper, inspiration materials (books with pictures, books for children, story cards, etc.), CD player or laptop to play music as background.

Instructions: The youth worker will explain the activity to the participants beforehand. Participants can lie down or sit and relax with some background music. Put all material in the middle of the room and encourage participants to draw an object, animal, food or whatever they want, which they believe will be useful to tell a story. On each card should be written the name of one object Before getting started, the youth worker will talk about the different parts of a story: beginning, middle, and end. The youth worker can create or use a short story as an example.

Participants must pick at least 4 cards which may contain a character, settings, a problem, and an object. This will help them come up with the bones, the structure of the story.

Participants should have time to think before they start. Their story should last at least 1 minute. If they have the bones, the meat is easier to fill in!

Youth workers must advise them to use details, different voices, etc., in order to develop their vocabulary. This is all about improvisation and creativity, so youth workers need to be flexible. They must also listen, and make mental notes of certain parts of the story. This is an important step, even if the story makes no sense!

Once the story is finished, the youth worker should ask questions. "What colour was that? Did the main character succeed?" These questions just might soak in, and help the storyteller expand on the story they will tell next time, to develop their vocabulary and let them see you were paying attention.



3. ART AND EMOTIONS

Introduction:

The participants, through listening to or observing a piece of art, will express individually their feelings in an artistic

way, and then will present the outcome to the group.

The relationship between art and emotion has recently been the subject of extensive study. Emotional or aesthetic reactions to art have previously been viewed as basic stimulus responses, but new theories and research have suggested that these experiences are more complex and able to be studied experimentally. Emotional responses are often regarded as the keystone to experiencing art. Moreover, the creation of an emotional experience has been argued to be the purpose of artistic expression. Research has shown that the neurological underpinnings of perceiving art differ from those used in standard object recognition. Instead, brain regions involved in the experiencing of emotions and goal-setting show activation when viewing art.

Duration: 40 min.

Number of participants: 4 to 30

Materials: Board, colours, markers, white paper, colour paper, any piece of art the youth worker believes will help participants express their feelings.

Instructions: The youth worker will explain the activity to the participants beforehand. They will start by listening to or observing a piece of art. Continuously, participants will use the way they feel more comfortable with to express their feelings. It could be painting, singing, improvising, dancing, etc. Each will present their feelings to their group one by one and then the group must recognize and say what the feeling is in L2.

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THE BIG GAME AT ANKAA PROJECT

ANKAA project is a resource centre for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants living in Athens. It is located near a hotspot centre of the Greek Capital and it provides programmes for labour integration and social inclusion.

It is run by volunteers and it is one of these concrete actions promoted by civil society that we discuss throughout our project. Therefore, it represented the best place to try out our idea of youth work in refugee assistance. We went there with a group of 20 youth workers who had followed a specific training based on the subjects collected in this toolkit. Then, they elaborated a big one-day game and offered the activity to the refugees and migrants present at the centre.

The game was a great success, not just for the migrants who participated, but also for the students who designed and implemented it, as it gave them the chance to put in practice what they had just learnt, and to receive first-hand best feedback.

Below, we will share with you the description of this exciting and fun activity who left everybody engaged, energised, and with a positive attitude towards the community and their future.

THE GAME

The main subjects that participants decided to choose as basis of the game's narration gravitated around the concepts of travelling, encounters with diversity, personal heritage, and home. To address such critical and crucial topics for refugees, we used the metaphor of space travel.

This way, we set the game in a context far from reality (planets, stars, spaceships, and aliens), while still having the chance to talk about subjects they want and need to address, in a safe way and a secure environment.

The group of participants had to imagine they were a group of space travellers, who were travelling to visit other worlds before establishing themselves and creating their own society. Activities were set in different "planets", where they had to perform tasks and challenges and play games to receive elements and materials pivotal for their new lives in their new planet.

We focused on the idea of cultural sharing for human development, and how important it is to be united and to celebrate diversity, for better and more inclusive societies.

Each location/planet was characterized by different areas of activities, which represented the cultural heritage and the identity of its inhabitants: the planet of music/ of visual art/of dance/ of all senses.

On the last planet, we put together what we had collected from the other ones, and imagined how to build our new world, how we envisaged it, and how we wanted it to be.

At the end, everybody gathered for a feedback session, where we shared thoughts and ideas about the day and what was learnt.

The most reported feedback from the refugees was that they got the possibility to play, relax and have fun together thanks to this game activity. Fun, pleasure, trust in others and informal learning are all fundamental for

the good development of individuals and consequently for society as a whole. Generally, these aspects are not treated with the same attention as basic needs are. But they have the same importance and should be provided as well, especially to the very young ones, but to adults and teenagers as well.

CONCLUSIONS

More and more young volunteers and youth workers are facing all the challenges that integration of refugees includes, directly on the frontline. Especially in temporary and first-response contexts, tools available for them are often too few and time for training too little; while legitimate requests and needs of refugee children remain very high.

With this toolkit, we wanted to try filling this gap by providing workers who assist young refugees, with the fundamental knowledge underlying their interventions.

Thanks to EU youth and education policies, it was possible to collect useful information and explain practical activities not requiring a large budget, many experience or detailed structure. When working in refugee camps, schools or day centers, youth workers will be well equipped to deal with the most recurring scenarios.

Moreover, we wanted to emphasize how art in general can be a great support and a way to deal with those delicate subjects that often refugees and asylum seekers have to face.

Trauma, intercultural and interlanguage, can be faced while playing, giving value to free time as a preparatory and educational practice.

The current toolkit has been tested and reviewed by 60 young youth workers, school teachers and educators, who have contributed to this final version thanks to their feedback and comments. Some of them actually helped us to re-shape activities and instructions in a way that was more consistent, diversity-centered, balanced and clearer to understand.

Many of them asked for more theory and activities to be included, which inspired us to continue to invest in distant learning. Especially in this time of global pandemic, where Europe has been one of the most affected nations in the world. As everybody, also our project has been affected and many of our local events were cancelled. We hope to take back the time we had lost and continue working for social cohesion, cooperation and education, now more than ever.

Some of the suggestions regarding exploring more theoretical topics were very interesting. Unfortunately, we could not add more chapters as we considered important to keep a light version for this material to be as much practical as possible. The risk was to generalize too much and give too superficial information regarding sensitive subjects. However we were enthusiastic of reading the suggested extra topic such as: leading youth organizations and NGOs in the field of asylum seekers; strategies in place to enhance the professional skills of asylum seekers; AGD (Age Gender Diversity) approach and more.

We thank again all of them for their efforts and cooperation while continuing thinking and projecting actions to support their training and education.

The toolkit will remain available in open source online for at least 2 years after the end of the [Youth Together for Refugees Project](#). You can always send us your opinion via google-form at <https://forms.gle/ftbm1k9P5o6mcNGt9>