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Online Consultative Meeting

APPLYING INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE YOUTH FIELD

in search of a cooperative approach among youth
organisations and other stakeholders

24-26 February 2021

Concept note

BACKGROUND

Preventing and counteracting discrimination, to allow the democratic participation of all young people, remains central to the Council of Europe's youth policy and a permanent concern of its partners. These are necessary steps to strengthen social cohesion and respect for diversity. The lives of too many young people are still shaped by the persistent forms of structural discrimination combined with prejudice, which impact negatively on the prospect of social inclusion and the well-being of marginalised groups of young people, including young people with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, young Roma, refugees and migrants, women and girls, LGBTQI youth, etc.

One of the Council of Europe's strategic priorities for 2020-2021 is to support youth workers and youth organisations to work on ...preventing and combating discrimination, exclusion and violent extremism. This is done by promoting social inclusion, fostering active participation, gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination on the grounds of Article 14 of the

European Convention on Human Rights – taking an intersectional approach, – with a specific focus on:

- Roma youth and other minority groups;
- Young refugees and their transition from childhood to adulthood;
- Young people with disabilities;
- LGBTQI young people;
- Young women and girls.

Youth work and youth organisations reflect the societies in which they are placed. Young people experience inequalities and discrimination in various forms, and this affects their well-being and chances for participating equally in society. Youth workers and youth leaders can also be the agents of change by recognising and understand their own role in strengthening or in reversing patterns of inequality and discrimination.

Youth work and non-formal learning as practised and promoted by the Council of Europe are based on human rights values and principles. The human dignity of every person involved in activities is to be respected at all times. Human rights offer a framework where opinions, beliefs and cultural practices can be discussed while respecting differences. A human rights-based approach in youth work and non-formal learning recognises that achieving equal opportunities remains a common goal and that youth work should recognise inequalities and provide support to bridge the gaps.

Intersectionality as a term was coined by third wave feminist, Kimberlé Crenshaw, from the observation and recognition of the interconnectedness of oppressions and how one's experience of discrimination takes into account one's overlapping identities. For example, a queer woman of colour experiences oppression in a significantly different way to a white straight woman. Many of the Youth Department's partners by promoting an intersectional approach would argue that it is not possible to combat different discrimination on different grounds separately; and that by taking an intersectional approach the youth sector (youth workers, policy makers, leaders, trainers) can more effectively challenge injustice than through single-issue struggles.

In 2014 the Youth Department innovated by looking at multiple discrimination of young Roma, a research project that is documented in the publication [Barabaripen](#).

The Council of Europe youth sector supports youth organisations and youth workers to combat discrimination by supporting their activities, encouraging them to adopt more inclusive approaches and anti-discrimination dimension (in the activities supported by the European Youth Foundation or the activities held at the European Youth Centres) and by providing awareness-raising and educational materials for multipliers.

The concepts of multiple discrimination and intersectionality are very close to each other and are in principle easy to understand on the conceptual level. What is less clear for practitioners is the practical implications they should have on projects and activities. Exploring and clarifying some of their practical implications is important in view of the expectation for the youth sector to adopt and promote an intersectional approach.

It is in this context, that the Council of Europe organises the consultative meeting to explore how intersectionality can be further mainstreamed in the youth sector. The consultative meeting will look into the following questions:

1. What are the experiences, examples and expectations from the youth field in applying the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality into practice (youth work, youth policy, training, research)?
2. What kind of educational activities, tools and approaches on the basis of intersectionality can be applied in youth work and training in the youth field?
3. What can youth organisations, youth workers, trainers, researchers and policy makers do to secure that the intersectional approach is applied in their work?
4. How can youth organisations and other stakeholders communicate and cooperate about intersectionality?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The consultative meeting aims to build a common understanding of the role of intersectionality in promoting social inclusion, fostering active participation and combating discrimination taking an intersectional approach by:

1. creating a deeper understanding of intersectionality and its application in the youth sector
2. identifying experiences, examples and expectations from the youth field in applying the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality
3. proposing examples of educational activities, tools and approaches on the basis of intersectionality that are applicable and used in youth work and training activities
4. identifying what the youth sector stakeholders can do to further apply an intersectional approach in their work.

PARTICIPANTS

The consultative meeting will bring together a group of experts with the following profiles:

1. Representatives of youth civil society organisations which can be:
 - Youth organisations working on addressing discrimination and engaging in the promotion of an intersectional approach in the youth field;
 - Youth organisations working with Roma youth and other minority groups, young refugees, young people with disabilities, LGBTQI young people, young women and girls, other young people belonging to “visible minorities”
 - Youth leaders engaged in the promotion of Human Rights through their youth organisations
2. Representatives of national authorities in charge of youth and other relevant public authorities
3. Members of the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Steering Committee on Youth
4. Representatives of the European Youth Forum and its member organisations
5. Researchers in the youth field, members of the Pool of European Youth Researchers
6. Academia focused on youth issues, equality bodies and their networks and other relevant stakeholders.