

BE EVERYTHING BE LONG

Creating Intercultural Interaction
and Positive Narratives to Build
a New Sense of Belonging

— A collection of stories, best practices
and policy suggestions

NET-IDEA final conference, Botkyrka
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Foreword

On the second day of the NET-IDEA final conference in Botkyrka, Sweden, April 2024, all 60 participants engaged in a collaborative workshop to create this book. Over 3.5 hours, attendees were divided into themed working groups, such as youth engagement, anti-discrimination, and policy development. Each group produced diverse content reflecting their experiences and insights from the NET-IDEA project and beyond.

The methodology, termed “Collaborative Book Crowdsourcing,” emphasized flexibility, creativity, and collective effort. Each group had editors to guide the process and ensure the quality of content. This approach fostered a dynamic and inclusive dialogue on intercultural interactions and community building.

NET-IDEA’s motto, **“BE EVERYTHING. BELONG.”** is central to the book’s theme. It encapsulates the essence of fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity through intercultural dialogue and positive narratives. The book serves as a collection of best practices, suggestions, and personal stories, aiming to inspire professionals, policymakers, and activists worldwide.

The book is an excellent resource for anyone looking to enhance their intercultural competence or explore intercultural approaches, defined by the

Council of Europe as the ability to navigate complex intercultural settings effectively. This competence involves integrating skills, attitudes, abilities, and knowledge to enhance social cohesion and prevent conflicts.

The value of youth engagement and activism is also emphasized. The book discusses strategies for inclusive and effective youth participation, providing examples where youth collaboration led to significant community impacts.

Education, both formal and non-formal, is another critical focus. The book presents successful practices where public officers received training on diversity and inclusion, and highlights an annual art competition that promotes human rights through creativity.

Communication and media strategies are explored with contributions from youth, municipal representatives, and

civil society organizations. The importance of bridging the gap between youth and municipalities is underscored through innovative approaches.

Anti-rumours and anti-discrimination work are also key themes. The book offers practical steps and reflections on how to combat misinformation and discrimination, fostering a more inclusive society.

Policy development is another significant theme, focusing on creating inclusive policies through a bottom-up

approach. The book provides a step-by-step guide for engaging with policy development from an intercultural perspective, emphasizing collaboration, co-creation, and the inclusion of diverse voices.

In summary, this book is a testament to the collaborative spirit of the NET-IDEA project, aiming to build a new sense of belonging through intercultural interaction and positive narratives. It offers valuable insights and practical guidance for those committed to creating inclusive communities.

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About the book and its authors

On the second day of the NET-IDEA final conference in Botkyrka, April 17, 2024, a large portion of the day was dedicated to a collaborative effort involving all 60 participants in the creation of this book. The workshop, spanning approximately 3.5 hours, focused on harvesting and communicating ideas and experiences from the NET-IDEA project and beyond.

The objective was to produce a creative and educational booklet that would inspire professionals, policy-makers, and activists worldwide. Participants were divided into themed working groups, including youth engagement, anti-discrimination, and policy development. Each group was tasked with creating diverse content such as essays, interviews, and illustrations.

To ensure the quality of the content and maintain focus, each group selected one or two editors.

The editors played a crucial role in guiding the process and overseeing the completion of their group's contributions.

The final product, this PDF, was designed to integrate new ideas and perspectives continuously. This approach aimed to foster an inclusive and dynamic dialogue on intercultural interactions and community building, reflect-

ing the collaborative spirit and shared learnings of the NET-IDEA project.

The authors of this book comprised a diverse group, ranging from youth to adults, and included representatives from civil society, city administration, and the education sector.

All participants engaged on equal terms, immersing themselves wholeheartedly in the task with dedication and enthusiasm. While many had been involved in previous NET-IDEA project activities, for some, this was their first interaction with the project.

After the workshop concluded, the editing of the material commenced. Some texts were left untouched, others were edited for enhanced readability, and additional material from other work packages within the program was incorporated.

This supplementary content was added to enhance the understanding of the context and the NET-IDEA project's overall objectives.

Workshop Methodology description: Collaborative Book Crowdsourcing

Intention of the Workshop

Objective: Crowdsourcing a book in approximately 3.5 hours through a collaborative and creative process.

Purpose: To harvest, reflect, and communicate learnings, ideas, and experiences from the NET-IDEA project and beyond, resulting in an inspiring and educational piece for others.

Final Product

After the workshop, the content will be edited into a PDF available for download on all partner websites.

Target Audience

Professionals, policymakers, and activists in municipalities and civil society worldwide, seeking inspiration and knowledge on the topic.

Collaborative Process

Flexibility: Work in any configuration within the group. Emphasis on speed rather than perfection, with the goal to finish and present by the end of the workshop.

Editing Role: Each group selects one or two editors to ensure content quality, maintain focus, and adhere to time constraints. The editors' role: To support participants, check content quality, ensure timely completion, and present final group content.

Encouragement: Have fun and be creative.

Content Guidelines

Length: Each text should be no longer than 500 words.

Formats: Include various forms of content—how-to guides, essays, debate pieces, interviews, poems, to-do lists, letters, photos, and illustrations.

Language: Main language is English.

All content must be free for use in the book.

Working Groups

Participants choose one of the following groups to focus their contributions:

1. Youth Engagement and Activism
2. Formal and Non-Formal Education and Training
3. Communication and Media
4. Anti-Rumours
5. Anti-Discrimination Work
6. Policy Development

Thematic Focus

Content should relate to the NET-IDEA project and beyond and answer questions such as:

- How can we develop and use intercultural interactions and positive narratives to build a new sense of belonging?
- What are important learnings, best practices, or policy suggestions to share?
- What personal or professional stories are significant to the topic?

Additional Writing Prompts

- What does it mean to belong?
- Examples of intercultural interactions or positive narratives.
- How can we make society more inclusive?
- The importance of diversity in strengthening society.
- Personal experiences, lessons learned, and suggestions for future improvements.

Call to Action

- Choose your working group and editors.
- Reflect on what you want to write and share your unique perspectives and experiences.
- Collaborate within chosen groups, following the provided guidelines.



About the NET-IDEA project

The NET-IDEA Project, Network of European Towns for Interculturalism, Diversity, Equality & Anti-Discrimination, aimed to empower local authorities in the promotion of diversity, interculturalism, anti-discrimination and minority inclusion.

With cities experiencing constant change and increasing cultural diversity due to human mobility, it's crucial for governments to embrace and adapt to this diversity to address emerging inequalities and discrimination.

The project involved a transnational partnership among civil society organizations and 16 municipalities in 6 European countries, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Germany and Poland, funded by the EU-commission through the CERV Programme and supported by the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Program.

It provided municipal staff at very different levels and young activists with an opportunity to deepen transnational peer-to-peer cooperation and develop specific skills and effective practices to address challenges at the local level in the fields of intercultural competenc-

es, youth activism on anti-rumours and awareness-raising.

NET-IDEA has, finally, promoted a very positive and lasting cooperation that will keep promoting the design and dissemination of new narratives to combat discrimination, creating hence a more inclusive European society.

Activities included webinars, capacity-building, a community of practice for exchanging experiences, local workshops with youngsters, events/initiatives of awareness-raising and a youth summit involving many young activists from different countries.

Central to the project are awareness - raising high-impact public events focusing on self-identity and belonging, involving youth, and an international social media campaign **"BE EVERYTHING – BELONG"**.

Introduction to intercultural competence and approaches

The foundation of the NET-IDEA project is rooted in interculturality, a concept you will encounter frequently throughout this book. If you're not familiar with the term or wish to refresh your understanding, here is a brief introduction.

Intercultural competence, as defined by the Council of Europe, is the ability to effectively understand and navigate complex intercultural settings. It involves integrating skills, attitudes, abilities, and knowledge to act appropriately and intervene effectively in diverse contexts where cultural, socio-economic, ethnic, and other lines intersect. This competence is crucial for preventing intercultural conflicts that can undermine social cohesion.

According to the Council of Europe, intercultural approaches are characterized by three fundamental parameters:

Value Basis

Intercultural dialogue is grounded in the principles of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, which are universal and indivisible. The Council of Europe rejects the notion of a “clash of civilizations” and underscores the importance of cultural cooperation and dialogue for peace and international stability.

Transversal policy

The Council of Europe's policy for intercultural dialogue adopts a cross-sectoral, transversal approach that influences the agendas of nearly all policy domains and institutions within the organization. This approach ensures coherence and coordination across different areas.

Geographical Dimensions

The strategy encompasses three levels crucial for a coherent policy to promote intercultural dialogue: local, national, and international.

The Council of Europe emphasizes the importance of developing cultural competences in public services to facilitate mutual learning and improve integration policies and practices. Initiatives such as the Intercultural Cities Program, which all project partners are directly or indirectly connected to, exemplify this commitment. Overall, the

Council of Europe's approach to intercultural competence aims to foster a culture of mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation across different cultures and societies, thereby enhancing social cohesion and international stability.

Sources:

- <https://rm.coe.int/intercultural-competence-for-all/16808ce20c>
- https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/approaches_EN.asp
- <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/>





Youth engagement & activism

Thoughts on engaging and empowering youth: strategies for inclusive and effective youth participation

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“Does your city have youth protests in this time of polycrisis? Historical events that bear references to current movements? Use and create stories about changes that have already been made or can be made.”

“When creating actions and local activities, it must be considered that people are at different points in their journey and life. This way, we can make sure that we address different topics and meet youth where they are at a specific point in life. During actions and activities, we should check in with the prejudices and stereotypes youth face, give them the chance to reflect on them, break internalisation, and empower them to make them their own.”

“It is essential for any process to engage youth from the very beginning.”

“Make sure to engage with and include young people with disabilities.”

“What motivated me to become active was being a Scout. As a Scout, I learnt the basics of getting involved and helping out in the local community. I liked it and tried to implement what I learned in my everyday life. People with more experience sharing their practices is greatly appreciated.”

“The sense of belonging is an essential need for youth. Youth have different backgrounds, and in some cases they're from different countries. Many people share a desire to be part of a community and meet new people. All groups are different, and all participants in a group are different; therefore, it's crucial to analyse the needs of groups as well as individuals.”

“People should share stories about what is being done in their cities and the impact of these actions.”

“Show the needs of youth, what we have already done about them, and ideas for what we can do for our society.”

“Different countries define youth in different ways. The age range can be defined as 12 to 30 years, roughly speaking.”

“To be everything” means being free of the expectations of others, as well as yourself.”

“As a youth worker, I became engaged because I had to express myself using creativity and develop my relationship with other activists and people coming from different backgrounds. I think it is important to get to know and enter into dialogue with people with different backgrounds and cultures.”

“Make sure to have a youth engagement strategy in place. What can we do to make young people interested?”

Collected experiences on youth engagement

Thoughts and experiences through NET-IDEA and beyond, from Lublin, Poland

What we, youth, do for society, and what the impacts and effects are.

“Lublin is changing, and we managed to create strategies and concrete NGO practices that help us deal with the situation, the conflicts and differences in perspectives. It was inspiring and will help us to engage more people and create initiatives in schools and society in general. It is important to work on values and concepts early in the process.”

“During the Photo voice project, we didn't only take pictures. We learned to listen to each other and understand differences.”

“It was important that people got to know each other and started to build a community. Seeing the result of the Photo voice project was inspiring!”

“When we talked about problems, we also started talking about solutions and perspectives from other places.”

“It is easy to hate people, but much harder when you see a person, their face, their life.”

“For me, finding things that I could engage with wasn't that easy. Meeting someone who not only told me about opportunities, but also assured me and showed me that I can have an impact helped me a lot. This person was close to me, and they inspired me to join the Lublin youth space, “HEJ!”. The people working there gave me a chance to start.”



“Involve youth through collaboration with NGOs and during events. There's a need to promote opportunities the way youth prefer it, for youth, by youth is a helpful strategy. Keep the tone encouraging! Make sure to create safe spaces for youth to express themselves.”

“Some people have very negative perception of other places, like Sweden. So it was nice to meet people from there. Sometimes people have negative perceptions about Ukrainians, Jews, Muslims, or people in the LGBTQ community.”

“The role of schools and teachers is critical. It is not only the place and people for learning and facts, but also the place for fostering values. Some schools and teachers that are not open to other experiences and cultures.”

“Working with participants from Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine was inspiring, but also challenging. The war and conflict were present, but through the process we created a safe space for dialogue across cultures and experiences. In this space, we managed to talk about difficult things.”

“I was invited by my teacher to participate in a training program for youth leaders. More than 100 teenagers, young people under 20, learnt about leadership and activism. The training promoted NGOs, and other organisations and councils which provide an opportunity to engage in taking decisions about youth and city life. I now understand that I can do something for myself, my friends, and the city I live in, which will make it more open to me and enjoyable to live in.”

“After seeing the photos, we started to speak about things we have in common. Simple things like bread from different places. We also made objects that we all can relate to, like kitchen appliances and chopping boards decorated with stuff we would cut on it: veggies and other things.”



Good practice:

Empowering youth through comics

Seeking to enhance the engagement and activism of youth in the Spanish cities involved in the NET-IDEA Project (Castellón de la Plana, Bilbao, San Sebastián, Tenerife, and Barcelona) from a local perspective, each city based its efforts on the previous campaign of the Spanish Intercultural Network (RECI), “A necessary trip” and focused on the key concepts of belonging, identity, and diversity.

The strategy decided upon was to design different participatory sessions with young people to reflect on these key concepts and create a local awareness campaign that gathered their ideas and concerns, all through illustration.

After completing this creative process in all five cities, a common conclusion shared with all NET-IDEA Project partners was that illustration is a powerful tool and an effective way of gathering the ideas and impressions raised during the various reflective spaces with the young participants.

A common challenge when working with youth is promoting engagement. In this sense, the experience of the Spanish NET-IDEA cities shows that participatory spaces centred around illustration to collect and convey the ideas of young participants can be a very interesting way to promote and maintain engagement.

Here are some examples of the final product of three of the five Spanish cities involved: Castellón de la Plana, Bilbao and Tenerife.

Good practice:

Empowering youth engagement through illustration

To enhance youth engagement and activism in the Spanish cities involved in the NET-IDEA Project (Castellón de la Plana, Bilbao, San Sebastián, Tenerife, and Barcelona), each city built upon the previous campaign of the Spanish Intercultural Network (RECI), titled “A Necessary Trip.” This campaign emphasized key concepts such as belonging, identity, and diversity.

The chosen strategy was to design various participatory sessions with young people, allowing them to reflect on these concepts and create a local awareness campaign that captured their ideas and concerns through illustration.

Upon completing this creative process in all five cities, it was evident to all NET-IDEA project partners that illustration is a powerful tool for capturing the ideas and impressions expressed during the reflective sessions with young participants.

A common challenge when working with youth is promoting engagement. The experience of the Spanish NET-IDEA cities demonstrates that participatory spaces centered around illustration are an effective way to gather and convey young people’s ideas, thereby maintaining and enhancing their engagement.

Here are some examples of the final products from three of the five Spanish cities involved: Castellón de la Plana, Bilbao, and Tenerife.

Read the Tenerife fanzine here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hdXmx3WLpnZiAwYB-sehUaMUr7I-O66Mj/view?usp=share_link





Advice for cities working with and engaging with youth

Initiating collaboration between youth and cities

- Youth should take part in making decisions, especially in situations that could make an impact on their lives and activities.
- Ensure that activities and projects involve youth from the start. Prioritise co-creation and participation! This way you can ensure a very high engagement.
- Ensure that the project is aligned with the youths' visions, needs, and reality.
- Emphasise the use of creative, non-formal methodologies.

Building trust and support

- Continually work to build trust between the municipality and the youth.
- Municipalities should support youth in realising their activities, not only through financial support, but also support from experienced coaches.
- Emphasise that the youths' participation is voluntary. Work with flexible participation tools and flexible request to participate.
- When wanting to work with youth, consider caring for the mental health of the participants. We cannot only ask for engagement without educating about and preventing burnout and stress.
- Create a safe place to let youngsters express themselves throughout the whole process.

Youth centred approach

- Work together with the youth to imagine and stake out the concrete output of a project or initiative.
- When approaching youth, consider what is in it for them. For example, certificates, opportunities, maybe even a snack in a youth centre during a session. Make their engagement count and give them appreciation back.
- Make sure to activate lesser engaged and underrepresented groups within the youth, e.g. youth with disabilities.

Sustaining momentum

- Actions and the momentum built up by joint work and commitment should not just frizz out after the end of a project. Be careful to not have people engage and then leave them hanging after the project.
- There is not always the need to create a new place for youth engagement; we can use spaces where youth already engage, e.g., schools. Instead of making them come to you as facilitators, go to the spaces where young people already are instead of creating new ones. Empowering that which already exists.

Transparent communication

- Realistically and honestly explain actions and goals without compromising on motivation. Make sure to not instil any false expectations.
- Create a communication plan. Use social media for activation and promotion without assigning excessive importance to it. It cannot be the only and most important channel. Explore having the communication work done by the youth. Engage youth in television and radio appearances to increase visibility and participation.
- Assure the participants that their work has an impact, e.g., by showing their work in magazines to make it visible.

Engagement enhancement

- Know and use the channels and websites that young people use for posting and call to action. Ask youngsters where to find them.
- Set up a page to explain events, goals etc. The municipality website can be used for this. Use images that speak to youth. Each activity needs to be attractive! Collaboration with famous people can help with the outreach.

Read more here:

- <https://baobab.lublin.pl>
- <https://www.facebook.com/LublinisYOUth>
- <https://erlangen.de>
- <https://www.fanzingo.se>
- <https://tenerifejoenyeduca.com/cij>
- <https://portalegiovani.comune.re.it>
- <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/bcnacciointercultural/es/quienes-somos/programa-bcn-interculturalidad-progbi>
- <https://centrum.fm>
- <https://www.facebook.com/hej.peowiakow11>
- <https://www.facebook.com/LublinisYOUth>
- <https://erlangen.de>
- <https://www.fanzingo.se>
- <https://tenerifejoenyeduca.com/cij>
- <https://portalegiovani.comune.re.it> <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/bcnacciointercultural/es/quienes-somos/programa-bcn-interculturalidad-progbi>,
- <https://centrum.fm>

Case from Lublin: Homo Faber Association in Lublin has created an Intercultural School of Leadership for migrants. They teach how to create and run a project, from planning to realisation. Youth are also involved in this learning process by receiving guidance from mentors and acquiring greater courage at the outset.





Formal and non-formal education and training

Building a Sense of Belonging: Integrating Interculturalism in Formal and Informal Education

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How do we build a new sense of belonging within education in formal and informal arenas? Why should interculturalism be part of formal and non-formal training and education? To create inclusion, we must address basic human needs and rights. Achieving a sense of belonging requires ensuring housing, access to public services like health and education, and proper documentation. Often, people encounter barriers in meeting these needs because public officers, unaware of their own prejudices and non-inclusive behaviours, may impose additional challenges in accessing services or exhibit micro-discrimination in their communication.

To establish a common language of inclusion, public officers must be trained to become more self-aware and better equipped to manage diversity using an intercultural approach. The evolving political landscape in Europe is increasing the number of immigrants awaiting entry and welcome. How we receive immigrants is crucial, and we are developing a plan to ensure everyone gets a good start. Training staff to

adopt an intercultural perspective is key, encompassing teachers, facilitators, youth workers, and trainers.

Pedagogical methods should be tailored to each context and audience, with educators prepared to understand the needs of their groups and ensure everyone feels included in a training or classroom setting. Everyone should feel they can represent themselves

authentically, be honest, and feel safe. We must cultivate a culture that promotes these values.

Media reports on various crises provoke fear, triggering our fight-or-flight response. We are programmed to react with fear to anything different, and when we hear speeches linking migrants to danger, these connections become ingrained in our brains. To counteract this, we can start sharing positive news to trick the brain into stopping its fight-or-flight response and starting to act constructively.

We need to develop power awareness—understanding how, in our roles of majority and institutional authority, we are responsible for wielding the power derived from age, education, professional roles, and personal influence. Effective communication re-

quires recognizing that people might fear telling the truth or expressing their opinions due to the power we hold. We should use our power in a way that makes people feel safe, fostering communication where power dynamics are not the focal issue. We should organize democratic spaces for open discussions, ensuring that people do not feel like victims but rather as participants working together. Whether as social workers, public servants, or teachers, our roles are to guide and educate, using our power to promote humanity's progress towards the future. We must be mindful of how we present ourselves and take responsibility for how our actions are perceived.

Coming back full-circle to the main idea, how to develop non-formal and be aware of informal education in the classroom.



Good practice:

Vila Verde's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion Training

After participating in NET-IDEA, the city of Vila Verde in Portugal decided to adapt the training content and deliver it to their staff. Previously, they hadn't done this due to a lack of dedicated budget, but now they have all the tools needed to do it autonomously. They are now committed to continuing this training with local partners, such as teachers and youth workers.

Variations in formal education

It's important to note that formal education varies between countries. The level of autonomy schools have and the influence cities hold in education differ as well.

Importance of informal education

Informal education occurs both inside and outside school settings. Establishing partnerships between organizations like schools, NGOs, associations, community informal groups (such as youth groups), private companies, and public administration is crucial. Everyone should be prepared to act according to intercultural principles in their daily informal interactions.

Collaborating towards common goals

Recognizing the power of informal arenas, it's vital to collaborate towards common goals. Utilizing peers who can inspire and act as agents of change is essential. Encourage people to be openly supportive and help younger students. Creating a code of conduct together within organizations makes everyone feel accountable for keeping a safe and inclusive environment.

Profile of trainers

Delivering training on diversity, inclusion, and interculturalism requires special skills and preparation from trainers. They should possess not only academic knowledge but also practical experience, understanding the realities faced by minority groups and individuals encountering discrimination. It's crucial to involve people from these groups in the training process. Trainers should engage in deep self-reflection and be capable of fostering safe spaces to encourage this practice in others. Personal stories and experiences should be used to guide us toward the future, serving as inspiration and avoiding the prescriptive approach of telling people "what to do".



Good practice:

Training Portuguese Public Officers on Roma Inclusion

While delivering training on diversity and inclusion for Portuguese public officers, several ideas and debates arose regarding Roma people. Recognizing this as a crucial concern for the participants, a special session was prepared to address and reflect on their ideas and concerns about this community.

Introduction session

An introductory session was organized to set the stage for a more comprehensive session with a Roma mediator. This mediator provided information and training about Roma traditions and history. The introductory session was crucial in helping participants prepare their questions in a more inclusive and non-judgmental manner.

Engaging with the Roma mediator

With the groundwork laid, the participants were able to pose their questions to the Roma mediator without causing offence. This approach allowed them to learn not only about Roma culture, but also how to reflect on their own prejudices.

Learning Outcomes

The training emphasized the importance of framing questions that are non-judgmental, using non-formal education methods. This dual focus helped participants gain a more in-depth understanding of the Roma community while fostering a more inclusive mindset.

Training methodologies: Impact and Importance

The methods we choose can produce varying results in learners. The role of learners shifts with different methods, which can either reinforce or change existing power dynamics. In schools, teachers may see their role as administrative and be unaware of their power. If the information transmission does not reflect their needs and interests, young people may feel uncomfortable bringing their own knowledge and may not engage fully if the information transmission does not reflect their needs and interests.

Informal and non-formal education: Why do they matter?

Non-formal education methods are based on the principle that we learn more effectively through interactive experiences with others than through passive reception (hearing, seeing, or reading). This approach is particularly relevant for promoting reflection on behaviours and values, which are often acquired informally throughout life. In non-formal learning settings, everyone's greatest educator is "the others". Each person is both a learner and an active agent in their learning process. These environments need to be interactive and have actions that encourage participation, learning, and knowledge exchange.

Differences Between Informal and Non-Formal Learning

Non-formal learning combines the clear pedagogical intentions of formal education (like transmissive training in schools) with the unprogrammed nature of informal education. Informal education occurs throughout life, helping people socialize, acculturate, and develop habits, attitudes, behaviours, ways of thinking, and language use according to the values and beliefs of their social groups, ethnicity, gender, and social environment. Often, we are unaware of the messages we transmit through our behaviour. Non-formal education, conducted in educational environments like training or awareness-raising sessions, has clear pedagogical intentions. It is mediated by an educator who organizes activities to mimic informal socialization processes. This is why informal learning emphasizes group dynamics, games, interactive activities, and peer debates.

Integration of methodologies

These methodologies are not mutually exclusive. In formal contexts, educators can promote non-formal moments, and informal learning is always present in our lives. For example, we learn from both teachers and peers how to behave through observation and interaction. Effective training methodologies must recognize the importance of both non-formal and informal education in fostering an inclusive and engaging learning environment. By integrating these approaches, educators can better meet the diverse needs and interests of their learners.



INFORMAL EDUCATION

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

FORMAL EDUCATION

CONTEXTS	Family life (home); informal environments (community, friends, etc.)	Training room, informal environments such as community centres, online etc.	Classroom Training room Online
PEDAGOGICAL GOALS	Not stipulated Not always intentional	Clearly stipulated Intentional	Clearly stipulated Intentional
PRIVILEGED LEARNING METHODS	Observation, dialogue, debate of ideas	Group dynamics, games, interactive activities, debating ideas, brainstorming, sharing of experiences, critical reflection after observation, simulations, movies and readings, study visits, etc.	Knowledge transfer, Seminar, Transmissive lessons
EDUCATOR'S ROLE	Role model (through example); Critical friends (feedback) that can be judgmental (because it is an education carried out tailored to our values of what is "right" and "wrong".)	Facilitator of the session / Mediator between the participants and knowledge; Promoting critical reflection and constructive debate; Critical friend (feedback); avoids "giving opinion" and judging behaviours	Knowledge transmitter / specialist, Teacher, Trainer
EVALUATION	Does not exist in a formal way, but we receive informal feedback throughout our socialization about our compliance with social norms and expectations	Informative (performed through the observation of the educator, registration of interactions and debate between people, etc.). There are no grades or formal approval only evaluation of the session itself by the participants	Quantitative (concrete evaluation moments - tests, homework) with grades or similar

Fostering inclusive education through communication and community involvement

Effective communication in education is vital for creating a welcoming environment. It's not just about words; it's also about understanding each other's experiences and perspectives. We need to be aware of the power we have in our roles and use it to make everyone feel safe to express themselves.

By involving the community in education, we can create a more inclusive atmosphere. Non-formal education methods, such as interactive activities and active listening, help us connect with students in meaningful ways and promote a sense of belonging for everyone involved.

Communication is key

In discussing education and communication, various approaches can enhance the learning environment. Communication goes beyond language; it involves recognizing every individual's unique experiences and expressions as valuable resources. You don't need to know the meaning of intercultural perspective, you need to feel it and be aware of it.

We must cultivate awareness of power dynamics—how do we, in our roles of authority and institutional influence, recognize our responsibility to manage the power we possess due to factors like age, education, professional standing, and personal influence? Effective communication requires us to acknowledge that individuals may fear speaking truthfully, being themselves,

or expressing their opinions due to the power we hold.

Can we use our power in a way that promotes safety and equality in communication, where power dynamics don't overshadow the discussion, thereby democratizing our approach? People should not feel as though they are victims; instead, we should stand and work together, recognizing that roles like social worker and teacher are meant to guide and teach. The power we hold should be used to bring people closer and help them move forward. It is therefore important to be aware of how we present ourselves and take responsibility for our actions.

Come back to the main idea of how to develop informal education.

Returning to the main idea of developing informal education, it's crucial to remember that the school belongs to the village, not just the teachers. By inviting organizations and municipal initiatives into the school, we can foster a deeper connection and create a better environment for developing self-awareness and celebrating diversity as a positive aspect of our societal approach.



Good practice:

Head Teacher Empowers Local Youth with School Access

In Loures, Portugal, a head teacher faced challenges with vandalism and break-ins at a school located in a remote, disadvantaged neighbourhood. Concerned about the safety and security of the school, the head teacher consulted several local NGOs and conducted a participatory assessment to understand the root causes of these issues.

The assessment revealed that the youngsters responsible for the vandalism had negative experiences with the school and saw it as an inaccessible space. Despite the school having a football field they wanted to use, the closed gates prevented them from accessing it, leading to frustration and vandalism.

Community-driven solution

To address the problem, the head teacher provided an extra set of keys to the youngsters and invited them to use the school facilities during off-school hours. Together, they established common rules for using the space, transforming the school into a shared community resource rather than a restricted area.

Building community belonging

This initiative improved community relations and fostered a sense of belonging among the youth. The head teacher realized that the school should be a community space, not just for teachers and students.

Embracing non-formal education

This approach highlights the potential of non-formal education, which focuses on creating a different dynamic between students and educators. Active activities, games, art, non-violent discussions, and active listening can establish a secure space for self-expression and experiential learning. This method emphasizes overcoming boundaries and enhancing the student-teacher relationship, promoting a more inclusive and engaging educational environment.





Good practice:

Non-Violent Debate in School - Innovative Youth Participation Project

In Turin, Italy, a youth participation project brought together youth facilitators and high school students for five meetings focused on non-formal activities. These included games, group work, and training in non-violent debate. This initiative fostered an environment of equality, open-mindedness, and fun, introducing a new way to learn and interact within education.

The project's emphasis was on feelings, personal experiences, and active listening. Students were encouraged to put themselves in others' shoes, a significant shift from the usual day-to-day communication. This approach helped them develop empathy and a more in-depth understanding of different perspectives.

Beyond verbal communication

People often rely on verbal language for communication, but it's not the only way to connect. When interacting with those who don't share a common language, body language becomes crucial for mutual understanding. Learning settings can incorporate diverse communication forms to ensure inclusivity and distribute power more evenly.

The power of intercultural communication

Various types of languages, including dance, theatre, and visual art, can effectively convey concepts. These forms of intercultural communication are more universal than verbal language and help bridge cultural divides. The project highlighted the importance of seeing each person's unique experiences and expressions as valuable resources.

Embracing an intercultural perspective

Understanding intercultural perspectives goes beyond knowing the terminology; it involves feeling and being aware of different experiences. This project demonstrated how inclusive, non-violent, and diverse communication methods can transform educational experiences and foster a more empathetic and connected community.



Good practice:

Annual art competition: Promoting human rights through creativity

In Donostia, Spain, the municipality organizes an annual painting and arts competition that engages schools and organizations working with young people. This event serves as a platform for youth to express their creativity and reflect on important societal issues.

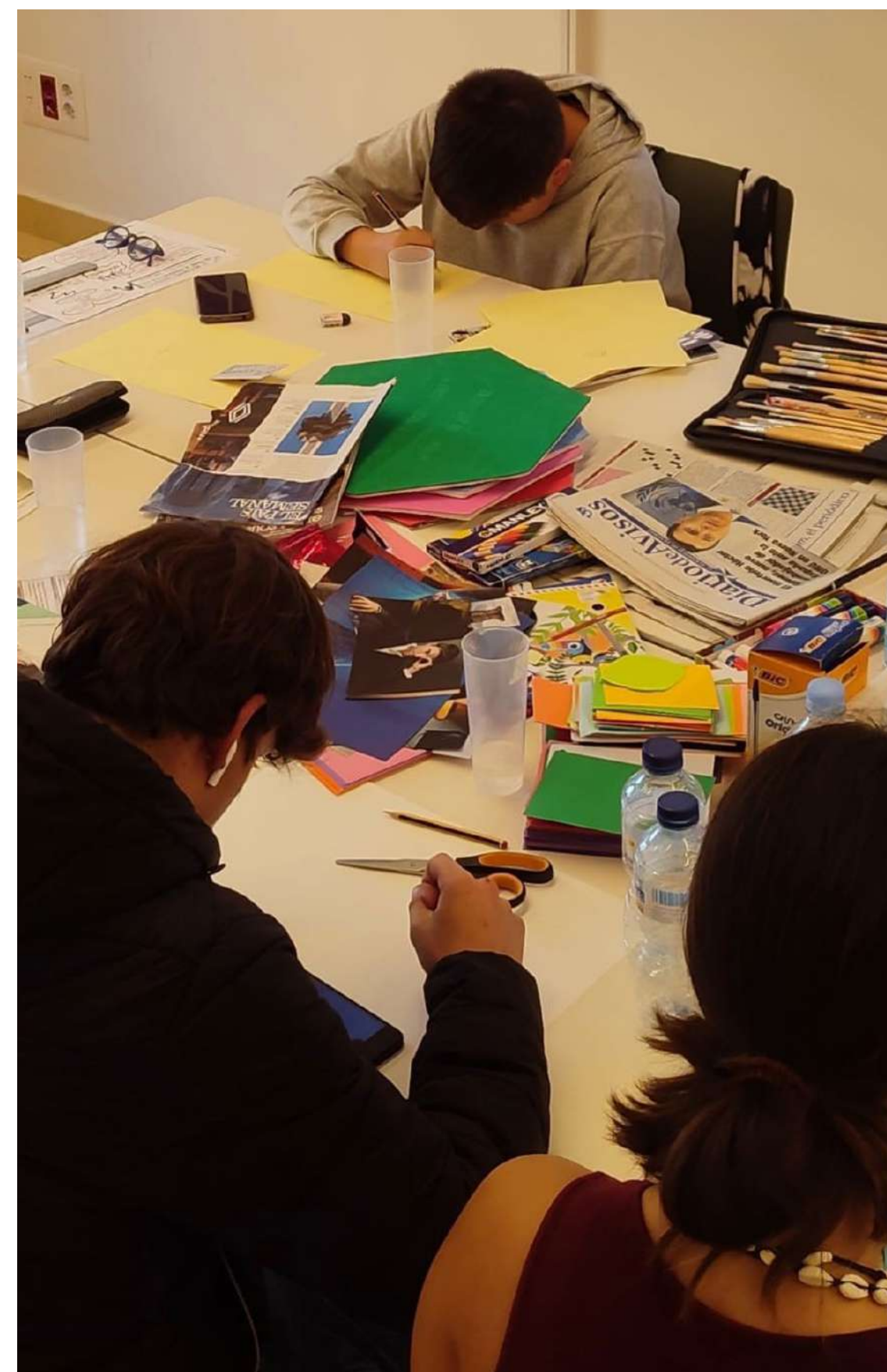
Each year, the competition features different topics related to human rights, such as interculturalism. These themes encourage youngsters to think about and discuss critical issues, which they then represent through their artwork. The competition is divided into various age groups, ensuring inclusive participation.

Recognizing and celebrating talent

A panel of experts evaluates the submitted artworks, selecting the best pieces for awards. The winning entries are not only honoured with prizes but are also displayed in a public exhibition. Additionally, these artworks are compiled into a booklet that is distributed throughout the city, spreading the messages and creativity of the youth.

The power of non-verbal communication and bridging cultural divides

Participants are reminded of the power and impact of communication. Through their works they can convey kindness, respect, and humility, creating a safe and welcoming environment that fosters open dialogue and reduces defensive reactions. The competition highlights the need for communication methods that help bridge cultural divides and bring people together. By promoting an inclusive approach to expressing ideas and emotions, the event aims to create a sense of community and mutual understanding among participants.



Chapter Conclusions: A Strategic View on Education

Creating a strategic educational framework involves integrating formal and informal education, fostering effective communication, being aware of power dynamics, and building a sense of belonging. By working together and adopting inclusive practices, we can create a welcoming educational environment that empowers all participants.

A comprehensive educational framework must include both formal and informal strategies.

Education is not confined to the classroom; it should integrate in-school education with out-of-school experiences. This involves interacting with external organizations and leveraging informal settings.

Collaboration and shared goals are essential to create a more meaningful learning environment.

Key Features for Effective Education

- **Peer Inspiration:** Peers can inspire and guide one another, creating a supportive and dynamic learning environment.
- **Collaborative code of conduct:** A code of conduct should be developed collaboratively with all participants in the educational process to ensure mutual respect and understanding.
- **Learning from personal experiences:** Sharing personal stories can enhance the educational framework, fostering deeper connections and learning from real-life experiences.

Policies and Best Practices

Adopting educational policies and best practices is crucial. This includes training teachers in intercultural perspectives and non-violent communication strategies to provide a well-rounded educational approach.

Communication Beyond Words

Effective communication goes beyond verbal language. Each person should be seen as a valuable resource with unique experiences and expressions. Understanding an intercultural perspective is less about knowing and more about feeling and being aware of it, or exploring it through arts, sports, music, and dance.

Awareness of power dynamics

Individuals in positions of power, whether by age, education, or professional role, must be mindful of their responsibility.

Communication should be conducted in a manner that makes people feel safe to express their opinions, even when challenging authority. Democratic classrooms and open dialogues are essential tools for this purpose.

Adapting to political changes and migration

In response to political changes and the influx of migrants, adopting an intercultural perspective and developing communication strategies beyond words is vital. Together, we can create an inclusive and empathetic environment where everyone feels part of the educational community.

Building a sense of belonging and common identity

Young people should have an active voice in community building. The municipality's art competition on thematic topics for schools is a prime example. This initiative boosts students' self-esteem and empowers the project with municipal support. Belonging can be exhausting due to crises, wars, climate change, and high crime rates. It's important to recognize our different priorities and concerns to avoid misinterpretation and insensitivity. While belonging requires effort, making it the norm is essential for a supportive and inclusive community.





Communication & media

Bridging the gap between youth and municipality

AUTHORS: Claudia Emmanuel Laredo, Eva Calado, Kelechi Anochiam, Luis Lineo, María Limonge Seguer, Vítor Latourrette Marques, Zanyar Adami

We believe that, to create meaningful change in society, we need to start with giving power and voice to the youth. Young people have an innovative perspective about the issues, they have the digital tools and skills to get the message across, and they are the future (as well as the present!). To do so, we should start by bridging the gap between the community and the municipalities.

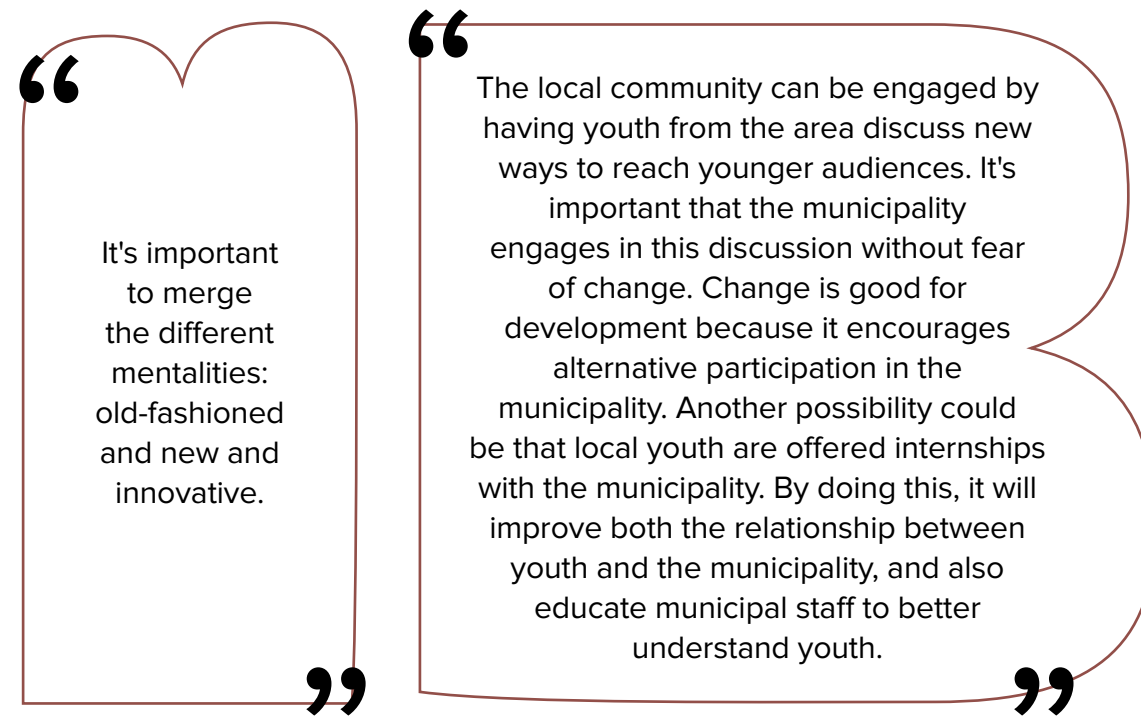
When it comes to the needs of youngsters, the municipalities are often very isolated and alienated from the community.

It's hard for people in power positions to give up power and the need to control, but that's what might get them and

the community what they need: a horizontal distribution of power.

We gathered a group of people who work with interculturality in their daily work lives to give you their perspective on how to approach (and solve!) this problem.

The youth perspective



The municipality perspective

From a communication and media point of view, what does “Be Everything Belong” mean?

- It is essential to include communication and a common conceptual framework from the start of the project.
- Involve all relevant parties in the development of the conceptual framework.
- Make sure all parties have sufficient knowledge about communication.
- Make sure to build a foundation of trust between all involved parties.
- Create new narratives with the help of new tools.
- Dare to be innovative.
- Consider experimenting with reversed roles among the participants. Share the communication power among the parties. Make sure your messages are catchy. Put the focus on generating curiosity.

A few things to keep in mind:

City officers need to have the tools to communicate and connect with the youngsters and the community. Keep in mind that civil society organisations often have better access to specific target groups and use innovative solutions before municipalities do, and that they have often tried these tools to engage with the community. Civil society organisations are representative of the community and youth

because they work together daily. This means they will be able to anticipate needs and better respond to these needs.

In an era where young individuals across various nations are increasingly inclined to emigrate, driven not only by the appeal of new opportunities but also by the prospect of securing better-paying jobs.

It is important that both national governments and local municipalities devise proactive strategies and collaborations aimed at creating conditions for youth to stay. It is essential to recognize that today's youth are exceptionally skilled, and should this mass migration occur, it will yield grave repercussions in both social and economic spheres.

The departure of such a highly qualified workforce would undoubtedly lead to a negative influence on the labour market, precipitating profound adverse effects on the economies of respective nations.

It is therefore urgent that there be a political vision aimed at youth, a monitoring, and integration policy to solve this dilemma.

**BE EVERYTHING
BELONG**

The civil society perspective

- “We view ourselves as a link between youth (and other citizens and vulnerable groups) in society and the official and unofficial powers in society, such as the municipalities, the state, agencies, companies, and so on.
- We have identified the needs, problems, and challenges in society and have developed responses to these needs.
- We work closely with the citizens and listen to their voices and work to reinforce their points of view and even come up with solutions to different issues.
- We have developed and tested (innovated) different ideas, methods, and approaches that serve as solutions to societal challenges.
- We act as process leaders, mediators, facilitators of the meeting be-

tween citizens, young people and the municipalities, agencies and other authorities.

From young people

We need their trust, confidence and their time and ideas. We need them to feel like the experts they are and like equal partners.

From the municipalities (and others in power): we need their trust, long-term support and openness. We need them to be brave, open to failure, and to learn from the process.

We need them to trust the process, to try to hack the rigid systems, and to be prepared to change the way they work, the structures, and themselves. We need them to work together, to take us seriously, and to treat us as equal partners.”

The communications expert perspective

“

It would be very impactful to have youth take ownership of a social media channel that represents the municipality. This should start by opening the channel of communication between the local youth and the municipalities' decision makers.

Maybe “Reversed Townhall” could be a starting point.

To further strengthen communication between youth and the municipality, a mediator would be helpful.

It is important to choose a mediator that speaks both “languages”, and who can understand and relate to both perspectives. This mediator needs to have great diplomatic and communication skills.

”





Antirumours work

Young Leaders to Fight rumours and prejudice

AUTHORS: Armando Bosell, Benedetta Kumih Yeboah, Kelvin Kamara, Luiz Rodrigues, Maria Ziu, Sophie Njie, Suden Akcay, Victor Moura Guimarães, Vitor Marques

What is a rumour?

For us, and most people would agree, rumours are those wild stories that spread rapidly, especially in schools or online. They often consist of unverified information passed from person to person. While some rumours may contain a grain of truth, many are simply fabricated or exaggerated.

What harm can rumours cause?

Rumours can cause drama, hurt feelings, and even damage someone's reputation. Therefore, it's crucial to be cautious about what we believe and share.

What is anti-rumours work?

Anti-rumours work involves efforts by

individuals, organizations, or governments to prevent the spread of harmful or misleading information. This work typically includes fact-checking, providing accurate information, and promoting critical thinking skills to help people identify and reject false information.

It also involves educating the public about the dangers of rumours and the importance of verifying information before sharing it.

How to participate in anti-rumours work

Verify information: Before sharing anything, ensure its accuracy by checking reliable sources to confirm the facts.

Promote critical thinking: Encourage others to question information and think critically before believing or spreading rumours.

Educate others: Share information about the consequences of rumours and how they can harm individuals and communities.

Communicate openly: Foster a culture where people feel comfortable discussing rumours and addressing concerns openly.

Lead by example: Avoid spreading rumours yourself. Instead, model responsible behaviour by verifying information before sharing it.

Build trust: Promote transparency and honesty in communication to foster trust within communities.



Antirumours Youth Summit 2023: Young Leaders to Fight rumours and prejudice

The Antirumours Youth Summit 2023, which took place in Lublin from October 6 to 8, gathered young leaders from across Europe to tackle the issue of rumours and misinformation. The summit aimed to give youth tools and strategies to combat hate speech and promote inclusive societies. The summit sessions were a combination of workshops, discussions, and cooperative activities designed to create a strong framework for the Anti-Rumours Strategy.

Participants were introduced to the Antirumours Strategy, learning to identify and address common rumours and how they affect society. Through games and collaborative exercises, they explored key concepts and goals and gained a more in-depth understanding of how to implement effective anti-rumour strategies. This process showed how important it is to work together to stop rumours and how important it is to work together.

Drafting the youth manifesto for rumour-free coexistence

equipped them with strategies to deal with rumours.

The Youth Manifesto, which advocates for rumour-free coexistence, was one of the key outcomes of the summit. Through cooperative creation methods, participants identified problems related to rumours and proposed ways to reduce their impact. The effort resulted in a draft manifesto that emphasized the youth's commitment to promoting education, critical thinking, and transparency.

Exploring the dynamics of hate speech and rumours

The summit focused on understanding how hate speech and rumours work. Participants talked about why rumours spread and how dangerous they might be. By engaging in creative exercises, like making collages from newspapers and magazines, they generated impactful visual responses to raise awareness and combat rumours in their communities.

This hands-on approach deepened the participants' understanding and

The summit also focused on generating impact through the manifesto. Participants were introduced to the concepts of Theory of Change, including Impact and youth-led actions, using a specialized canvas to develop action-

able plans, The Impact Action canvas. They presented various activities, linking them to the manifesto and demonstrating effective dissemination strategies.

This process inspired them to continue making and measuring impact through youth-led projects.

Evaluating the potential for a European Youth Anti-Rumours Network (EYAN)

Furthermore, the potential for a European Youth Anti-Rumours Network (EYAN) was evaluated. Participants reflected on what they learned from the summit and discussed how to stay connected.

Group discussions led to concrete ideas for the network's creation and sustainability, with a focus on long-term engagement and resource identification.

Concluding the summit with reflections and future steps

The summit concluded with a wrap-up session that reviewed the event's key learnings and achievements. Future steps were introduced, and participants shared a photo report of the event, reflecting on their experiences and commitments. This final session provided a collective reflection and celebration of the summit's impact.

Building a foundation for future anti-rumour initiatives

The Antirumours Youth Summit 2023 was a key event that gave young leaders the knowledge and tools they needed to challenge misinformation and build inclusive communities. The outcomes promise a strong foundation for future anti-rumour initiatives across Europe.



MANIFESTO

YOUTH FOR DIVERSITY AND CRITICAL THINKING

Considering that:

- **WE VALUE DIVERSITY**
as a key element for the development of our societies and a fundamental pillar on which to build our future.
- **WE REJECT STEREOTYPES**
prejudices and discrimination that cloud our coexistence.
- **WE ACCEPT OUR OWN RESPONSIBILITY**
and encourage other individuals, institutions, media and other key players to understand the harm caused by rumors and misinformation.
- **WE REFUSE TO BE SWAYED**
by unfounded narratives that facilitate discriminatory situations against diverse groups and communities based on ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation or any other diversity.

**BE EVERYTHING
BELONG**

MANIFESTO

YOUTH FOR DIVERSITY AND CRITICAL THINKING

We the participants of the Anti-Rumours Youth Summit 2023 held in Lublin on October 6, 7 and 8, 2023, commit to:

YOUTH IS THE FUTURE AND TOGETHER WE CAN CHANGE THE RULES!

THE EUROPEAN YOUTH ANTIRUMOURS NETWORK (EYAN)

1 ACT FOR CHANGE
Participation, Advocacy, Promote Inclusion

2 EDUCATE AND EMPOWER
Attitudes, Empathy, Critical Thinking

3 BUILD INTERCULTURAL BRIDGES
Respect, Dialogue, Cooperation

4 BREAK THE CHAIN OF RUMOURS
Understanding, Debate, Transparency

The Manifesto of European Anti-Rumours Youngsters has been elaborated as main output of the Youth Summit organised in October 2023 in Lublin within the Project NET-IDEA: Network of European Towns for Interculturalism, Diversity, Equality & Anti-Discrimination, funded by the European Commission / CERV Programme





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Youth-led Impact-Action Canvas

This Canvas is designed to help you create and organise impactful actions to ignite change in your community or among specific target groups. The canvas can be used to create small or large-scale impactful actions to educate, engage and empower people and organisations. Each impact-action consists of a set of actions and messages, and is realised through working together towards common impact-goals. The canvas is designed to champion social and environmental justice.

Name of the impact-action:

Date:

Designed by:

Version:

Target group

Define the target groups of the impact-action

- Who is the impact-action for?
- What are the primary and secondary target groups of the impact-action?
- Who participates in the activities? What are their motivations to participate? (Primary target group)

Activities

Define the main activities of the impact-action

- What are the internal and external activities of the planning, launching, outreach and closing phases of the impact-action? (Workshops, meetings, campaigns, trainings, events, press releases, evaluations etc.)
- Who is responsible for what?

Collaboration

Map organisations and people that might help strengthen the impact-action

- How could collaboration strengthen the impact-action?
- How can potential partners get and stay engaged? What's in it for them?

The team

Identify the people willing to make this happen

- Who are the team members? What does everyone bring to the table?
- What is everyone's motivation and availability?
- What skills are missing? Who else needs to be on the team?
- How can the team members best work together?

Outcome & Impact

Define the intermediate and long-term change ignited by the impact-action

- What do you want the target groups, primarily the participants, to understand, learn, or feel empowered to do? (E.g.: Share their stories, work for a cause, change behaviour...)
- Outcome (intermediate): How will the impact-action change someone's life for the better?
- Impact (long term): How will the impact-action contribute to changing cultures and systems?
- How will the team know if the impact-action has been successful?

Message

Define the main message(s) of the impact-action

- What is the main message(s) to be shared through the impact-action with the respective target groups/personas?
- What is the call-to-action?
- How can others easily share the message further?

Opportunities & Risks

Identify opportunities and risks throughout the impact-action

From immediate through hidden opportunities and risks: team members and participants' well-being and safety, media attention etc.

Resources

Define the resources needed to make the impact-action happen

Team, collaboration, location/space, grants, sponsorship, volunteering, in-kind etc.

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Beta, version 1.1, 2023
Work inquiries and feedback are welcome! www.thegoodtribe.com



Youth-led Impact-Action Canvas

Timeline & Milestones

Name of the impact-action:

Date:

Designed by:

Version:

Timeline & Milestones

Based on the Youth-led Impact Action Canvas, what are the most significant milestones that the team will accomplish within this and the coming years?



2023

2024

2025

Ideas & Questions

What are small and big ideas - or questions that you need to answer to move forward?

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Anti-discrimination work

Overcoming discrimination: strategies for systemic change and individual actions

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Discrimination is unfair treatment of people due to their belonging to a certain category. The work with anti-discrimination is multifaceted and involves changing personal attitudes in individuals as well as working for systemic change. One of the main challenges entails forcing powers who are supposed to protect against discrimination, but are instead discriminating, to change their ways.

Anti-discrimination requires active work with values in organisations, as well as tools for measuring discrimination and installing measures against discrimination. Such tools include legal tools, access to justice, and activism. Working against discrimination also requires safe meeting places for people who are being discriminated against, where they can meet and discuss their experiences, and receive advice and comfort.

The barrier of discrimination in intercultural societies

Discrimination is one of the biggest

barriers to achieving social cohesion and inclusion of marginalized groups and minorities in an intercultural society.

Discrimination is the organised and intentional gathering of power and benefits for a preferred group, harming one or many out-groups.

On the individual level, discrimination can stem from ignorance or fear of the other.

The essence of discrimination, however, is a fear of perceived disempowerment of one's own collective, even despite an obvious societal need for re-distribution of power and resources.

The anti-discrimination pizza: a lighter approach to a complex topic

The historical context of discrimination is a vast and horrifying testament to this group dynamic, and should never be taken lightly. For the purposes of this booklet, however, we will employ

a somewhat flimsy metaphor, which we call “The Anti-discrimination Pizza”. The idea is to illustrate a holistic approach to creating a toolkit which would be helpful for achieving the somewhat utopian idea of a society free from discrimination. A recipe for a popular food item could help illustrate this toolkit’s complexity, gaining a broader appreciation.



The anti-discrimination pizza



- The crust represents society and societal change regarding policy and legal framework.
- The sauce represents the NGO's and schools responsible for bringing about change, the spaces of contact that are responsible for preventing discrimination, but can also be arenas for discrimination.
- The cheese represents personal reflections.
- The different toppings represent the different individual actions.

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Anti discrimination pizza recipe

Preparation time: more than one term of political office

The crust

Ingredients: Political will, laws based on human rights, a democratic political system, and independent media

Method: The crust is the structure where interaction between individuals and organisations takes place. The crust is a fundamental building block, also representing the structures of power. To make a fluffy and thriving crust/society, mix all the ingredients, let it take shape.

The sauce

Ingredients: Companies, schools, public organisations, NGOs and other organisations.

Method: For a good sauce, create a smooth mix of learning processes, cooperation, and leadership within each organisation

The topping

Ingredients: All sorts of individual behaviour

Method: Spread responsible individual behaviour and individual courage, such as stepping back to let others take space, as well as stepping forward to stop any form of discrimination.

The cheese

Ingredients: Reflections, thoughts, mindset and knowledge

Method: The cheese consists of the reflections, thoughts, and mindsets of all individuals, the individual's knowledge about their privileges, as well as the legal rights not to be discriminated against and how to act to stop discrimination against others. Time to sprinkle.



Promoting anti-discrimination education: inclusive strategies for schools

Throughout the educational system, it is necessary to spread information and knowledge about discrimination based on, for example, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and disability. It's advisable to include anti-discrimination as a topic in the school curriculum. Teachers can work with groups that fight discrimination to organize meetings or trainings at every level of education. Local administrators can serve as the mediator between associations and school directors. Each level of education and age group has its own characteristics and needs. The meetings or trainings should include teaching methods how to recognise privilege and how to work against discrimination.

To engage young people, it is essential to include both the discriminated

group and those who discriminate. The topics covered in the meetings or trainings, in addition to the information regarding discrimination, may encompass the exchange of individual experiences, critical thinking, gaining insight into communities and cultures, as well as exercises designed to foster bonds among the participants. Having different perspectives on the world is vital.

Self reflection questions:

- Are all perspectives present?
- Are all groups represented at the table? Who else do we need to invite to the table? Who else do we need to listen to?
- Are we working with different methods of listening to catch different voices and perspectives?



Policy development

Navigating the ecosystem of policy development with an intercultural perspective: a bottom-up approach

AUTHORS: Barbara Papotti, Delia Melani, Emanuel Ksiazkiewicz, Helena Rojas, Ingrid Nyman, Javier Torres, Marta Pérez, Pascal Tshibanda

Notes on this chapter: We wrote this text coming from various perspectives — ranging from civil society and youth organizations, to political decision-making. Our professional backgrounds range from policy advisors and strategic experts, to civil servants and public representatives, and beyond.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide you with a step-by-step guide for engaging with policy development from an intercultural perspective, with the aim of making policy development more inclusive of multiple and diverse perspectives, especially to involve and serve young people.

We want this chapter to be useful for many types of readers, whether you are currently part of political decision-making structures, a youth activ-

ist, or a representative of a civil society organization or civil servant.

Navigating the policy development ecosystem with an intercultural perspective is not a linear step-by-step process. Instead, it is about understanding the ecosystem of local decision-making, how and where you enter into it, and how to generate positive change within it. It is also about opening doors and providing access to others.

How to read this chapter: We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the different aspects of the ecosystem. We encourage you to identify and fill in any gaps that you see from your experience, as a co-creator of the landscape. Consider how you relate to the aspects. What is your position? Where do you find yourself in the ecosystem?



What is the pattern or the sequence of actions that you see from where you are located? Are you attempting to bring your ideas forward and put them

into action through the formal political process? What do you need right now? Where can you contribute? What do you contribute already?

How to navigate local policy development aspects

1. Identify a policy area or an issue that needs to be developed.
2. Identify political will and commitment. There needs to be a firm will to change things, always centred around the intercultural perspective. Seek consensus if possible.
3. Work through the lens of Intercultural principles
4. Listen to needs, identify the problems, issues and challenges from the local community and constituencies.
5. Focus on collaboration and co-creation processes where all participants have equal access to power or participation.
6. Dare to strengthen new narratives! Sometimes these new narratives are informed by a diagnosis of the dominant and potentially destructive narratives.
7. Seek inspiration, innovation, creativity and learn from other contexts and good practices from other places.
8. Develop a detailed plan for putting the policy into action. Ensure that all stakeholders are informed and involved in the implementation process. Monitor progress regularly to address any issues.
9. Conduct a thorough evaluation of the implemented policy. Assess its impact, effectiveness, and areas for improvement. Use the feedback to refine the policy and inform future initiatives.

1. Identify a policy area or an issue that needs to be developed

2. Identify political will and commitment

There needs to be a firm will to change things, always centred around the intercultural perspective. Seek consensus if possible. An intercultural city cannot emerge without leadership and political commitment. Resources should accompany the political will.



3. Work through the lens of Intercultural principles

It's essential to base the work on a shared conceptual framework, such as proposed by the Council of Europe.

EQUALITY

The intercultural approach is grounded in a proactive commitment to defending Human Rights, democracy, and a concept of citizenship based on equal rights—social, economic, political, and cultural—along with equal duties and opportunities. Advancing towards true equality requires a commitment to equity, which means considering the differences in contexts and starting points to prevent “equal” treatment from resulting in unfair outcomes.

DIVERSITY

Interculturality is based on the recognition of diversity and the importance of its presence in all areas of society. It promotes a broad and dynamic concept of culture as well as the plural and hybrid nature of identities that does not allow people to be pigeonholed into watertight groups based on a single element of their identity (such as origin, ethnicity or religion). Interculturality also argues for the importance of focusing on common and shared elements that transcend differences.

INTERACTION

Interculturality emphasises the importance of relationships, dialogue and meeting spaces. Interaction, if it takes place in conditions of equality, favours the creation of links and a sense of belonging that facilitates coexistence and social cohesion. Positive interaction challenges prejudices, encourages critical thinking and trust, and makes it possible to take advantage of the opportunities of diversity. But interaction is not without complexities and potential conflicts that need to be addressed proactively and with the development of intercultural competences.

Some of the risks and consequences of poor diversity management

DISCRIMINATION

The main threat to equal rights and opportunities is discrimination. Interculturality therefore requires a clear commitment and action against any discriminatory practice. It must be tackled both from the perspective of prevention, questioning stereotypes, prejudices, rumours and the social norms that underpin them, and from the legal and institutional sphere to address structural changes and guarantee protection and support for victims. The existence of high levels of socio-economic inequalities coupled with discrimination is a major barrier to achieving real equality of opportunity.

HOMOGENISATION

One of the main risks of failing to recognise, and positively value, diversity is the processes of cultural identity thought homogenisation. This may be due to ‘direct’ control by a dominant group, or the result of more subtle processes marked by differences in economic, political and cultural power. In general, in more culturally homogenous societies, progress towards interculturality encounters greater complexities due to the difficulties of accepting and recognising diversity and plurality of identities for the majority or other dominant group.

FRAGMENTATION

The fragmentation of society into different groups that barely interact with each other is a significant risk and consequence of failing to create links and a shared sense of belonging. Society can become fragmented when inward-looking groups keep to themselves and don't interact with others, as well as the segregation of certain groups caused by discrimination and exclusion. Fragmentation can also result from increased social polarization and the tendency to form multiple sub-groups divided by subtle identity differences, which can become impassable barriers, fostering attitudes of mistrust and hostility.

4. Listen to needs, identify the problems, issues and challenges from the local community and constituencies

The local diagnosis process can be conducted in multiple ways.

Take a look at the Good Practices from page 82 to page 89.



5. Focus on collaboration and co-creation processes where all participants have equal access to power or participation

- Identify a key civil servant: Find a civil servant familiar with action pathways who can move grassroots ideas to political decision-making agendas.
- Foster a listening culture: Develop a culture within the city administration that values and listens to ideas from all levels.
- Formulate political proposals: Understand how to create political proposals and the necessary preconditions for the administration to accept bottom-up ideas.
- Build trust: Demonstrate the impact of implemented ideas to build trust in the political system.
- Top-down or bottom-up: Recognize the origins of policy development and adapt strategies accordingly.
- Approach policymakers: Learn effective methods for engaging and communicating with policymakers to advocate for your ideas.

6. Dare to strengthen new narratives!

Sometimes these new narratives are informed by a diagnosis of the dominant and potentially destructive narratives.

7. Seek inspiration, innovation, creativity and learn from other contexts and good practices from other places

Seek inspiration, innovation, and creativity by learning from other contexts and best practices. The network of intercultural cities serves as a hub for exchanging new ideas, perspectives, and experiences. Implementing a best practice framework can turn intercultural interactions into a comparative advantage. Use diverse forms of communication, such as theatre, to engage emotions and foster participation. Organize World Cafés, where participants move between small tables to discuss and share ideas with different people, enhancing collaborative dialogue and community engagement.

8. Develop a detailed plan for putting the policy into action

Ensure that all stakeholders are informed and involved in the implementation process. Monitor progress regularly to address any issues.

9. Conduct a thorough evaluation of the implemented policy

Assess its impact, effectiveness, and areas for improvement. Use the feedback to refine the policy and inform future initiatives.



Good practice:

Co-creative storytelling, a novel approach to community engagement

In the novel narrative co-creation approach employed in Botkyrka, Sweden, the fundamental tenet was humility. By engaging in co-creative storytelling with active participation from local stakeholders, a rich tapestry of place stories emerged, fostering the recognition of diverse place meanings from various perspectives.

Embracing multiple narratives

Every place has a multitude of stories, and no one is more valid than the other. Recognizing the danger of singular narratives, the strategy aimed to combat limiting stereotypes, especially those that affect marginalized communities.

Layers of identity

Embracing a broader understanding of identities, akin to the layers of an onion, the strategy acknowledged the complex ecosystem of identities spanning from the local to the global level. This approach fostered inclusivity and empowerment within the community.

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Good practice:

Fostering intercultural collaboration - a participatory approach

In Pontedera, Italy, we organized four Intercultural Assemblies, inviting members of local associations. The municipality mapped these groups and invited them to participate in the meetings. Specific meetings were organized to engage these groups in the process, leading to the launch of the intercultural assemblies. The aim was to develop a close relationship with the communities, creating a participatory approach to public administration.

Understanding community needs

The assemblies aimed to understand the needs and expectations of different communities and civil society members, integrating their perspectives into institutional life and documents. These events provided a platform to discuss key topics such as encouraging youth participation through an intercultural approach, opening dialogue spaces between institutions and social communities, sharing main goals, and giving visibility to intercultural aspects in city spaces.

Developing a participatory framework

At the end of the assemblies, a participant group developed a final report. This report detailed the project focused on the participative process, from initial ideas at the first assembly to the implementation and conclusions. The report served as the starting point for the next step: the co-creation process, a so called “co-projecting action”, where participating associations will present a project that the city administration will realize in collaboration with them.

Moving forward with co-projecting actions

In March 2024, a group of city representatives met with the associations that presented their projects to define the final actions. The goal

is to implement the best project for the community, addressing the relevant needs identified through this inclusive and participatory process. This ongoing collaboration aims to ensure that the initiatives remain dynamic and responsive to the community’s evolving needs.

Good practice:

Intercultural public assemblies and introducing the Carta Viva

In Modena, we held various public assemblies focused on intercultural topics, embodying the intercultural approach. These assemblies were open to all citizens, and invitations were extended through associations and local municipal organizations. The turnout was impressive and notably diverse, with significant participation from associations representing people with migrant backgrounds.

Introducing the Carta Viva

During the assembly, we presented the “Carta Viva”, a living document akin to a Magna Carta of intercultural principles. A Magna Carta is a document which symbolizes fundamental rights and liberties for individuals. This guide for policy development was initially created in collaboration with organizations representing individuals with migrant backgrounds and has been adopted by the mayor. The document is dynamic and open to new ideas, ensuring ongoing relevance and inclusivity.

Gathering New Ideas

The assembly served as a platform not only to present the Carta Viva, but also to collect new ideas from the participants. The document, structured around five pillars aimed at achieving specific goals—such as sustaining networks of organizations working with an intercultural approach—includes a list of strategies that can be updated and expanded.

A living, co-created document

The Carta Viva is more than a static presentation; it is a co-created and ever-evolving document. The public assembly emphasized this openness, inviting continuous input and adaptation to reflect the community's needs and aspirations. This approach ensures that the document remains relevant and effective in promoting intercultural principles within the community.

Read more:

<https://www.comune.modena.it/argomenti/immigrazione/modena-citta-interculturale/carta-viva-modena-inteculturale.pdf>



Good practice:

Reversed Townhall - collaborative efforts for awareness-raising, amplifying youth voices

Through NET-IDEA, Linköping and Botkyrka municipality, respectively, teamed up with the media production company Fanzingo to support the awareness-raising initiative: Reversed Townhall. With a history of amplifying youth voices within an intercultural framework, Fanzingo pioneered the concept of the Reversed Townhall. In this format, young people invite elected local officials to engage in deep-dive discussions on topics chosen by the youth.

Addressing critical issues

During the intensive preparatory phase, local youngsters selected key topics to explore, including racism, discrimination, mental health, climate change, violence, the role of religion, familial and societal norms, public transportation, and community cohesion. The youth captured their stories through various mediums such as podcasts, articles, video clips, and radio theatre, forming the foundation of the Reversed Townhall events.

Inclusive discussions and reflections

Throughout the Reversed Townhall, these youth-generated narratives were seamlessly integrated into discussions, fostering an inclusive environment where both young and adult participants shared their perspectives. This workshop format emphasized situational analysis and centred on the experiences and ideas of the youth. Elected officials were encouraged to focus on active listening and thoughtful reflection rather than defaulting to debate mode.

Impact and political ramifications

In both Linköping and Botkyrka, the Reversed Townhall methodology successfully reversed the traditional power dynamics of town hall

meetings. Instead of policymakers dominating the discussion, young citizens spoke most of the time, and the policymakers had the opportunity to comment. This approach highlighted crucial youth issues, leading to political changes. In Linköping, these discussions brought several youth concerns to the local media and political agenda.

Engaging diverse perspectives

The Reversed Townhall methodology demonstrated the importance of engaging citizens and youth from diverse local perspectives. This approach provided valuable insights into the everyday needs and challenges of the community through intimate dialogue, ensuring that youth voices are heard and considered in the decision-making process.



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