>> MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY PROJECTS

connectyouth | SALTO-YOUTH CULTURAL DIVERSITY RESOURCE CENTRE

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognised and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.

Article 1 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

Contents

In 2005, as part of the UK hosting of the EU Presidency, the UK National Agency for the European Youth programme together with the SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre, organised an event which specifically focused on how youth workers (and others working closely with youth) could measure the success of the cultural diversity projects they lead with young people in their respective countries. Over the 5 days of the event (which took place in July 2005), more than 60 youth workers from 25 countries engaged in a series of activities from practical creative workshops (using arts as a tool for dialogue and mediation with young people from culturally diverse backgrounds), sharing best practice, exchanging project ideas, and working together to identify the key ingredients that make projects both culturally appropriate and accessible for young people who, because of their ethnic, religious or cultural identity, are traditionally excluded (or who exclude themselves) from mainstream youth programmes and activities.

Most of the information in this booklet is the result of extensive consultation with youth workers participating in the event, integrating feedback from sessions run by the project trainers and external workshop leaders (a number of whom were from immigrant/refugee communities). Additional participant 'voices' were gathered by the Measuring Success rapporteurs who recorded and captured the essence of the event using photography, video and audio recording equipment.
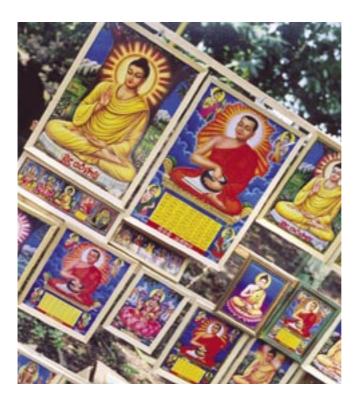
How can this booklet be useful for my work?

If you are new to working with young people from culturally diverse backgrounds, or you want to plan a project which focuses on cultural diversity, then the information in this booklet will be very useful for you. Experienced youth workers will find this booklet useful to measure the success of existing projects, and to gain a greater understanding of creating a more inclusive policy of working with marginalised youth.

'Religion, and language, takes more than democracy and equitable growth. Also needed are multicultural policies that recognise differences, champion diversity and promote cultural freedoms, so that all people can choose to speak their language, practice their religion, and participate in shaping their culture – so that all people can choose to be who they are.'

Human Development Report 2004 'Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World', United Nations Development Programme

There are no set rules or 'magic' solutions to creating a successful cultural diversity project, but the suggestions listed below could form a useful CHECKLIST when planning your next project:

> KNOWLEDGE OF YOURSELF

- If you have good knowledge and understanding of yourself you are better equipped to understand others
- When organising cultural diversity projects it is important to use your own knowledge of 'self' to understand the individual identity or collective identities of the communities you are working with

> FLEXIBILITY

- Allows for unexpected change/s in a project
- Encourages an open and transparent working process which respects and accommodates the needs of young people from culturally diverse communities
- Ensures the voices of young people participating in a cultural diversity project are being heard and included
- Supports evaluation processes which may need to be changed or adapted according to the needs of the project

> PROMOTING INCLUSION

- Projects should be devised and implemented with the active involvement of the community or communities involved
- Young people should be involved in the planning process of educational or young-person focused projects
- Projects with social aspirations should address specific needs identified in partnership with those who are intended to benefit
- The project should, if possible, contribute to the transformation of attitudes and perceptions of public agencies, local authorities, policy-makers, mainstream media and the general public
- Understanding barriers created by language difference

What makes a cultural diversity project successful?

> INTEGRATED EVALUATION PROCESS

- Gives you the information you need to improve the quality of further projects
- Projects can be led and informed by an ongoing evaluative process
- Supports the gathering of information and feedback essential to understanding and awareness of the success of a project
- Develops critical skills
- Encourages inclusive methods of involving young people from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Evaluates the benefits that translate into wider social impact by building the confidence of minority and marginalised groups
- Promotes contact
- Contributes to social cohesion

> PREPARATION

- Essential to how well a project is managed
- Gives the tools to combating any unexpected challenges or problems in a project
- Makes project participants feel confident and positive about a project
- Minimises the risks of a project
- Maximises the time spent with project participants
- Details left out during the preparation and planning time of a project will create more challenges with less time to deal with difficulties or emergencies
- Good preparation increases the energy of the team or trainer
- Realistic targets and outcomes – projects should not offer more than they can deliver
- Preparation is 80% of the project
- Preparation can make the difference between a successful project and one that fails to meet expectations

> FUN AND FRIENDSHIP

- Is essential for the wellbeing of all
- Is a fundamental right to experience and enjoy
- Encourages enjoyment of a project
- Challenges isolation and feelings of exclusion
- Helps learn new skills in a supportive environment
- Promotes tolerance, respect and understanding of different cultures
- Unites young people and helps to challenge stereotypes
- Creates opportunity for dialogue and exchange of views and experiences

> TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION

- Promotes understanding and tolerance
- Supports teams working together on projects
- Gives an opportunity for people to express themselves without fear of being misunderstood
- Provides clarity of objectives and targets that need to be met in the project
- Creates trust
- Helps avoid stereotypes
- Promotes equality and mutuality
- All voices are equal

> INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE APPROACHES

- It is exciting and challenging to introduce innovative and creative approaches
- Gives you a bank of ideas when working with young people
- Improves communication
- Challenges barriers to communication
- Engages young people
- Allows for deeper exploration of issues affecting young people from culturally diverse backgrounds

What makes a cultural diversity project successful?

> COMPLIMENTARY PARTNERSHIP

- Relationships between all partners should be built on the awareness of each others' roles and responsibilities and on mutual trust and respect that can accommodate adaptability
- The importance of creating a diverse environment
- Widening networks
- Encouraging greater participation by young people
- Access to training materials and manuals held by other organisations
- Alleviating the feeling of isolation
- Improving practice
- Strength in partnerships
- Wider dissemination of project outcomes

.> ADVICE AND SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

- Sharing problems, finding solutions
- Widening
- Understanding the issues affecting young people from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Enriching activities
- Learning new skills, methods and approaches to working with culturally diverse groups

> SUSTAINABILITY AND FOLLOW-UP

- Ongoing monitoring of outcomes and achievements
- Multiplying of skills
- Contact with young people
- Fulfilling expectations of young people
- Knowledge of effects of the project beyond the participating young peopl

While ensuring the free flow of ideas by word and image, care should be exercised that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known. Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to arts and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity.

Article 6 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

Using arts and creativity in projects

Your creative imagination and integrating creativity and artistic methods in project promotes lots of positive outcomes. Creative methods can:

- Develop self-confidence and self-esteem
- Be used as a fun evaluation tool
- Supports non-verbal communication when working with young people whose mother tongue is different to your own

Additional benefits of using the arts:

- Improves skills in planning and organising activities
- Improves communication of ideas and information
- Raises or enhances educational attainment
- Increases appreciation of arts
- Creates social capital
- Strengthens communities
- Develops community identity
- Decreases social isolation
- Improves understanding of different cultures
- Enhances social cohesion
- Promotes interest in the local environment
- Activates social change
- Raises public awareness of an issue
- Enhances mental and physical health and well-being
- Alleviates the impact of poverty

'It is important to be aware of the dynamics of prejudices and stereotypes, of tolerance and intolerance, of cultures and identities, inequality and injustice, and to be able to deal with conflicts as they arise in situations where diversity is present. It is equally important to critically assess the role that intercultural education with young people can or should play in the context of cultural diversity. And finally, it is important to measure success of our projects, if possible'.

Quote from Measuring the Success of Cultural Diversity Projects, 2005

'You cannot judge a project being successful only by the result, because the result may not be achieved…. but the process could have been very successful'.

Quote from Measuring the Success of Cultural Diversity Projects, 2005

The page opposite includes some suggestions for measuring the success of cultural diversity projects, but there are many more than can be used. Why not share these with colleagues and see if you have additional ideas? Draw up an additional checklist and ask others to contribute – it could be made into a fun and useful team game!

Achieving goals

Did you have clear and agreed goals at the start of the project? Have these been met and how?

Active Participation

How many young people participated in the programme of activities or project? Were they the right target group? How did you record their participation? Could the num ber of participants been increased? How?

Sustainability

Are young people involved in the project able to use new skills? Did they benefit from increased confidence and self esteem as a result of the project? How can this be measured, and over what period of time? Can funding be sought to continue the project to encourage increased participation? Can young people be involved in contributing to, or taking an active role, in applying for further funding?

Assessing learning

What learning took place? What criteria did you put in place at the start of the project to ensure learning can be monitored and evaluated? What tools can be used? Have the views/ opinions of the young people in the project changed? Is it important to measure your own learning as well as young people involved in the project, team members etc? Did young people evaluate their own learning?

Fun and Enjoyment

Did the young people involved in the project have fun, did they enjoy the project? How can this be measured?

Overcoming challenging situations Did unexpected problems or challenges arise in the project? If yes, what were the solutions? How did you deal with any potential conflicts or difficult situations? Did the project change after experiencing problems? Was this a negative or positive change?

Feedback and Evaluation

Were appropriate evaluation methods in place before the start of the project? Have these been used? Were they useful in assessing the success of the project? Can different ways of recording feedback be used?

If the project failed to reach targets and to actively engage participants, can this still be judged a success?

- Awareness of the challenges and obstacles of a project and what prevented the results to be met is a key element to recognising success
- Look at the positives achieved in the project rather than focusing on the negative. The targets were not reached but participants met new friends, interacted socially, confidence increased, new skills were learnt.
- Remember that the dynamics and parameters of a project change constantly and flexibility is very important to gain successful outcomes

'I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any'.

Mahatma Gandhi

The European Commission

established a network of SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation for the YOUTH programme, which provides young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

On the SALTO website you can find resources that can help you in creating successful youth projects. Have a look at the toolbox (www.salto-youth.net/toolbox) for methods, games and activities. You can also find a links list of organisations, campaigns, networks and other actors working in the cultural diversity field (www.salto-youth.net/diversitylinks).

Another resource you might find useful are the Training kits - thematic can help you in improving the quality of your projects and you can download them for free. Try the "Project Management" T-kit, or the soon to be published "Evaluation" T-kit. Go to www.youth-partnership.net and follow training, then publications, then T-kits. Also available in other languages.

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