

INCLUSION TOOLBOX

A GUIDE ON INCLUSIVE PRACTICES



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This toolbox was created as part of an online session on inclusive practices, delivered in November 2021, based on the contributions of participants. We would like to say special thanks to: Vanda Bajcs, Brian Donnelly, Ling You, Atanas Stoyanov, Gwen Viard, Dragana Radosevic, Maria Sierra, Hasna El Hiyany, Luisine Topchyan, Giulia Annibaletti, Nana Pirtskhakaishvili.

This document gives an account of the main discussions and content of an interactive online session on inclusion held by the EYF with the participation of representatives of youth organisations on November 26, 2021. It has been produced based on participants' input and discussions and enriched by an external expert.

The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

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chapter one

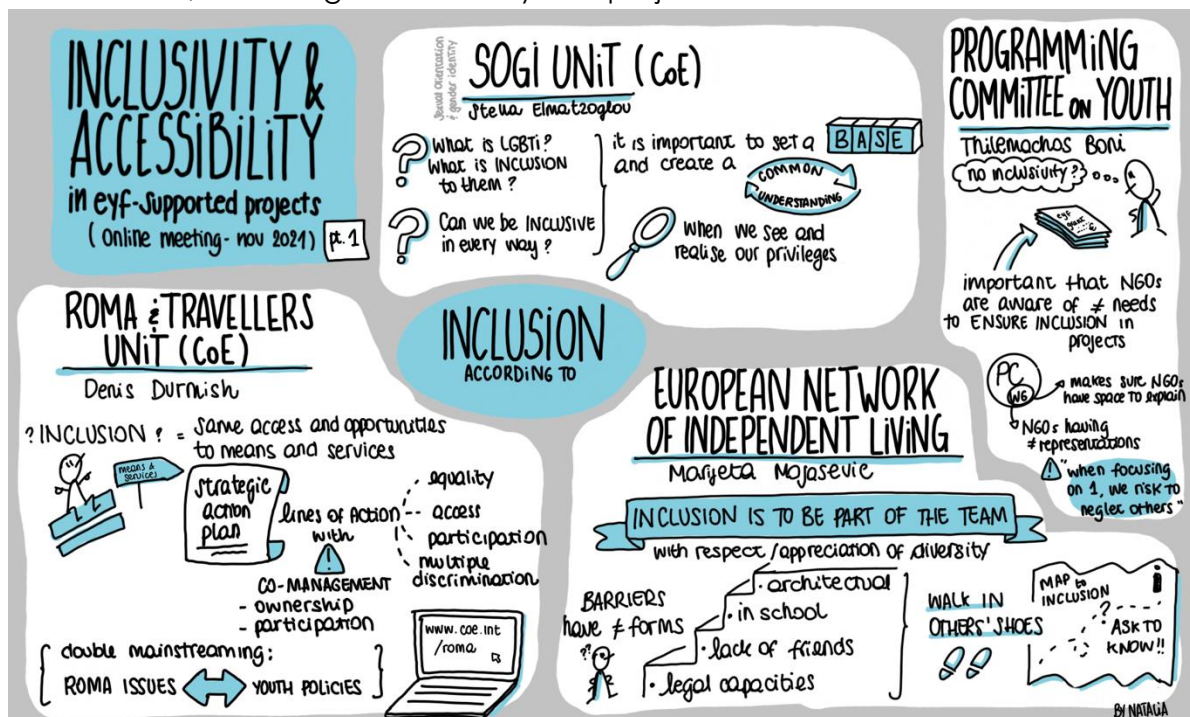
INTRODUCTION

Using this toolbox

On 28 November 2021, the European Youth Foundation (EYF) organised an interactive online session on inclusion and accessibility that gave space for a variety of participants to share inputs on their inclusive practices in youth-led projects. The session was part of a package of learning programmes and tools offered by the EYF secretariat to NGOs to support them in the delivery of EYF supported projects.

This toolbox is the output from that interactive online session.

The participants of the online session were representatives of youth NGOs, working in diverse fields, delivering EYF funded youth projects on local and international level.

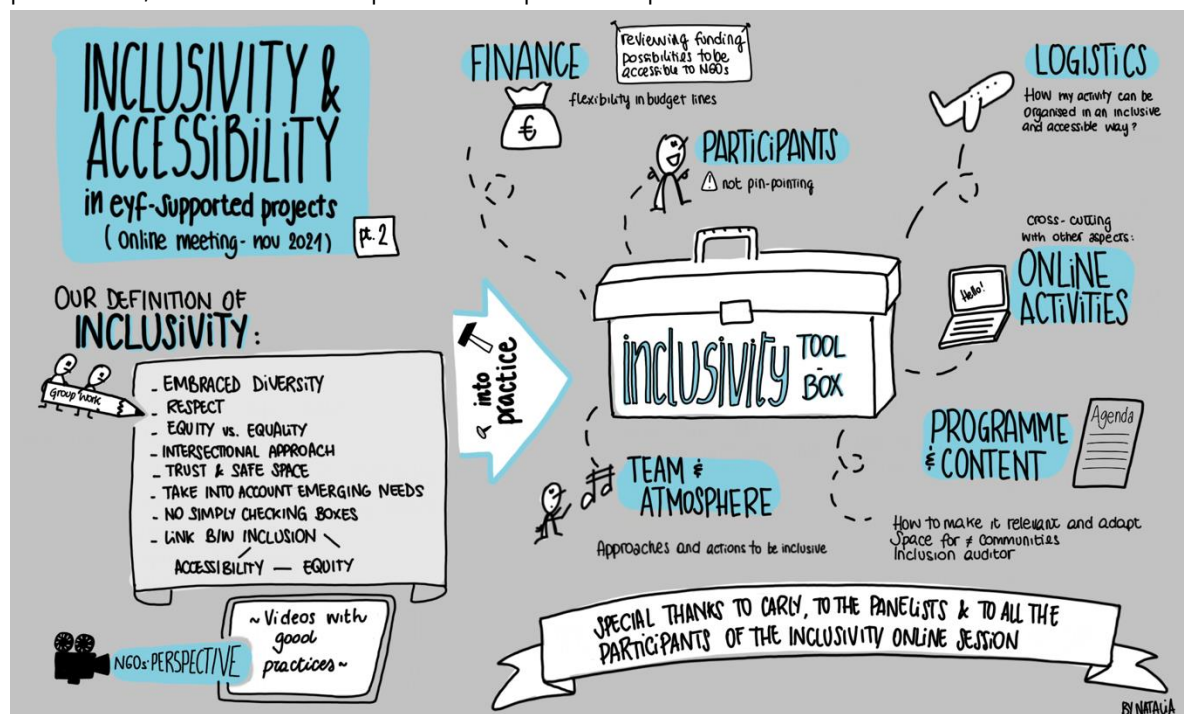


Graphic recording of the inputs from the panellists during the online session on Inclusivity and Accessibility

The session also included short presentations delivered by representatives of the Council of Europe Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit and the Roma and

Travellers team, as well as the Inclusion and Diversity Working Group of the Programming Committee on Youth, and the European Network of Independent Living. The graphic recording below captures some of the ideas they shared during the meeting.

In the second part of the meeting, the participants exchanged ideas and good practices, and collected practical tips to be presented in this toolbox.



Graphic recording of the participants' exchange during the online session on Inclusivity and Accessibility

The toolbox is a starting point to support youth organisations to better incorporate inclusive practices into projects, including European Youth Foundation (EYF) supported projects. This resource is intended to plant a seed – it is not absolute, it is not exhaustive, and it is not expected that you to do everything included in here straightaway. This toolbox needs to be adapted to your own realities and context, and to your own projects. And remember, inclusion is a journey and not an end goal!

Chapter outline

Chapter 2 sets the starting point for inclusion in practice. You will be invited to join a reflective exercise, assessing one of your past projects, through the lens of inclusion and diversity. It will present the idea of safer spaces and give you directions on monitoring and evaluation.


Chapter 3 outlines some concrete ideas to consider when delivering inclusive youth projects, guiding you through different areas of project management. It will present

the approach of participants in the online session to inclusive project delivery in more detail and offer you concrete tools, ideas and checklists.

Chapter 4 contains additional relevant resources produced by the Council of Europe, to support your learning journey on inclusion and diversity.

An approach to inclusion

Inclusion and diversity are at the core of EYF's work. **Living together in peaceful and inclusive societies** is a priority theme for the Council of Europe's youth sector and the EYF strives to support European youth activities that combat discrimination in all its forms and promote equality.



Inclusion is a positive force in our society. It brings about different ideas and perspectives on the world. Much of the success of an EYF supported project comes from the team spirit, atmosphere and the mood of an activity, and inclusion is a key part of this. Social change is the heart of youth work, non-formal education and social justice activism, which can only be achieved if we bring everyone on board.

There is no agreed definition about what inclusion is. If you ask 100 people, you will get 100 different answers. For that reason, rather than using a dictionary definition, the participants in the online session propose a **collaborative understanding** of what inclusion means, based on ideas and experiences shared during the online session on inclusion.

Inclusion is more than a tokenistic box-ticking exercise and a listing process of different groups we should include in our work.

An inclusive practice respects what makes people different, celebrates diversity, and uses a needs-based approach.

With this in mind, inclusion is not fixed, but ever-changing depending on the people involved and their needs. Inclusion challenges prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes, goes beyond the binary, and opposes normative assumptions. Inclusion recognises we all have the same right to be treated with respect and dignity despite our differences. To do this, we need to give additional support or opportunities to certain people or groups for them to be able to participate equally.

Taking an **intersectional approach** to inclusion recognises that the discrimination or barriers a person faces are constructed by the many intersecting aspects of their identity. This means that social systems are complex, and different forms of oppression (like racism, ageism or sexism) might be present at the same time.

The term 'intersectionality' was coined by black feminist, Kimberlé Crenshaw, who recognised her experience of discrimination as a woman of colour was unique to that of a white woman or a black man.

Many types of equality building work tend to focus on one type of discrimination in isolation. Intersectionality allows to overcome the tendency to think about inclusion as isolated struggles, instead approaching inclusion and discrimination in a holistic way. Intersectionality starts with examining our own privileges and asking questions about who may be excluded or negatively affected by our work, centring the voices of marginalised and minoritised groups, and then taking action.



Inclusion in the context of EYF projects

Inclusion in the context of EYF projects should be more than a tick-box exercise, or a list of compulsory measures to put in place for the sake of securing funding for your project. You are encouraged to explore and understand the importance and value of inclusion, and to channel this into your projects with your own contexts in mind.

First of all, we all have needs. For example, you might need a cup of coffee to function in the morning when you are delivering a project. Or you might need frequent breaks. A needs-based approach is the foundation of an inclusive project.

We need to speak with people, and not on behalf them. However, it is not possible to be 100% inclusive of all needs at all times. Some needs clash with another. What is most important is that there is open dialogue, adaptability, flexibility, and a solutions-focused attitude.

Exclusion and discrimination are diametrically opposed to inclusion. Part of your work is to challenge the ingrained prejudices and stereotypes that we all hold. This is not only in the content of our projects, but in the atmosphere and space that you foster. If your approach is inclusive, diverse and responsive, it will be evident across all areas of your activities. To do this, everyone involved in a project needs to make a concerted and conscious effort.

chapter two

INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

Reflective activity: your past project

No project is perfect and often striving for perfection can be a barrier to being good. Introducing inclusive practices is a process and something you can implement gradually over time. It is vital to start from a point of honest reflection to work out where is the baseline that you're starting from. This activity can help you establish your starting position and is purely for your own benefit.

Think of a recent project you delivered in your organisation. Consider the questions below to assess how inclusive your previous project was. What did you do well? What was missing? What could you do better? You may want to do this exercise with your colleagues and peers. You may do this in the style of a workshop, in a meeting, or as a desktop exercise.

- How diverse was your project team and support team?
- How much information did you have about your target groups and how did you cater for different people's needs?
- How welcoming were you to new participants with different backgrounds, identities, and perspectives?
- How well did you facilitate the active participation of all participants without discrimination, prejudice or judgement?
- What structures did you introduce to provide a safe(r) space for people from marginalised and minoritised groups (e.g., ethnic minorities, people of colour, LGBTQI, women, people with disabilities)?
- Does your organisational culture make the people involved feel (un)safe and (un)comfortable?
- How did the topic of inclusion feature within the content of your project?
- In which ways could you have been more effective by taking inclusion into account?

Creating a safe(r) space

Creating a safe(r) space within our projects is based on the idea that every person – regardless of their identity, background and culture – should be able to participate and express themselves without fear of discrimination, violence and abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or psychological).

As much as we strive to achieve a safe space in our activities, it is not possible to create a space that is completely safe for everyone because we all reproduce societal norms and prejudices, including oppressive attitudes and behaviours. As utopian as your organisation strives to be, abuse can and will still happen. This is why we refer to creating safe(r) space rather than safe space, as it recognises the potential existence of discrimination and abuse.

To create safe(r) space, we must consider how can we actively build trust and what mechanisms we can enact to make spaces better for everyone, such as a quiet room for neurodivergent participants or solidarity spaces for oppressed groups. We ask people about their access needs but realise that access needs are personal, and it can sometimes be traumatic to disclose them. People shouldn't have to justify their needs and privacy is important – try to avoid asking about access needs in a public setting. Be aware that personal access information is classified as sensitive data under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) regulation.

Project coordinators also need to have escalation processes to deal with oppressive or discriminatory behaviours. These should be agreed in advance and communicated with all. When dealing with a disclosure, it is vital to believe (and not question) any disclosures of discrimination or abuse. It is a huge step for someone to speak up, so don't doubt the person coming forward.

Monitoring and evaluation

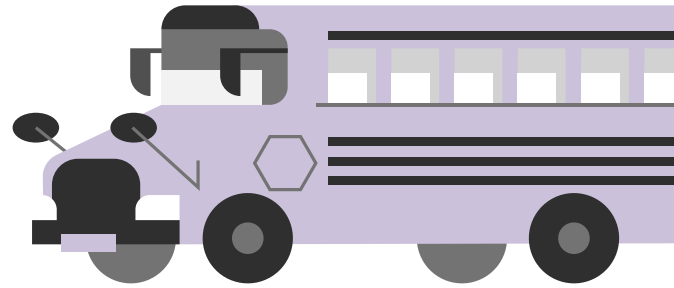
Not everything goes to plan – and that's fine! It's a totally natural part of planning and delivering a project. What is important is learning from our mistakes. This can be done through regular monitoring of inclusion at different stages of your project, not just at end when you have to write your report for the funders. Consider incorporating inclusion monitoring as an agenda item for each of your planning meetings or use an inclusion plan as a live tool that you review regularly alongside other key documents such as your risk assessment and communications plan.

chapter three

INCLUSION CHECKLIST



Logistics

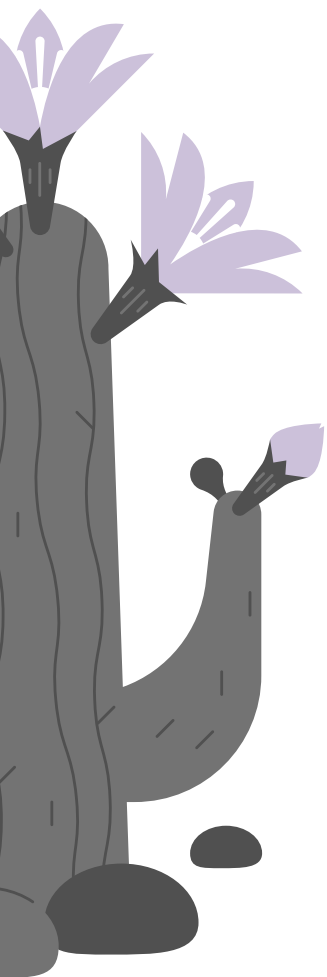


Top tips

1. Be flexible: change is a natural part of any project, so embrace it and be willing to adapt (it might even make your project more interesting!).
2. How would you feel?: Think about how you would feel if you were told outright that you couldn't participate in a project because, for example, the venue isn't accessible. Excluding whole groups isn't justifiable, so think about ways to adapt to facilitate inclusion.
3. Attitude is key: there is always a solution to an access need. It might not be perfect but having a positive can-do attitude that is based on listening to others means that you can find a collaborative solution. Often the biggest barrier is bad attitude and unwillingness to seek solutions.

Barriers to inclusion

- Inaccessibility is deep rooted: our society is built in a way that is inaccessible and excludes people. This is why when we say someone is disabled, they are disabled by society. Therefore, the basics of logistics, such as venues and public transport, are not built in a way to consider multiple access needs. The starting point is a challenge.
- Language: information is usually communicated through the spoken and written word, so if you struggle to understand this (whether because of impairments, language barriers or cognitive difficulties) the ability to comprehend logistical information can be impaired. Insensitive or offensive language, particularly when referring to specific minoritised groups, is another barrier.
- Travel: travelling can be troublesome and tiring for most people. But can you imagine travelling if you have migration problems, have mobility issues, or suffer from anxiety? Travelling can put people off your project before application stage.
- Financial barriers: considering inclusion in your logistics often costs money and, in the non-profit field in particular, there is pressure to reduce costs. Often inclusion is surrendered in light of financial issues. But it doesn't have to be this way – see the next section on finances.



Inclusive approaches and actions

Do a mapping process: consider what potential access needs you might encounter during and in the preparation for your project. When planning the logistics of your project, consider who might be excluded. Is there a step-free route to all of your meeting rooms, or can you provide a ramp? Is there a quiet space where people can take time out? Are there toilets that all genders (not just men and women) can use in comfort? Part of this can be doing an inclusion assessment, similar to a risk assessment, about how you would deal with different access needs.

Refer positively to inclusion in your project

communication: make sure you say explicitly within your communications and call for participants that you encourage people with different needs to apply, that you will work collaboratively to be inclusive of people with access needs, and that you recognise the value of including people with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Have a clear contact person, ensure there are clear avenues for communication, and produce a Frequently Asked Questions document. This reassures prospective participants that this is a project where they would be welcome, and their needs taken seriously. If you are unsure about terminology, especially when referring to minoritised groups, the best bet is to ask organisations or experts working with those groups for the appropriate wording.



Ask about needs at the start: in the application process, ask all participants what their needs are. This can include checkboxes (such as: step-free access, roll-in shower, sign interpretation, prayer room, quiet space, regular breaks) as well as an open space to share other needs not listed. The same applies to dietary requirements. Access needs change so make sure there are ways to report changes to access needs after the application process is complete.

Provide communications in different formats: consider whether you can offer logistical information in different forms, for example large-print documents or translated documents. Perhaps you can set up a pool of volunteer translators if you are an international NGO to support translation. Make sure that any visuals (such as an Instagram post) have a text description for people who are visually impaired. Consider how to disseminate information through physical print or in-person interactions if targeting people who experience digital exclusion.

Consider alternative to written application forms: this means having application processes that don't just rely on writing. This doesn't exclude written forms but is about offering a hybrid process and being flexible. This can help reduce barriers for those who are partially literate or illiterate, those that have learning or cognitive conditions such as dyslexia, or experience language barriers, for example.

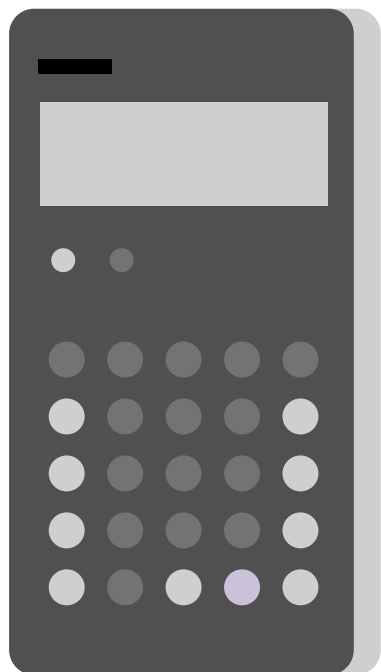
Be reactive: not everyone will feel comfortable disclosing their needs in the first instance, especially if they have experienced discrimination in past projects. If access needs come to light during an activity or shortly before, be patient and understanding. You will need to be able to respond to undisclosed needs, in discussion with the person. This is all part of everyday project management.

Checklist – logistics

- Undertake an inclusion mapping and inclusion assessment
- Refer to inclusion in the communications and publicity documents
- Identify and communicate a contact person, communication channels and an FAQs document
- Get help if you're unsure about how to be sensitive to terminology referring to specific groups or inclusion as a whole
- Ask about access needs in your application process
- Offer communication information in different forms, e.g., large print, translations, text descriptions, in-person interaction
- Consider how your application process can offer alternatives to written application forms

Finance

Top tips



1. If there is an item of expenditure you need to be inclusive, such as sign interpretation or Personal Assistant (PA) costs, it might be expensive. This doesn't mean it can't be part of the budget as an eligible cost: if you are not sure about the types of expenses that can be covered by the grant, you can always ask!
2. Include potential costs from the start: consider what you might need from your first budget draft, even if you don't know your team or participant composition.
3. Assume that people don't have disposable income as a baseline: this relates to requirements to book tickets and cover participation fees in the first instance. It also applies to optional activities and spending expectations during an activity – ideally you wouldn't require people to spend money during a project but, if you do, prewarn participants in advance.

Barriers to inclusion

- Discrimination has a substantial impact on economic security: people from marginalised and/or minoritised groups often have lower levels of financial security due to (multiple) discrimination affecting all areas of their life, including employment, education, and social opportunities.
- Individual financial situations can prevent participation: not all participants and team members have access to funds so the mere mention of participation fees or booking travel up front could put off a fantastic person from even considering getting involved in your project. This is especially true of young people, who often don't have high levels of disposable income.

Inclusive approaches and actions

Factor in additional costs: this could include the cost of providing taxis in exchange for public transport, ensuring accommodation is accessible, or covering the cost of interpreters and personal assistants. It also should include cost to hire accessible venues and ensure the provision of different dietary requirements (e.g., halal, gluten-free and plant-based).

Ask participants and team members what they need: ask them what they would need, in an ideal world, to make sure their needs are accounted for. Not sure what someone is asking for? Suggest an open conversation to better understand.

Be flexible with participation fees: can you set participation fees on a sliding scale based on ability to contribute? Can you introduce a flexible structure so fees can be reduced or removed for those who need it (with a discreet process)? Can you set up a solidarity system where those who can contribute more have the option to do so? Can you eliminate participation fees completely? There are many ways to approach participation fees to reduce the financial barriers.

Pay for costs up front: it's important to offer ways to book people's travel and pay for visas in advance, whether your organisation makes bookings directly or you offer payment in-advance. Remember this also applies to your team members as well as participants.

Checklist – finances

- Set a budget that includes possible costs for promoting inclusive practices
- Ask team members and participants what their needs are
- Offer the purchase of travel tickets and visas for people or provide up-front payments
- Have a flexible participation fee system or remove participation fees completely



Team and atmosphere

Top tips

- Be critical and reflective about power dynamics: power exists in all settings, no matter how horizontal or anti-hierarchical an organisation is. We need to reflect on our power dynamics and speak about them openly to prevent abuses of power, whether conscious or subconscious.
- Change up your teams: empower different members of your organisation and networks to deliver projects, trying not to use the same team members each time. Consider getting an external trainer. This can foster diversity in your team and prevent your organisation relying too heavily on one or two people (which can lead to a monopoly of information or opportunities).
- Make a conscious effort to build trust within the group, consider mechanisms to make participants with different backgrounds and identities feel comfortable
- Offer spaces for specific groups to self-organise: empower and offer resources to marginalised and minoritised groups to organise their own solidarity spaces on an activity or in a project.

Barriers to inclusion

- Lack of representation: this stems from lack of willingness to change. This can be because the organisation expects certain people to be involved in the team, so there is no room for others, or could be because the organisation has challenges in reaching out to new groups.
- Superficial inclusion: often when considering diversity, a check-box method is taken that doesn't look holistically at inclusion from an intersectional approach but looks at how certain groups can be represented solely in relation to the theme of a project. This can be tokenistic or create a siloed approach.

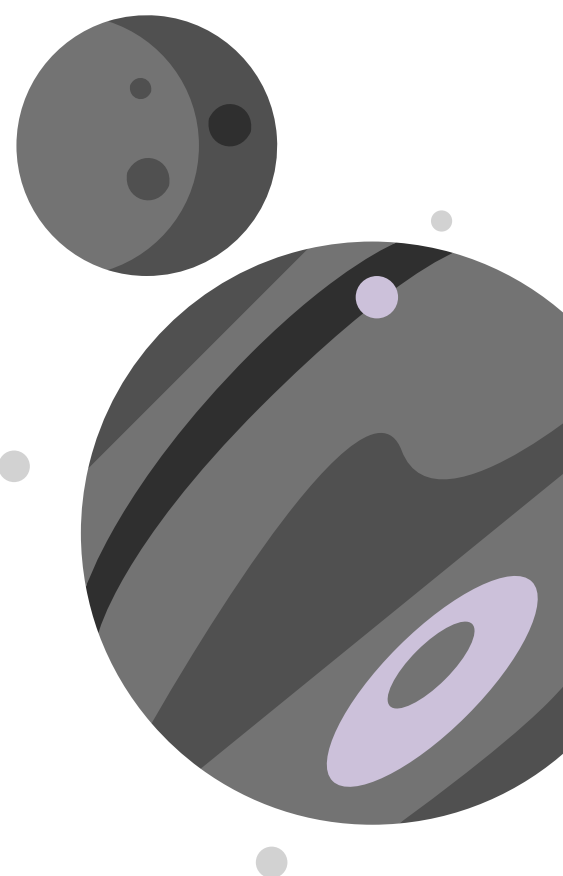
- Threat of invisible power structures: power is inevitable but needs to be reflected on and named to prevent it from being damaging. This is particularly important when considering team member-participant relationships. Power can also manifest negatively within a team.
- Lack of safe(r) spaces for certain groups: this can be a result of overt discrimination and hostility or overlooking the need to have solidarity spaces where oppression is lessened for marginalised or minoritised groups.
- Prior negative experiences: if someone has not had a positive experience with your organisation or prior projects, the starting point is low or limited trust in your organisation. For example, if you have had challenges enacting inclusive practices in the past, or if someone has felt excluded or discriminated against. Inclusion is actively demonstrating and communicating what you are doing, and past experiences is a huge factor in this.

Inclusive approaches and actions

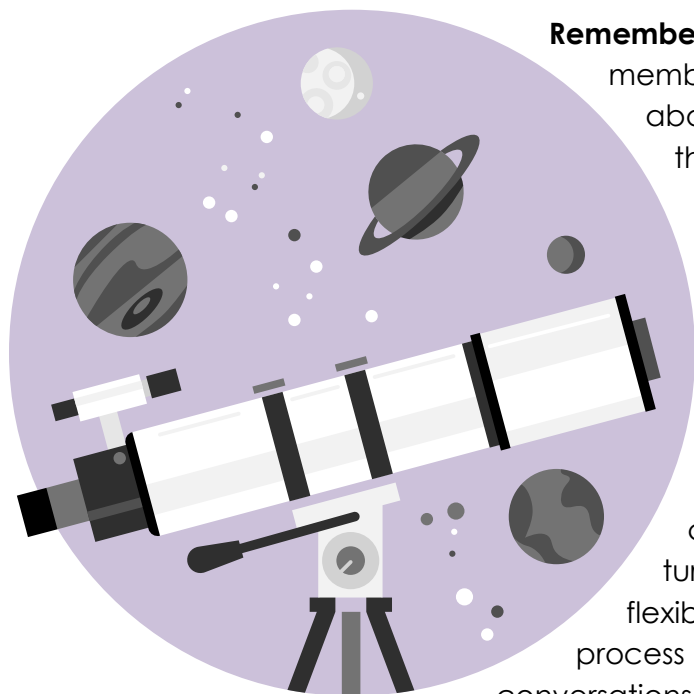
Promote diversity and representation in the team: this can help participants feel more included and have role models to identify with. It can also enable more meaningful discussions if the participants feel they are represented in a safe(r) space. If your project is targeting a specific community/group, ensure someone from this community is involved on the planning team throughout. Ideally you would create and utilise partnerships in this process.

Establish clear, predetermined boundaries between team and participants: team members naturally hold power over participants, as much as we like to think of everyone as equal. There should be clear boundaries, set out at the start of the project, for example preventing team members from engaging in romantic or sexual relationships with participants, or ensuring proper escalation of disclosures of abuse.

Invest in building the capacities and expertise of your team: offering training, mentoring or development programmes to your team around inclusion allows them to be more aware of difference, diversity, and intersectionality.



Foster a common understanding within your team: this includes different aspects of your project, including what needs it addresses, what are the objectives and goals, and who are the key stakeholders. It takes time to build this common understanding. Give time for team building to create a project team based on cooperation, trust and team spirit.



Remember, actions speak louder than words: team members should be sincere and be transparent about the goals, reasons and methods of what they are doing when involving or engaging diverse youth. Ensure coherence between the promotion of inclusion and team members' actions, language and practices. Be aware of verbal language and non-verbal cues and think about how words might affect others. Create an environment that encourages positive social norms and in which people actively care for each other through active listening, turn-taking and shared decision-making. Be flexible and adaptable, value and give time to the process itself, and be ready to have challenging conversations and offer additional support.

Prioritise communication: create open channels of communication between team members, and between the team and participants. This should be appropriate to the project, ensure a focused approach (quality over quantity), and consider different needs.

Create specific spaces for different groups (e.g., LGBTQI+ space, women's space): this offers a solidarity space and sanctuary for specific groups away from the systemic and everyday oppression these groups face. These should be coordinated and run by those who self-identify as a part of these groups. As most discrimination and oppression is not conscious, these spaces offer valuable respite and help build communities. This can be a one-off during an activity, a permanent space throughout, or a meeting at regular intervals.

Have a safeguarding policy and designate trusted persons in the team: having an organisational or project-specific safeguarding policy that outlines procedures for dealing with a safeguarding incident or disclosure of abuse should be in place, and all team members should be aware of it. A safeguarding officer may be appointed as part of this. A team of trusted persons in the team allows a specific point of contact for participants to approach in the case they experience or observe

abusive or discriminatory behaviours. Be aware of the additional power these persons hold in this position.

Be open to feedback: create a positive feedback loop where participants can give feedback to the team, and they know it will be considered. We cannot know everything, but we can always improve, and feedback helps us do this. If team members are struggling with receiving feedback, remember there is training on this topic.

Checklist – team and atmosphere

- Consider diversity from an intersectional approach in team selection and vary the composition of teams between activities/projects
- Conduct a reflection process on power dynamics within the team
- Set a Code of Conduct for team members and for the group
- Invest in training and development of team members
- Ensure there is a safeguarding policy in place and assign trusted persons and/or a safeguarding lead within the team
- Provide resources for self-organised solidarity spaces for specific marginalised or minoritised groups
- Establish open communications channels among the team and between the team and participants
- Introduce open feedback mechanisms

Participants

Top tips

1. Allow people to self-identify: avoid activities or asking for personal information that forces a person to place themselves within a category based on societal norms.
2. Promote self-organisation: this centres the experience around the participants and allows them to bring their own priorities and focus areas of their work to the educational programme based on their own experience and expertise.
3. Centre dialogue: active listening and open channels of communication is essential for participants to feel valued and included. This applies to planning and preparation, on an activity and in the follow-up of your project.



Barriers to inclusion

- Language barrier: as the majority of projects are conducted in a language not native to the participants, there will inevitably be language challenges. Marginalised or minoritised groups are more likely to have these due to the impact of systemic discrimination on education and opportunities.
- Cultural insensitivity or reduction to binaries: a lack of sensitivity to cultural norms of participants can cause discomfort, harm or exclusion. The same applies to having binaries – such as men and women being the only recognised genders – and not having the option to self-identify.
- Engaging with non-organised youth or hard to reach groups: lack of experience or knowledge about how to engage participants from harder to reach areas, such as participants with disabilities or people from traditional communities or rural areas can hinder the diversity of a group. It can also lead to the same participants attending multiple activities. This particularly applies to those who are not involved in structured youth movements.
- Affinity bias: this is the idea that we gravitate toward people like ourselves in appearance, beliefs and background, and we may avoid or even dislike people who are different from us. This can happen when selecting participants, where we select people most similar to ourselves, which can block the diversity of participants in a project.

- **Power dynamics within participants:** the differences in privilege and abilities in the participants can cause a hierarchy and power dynamic among the participants. This can unfold as obvious prejudice but, more likely, it is hidden beneath the surface and unconscious. Both situations can have negative effects on other participants, but the latter is more challenging to identify and transform.

Inclusive approaches and actions

Find allies: approach different communities or partner up with organisations working with specific target groups or that are already working in specific circles to access hard to reach communities. Consider approaching youth councils or municipalities to engage with unorganised youth. Networks such as the European Youth Forum, SALTO and National Agencies can be useful for outreach work.

Consider which platforms you use for publicity: share calls for participants widely by doing research and finding out which platforms you can use to reach participants. This will differ depending on the region and target groups. The EYF can also help publicise your activity on their channels.

Consider diversity and objectivity in the selection of participants: having multiple people reviewing the participants' applications allows different perspectives to be considered and challenges affinity bias. Set a scoring matrix when you're drafting the application process, so that all the people selecting the participants have an objective measure against which to score the applications, rather than just liking/disliking an application.

Create a glossary: this should consist of words and terms that are frequent in EYF projects or related to the theme of your project. Share it with the participants before the event so that they start to get familiar with some terms and it will help them to express their ideas during an activity.

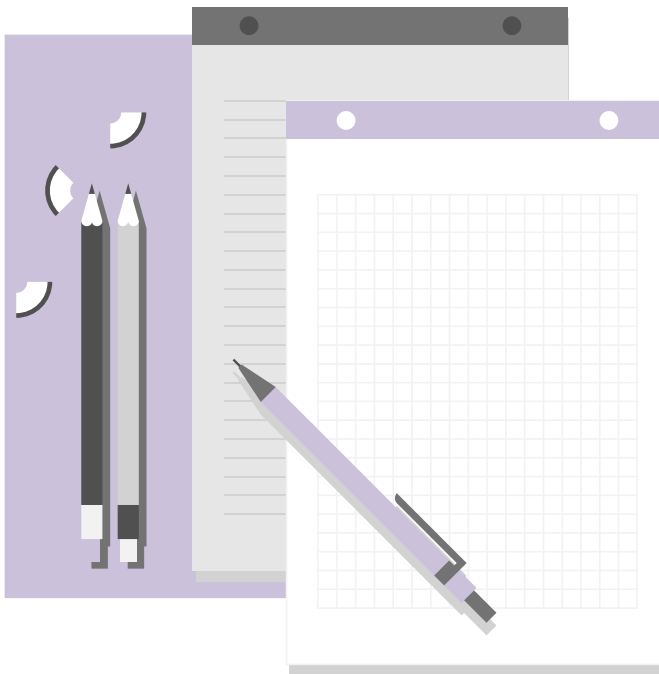


Obtain permissions for photos and comms: sharing photos of someone could be a threat to some or can perpetuate negative stereotypes. Always ask for permission in writing in advance and check again before sharing, particularly on social media or when using photos in publicity resources. This also applies to group online spaces as well as in-person activities.

Checklist – participants

- Research platforms to distribute calls for participants and collaborate with other organisations/ networks
- Create a scoring matrix for participant selection
- Ensure multiple people assess applications
- Set up communication channels for dialogue with participants
- Create a project glossary
- Establish an escalation process for violations of ground rules
- Consider the possibility of translation or interpretation
- Co-create ground rules with participants
- Offer spaces for participants to self-organise
- Get photo and comms permissions





Content

Top tips

1. Make sure your programme is relevant and meaningful to your target groups. Consider if the main themes and topics covered by your programme reflect their priorities and needs.
2. Mistakes can help you to develop: you only learn through making mistakes and reflecting on them, so don't be scared to explore new topics. Especially when we are talking about inclusion, people can get scared of 'getting it wrong' but people will value you trying much more than not trying at all. There is respect that comes with owning up to mistakes and making learning visible to participants.
3. Inclusion can be mainstreamed into the programme: inclusion intersects with all topics, so it should be considered in all projects, not just those focusing on inclusion specifically. For example, when discussing youth homelessness, consider how migrants, people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds or LGBTQI youth are disproportionately affected.

Barriers to inclusion

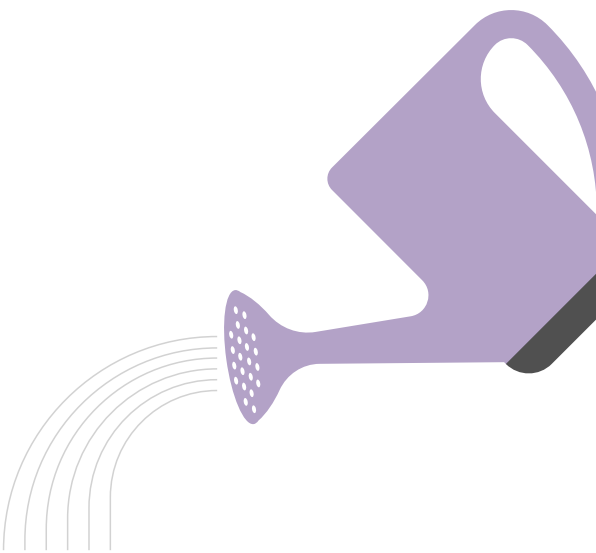
- How to include the breadth of inclusion in one programme: it is a challenge to consider the realities of the many different marginalised or minoritised groups, which can lead to certain groups feeling left out.
- Not dealing with triggers or discriminatory behaviours appropriately: by failing to disclose when certain programme points may be triggering, past trauma can be activated and cause someone to feel unsafe. If discriminatory behaviour is not dealt with swiftly and appropriately it can cause harm to the individual and the group.
- Certain content and methods can perpetuate negative assumptions or stereotypes about specific groups. Poor facilitation or conflict avoidance can leave discriminatory remarks unchecked and unchallenged.
- Lack of involvement of a diverse community in programme planning process: this can overlook important themes, questions, and areas of discussion in the programme, as well as approaching inclusion in a tokenistic way.
- Lack of flexibility: due to funding guidelines, time schedule or logistics, the programme may not be able to be responsive and flexible to the needs of the participants. Rigidity can also be the result of inflexibility of certain team members, project managers or the organisation.

Inclusive approaches and actions

Take an intersectional approach: intersectionality allows you to shape the content without fear of missing out certain groups and adds nuance to the topic of inclusion. Intersectionality can be daunting if you're not familiar with it, but there are plenty of resources and expert trainers out there to help you out.

Harness the participants' personal experience: one of your strongest tools in approaching inclusion as a topic is allowing participants to share their experiences in a safe and structured way. We all have different experiences and identities –

harnessing these provides real-life examples about inclusion and diversity. Be aware of keeping questions open (how/why questions are good), be sensitive to the potential trauma related to discussing inclusion-related topics and provide spaces for all participants to input in comfort (small groups may feel more comfortable than in the plenary). Be aware about the boundaries of youth work and the competences of your team members in handling potentially sensitive topics and situations that could impact the wellbeing of participants.



Don't speak on behalf of other people or groups: if you are discussing the experiences of a specific group, try to invite people with lived experience to share their realities instead of speaking on behalf of them. There are lots of great materials available to project the voices of others through videos or case studies where people's real experiences can be centred.

Use experts wisely: if you are struggling with a topic or think you need someone with specific expertise, use an external trainer, speaker or consultant. There are lots of great organisations to collaborate with that would be happy to help you. If you're unsure of where to look, speak to the EYF Secretariat and they can help you to identify contacts.

Get a second opinion: if you are unsure whether a session or certain content could perpetuate stereotypes or you have concerns about the potential consequences of tackling a topic, speak to someone else for advice and support. This can be someone from inside or outside of your organisation.

Be clear about content in advance: this means that participants can know what to expect and to make them aware of timings. This can offer security to many and allow people with specific access needs to plan their participation. This is important especially for those that require assistance from others in sustaining their needs.

Have procedures in place to deal with discriminatory language or behaviour: it is the responsibility of the team to challenge discriminatory comments or behaviours quickly and firmly. The participants may self-regulate themselves, and you may offer space for this, but it is the team's final responsibility, and they should be ready to intervene.

Do not be afraid of stopping or changing a planned session to challenge such behaviours or comments, even if you're worried about the timings of the programme. Decide in advance what your approach would be in such situations. You might even want to role play situations within the team.



Have procedures in place to deal with triggers: if exploring sensitive topics or themes that could trigger past negative or traumatic experiences, tell the participants in advance so they can make a choice to leave beforehand. This includes showing potentially triggering media content, such as videos or films with violent or abusive substance. You do not have to remove them from your programme, but participants should have the option whether or not to be present. It's good to have a team member on hand who can support the participant(s) who leave, if needed. Human beings are complex so even if you have trigger warnings, people may have adverse reactions to content, so you should be ready to pause or adapt an activity. Always conduct a debrief after such content.

Be aware of norms and ability to participate in activities: consider how the needs of your group will be addressed in your sessions, especially when it comes to energisers and physical activities. Think about whether all of your group members are able to participate. This not only is important with physical abilities, but with regards to sensitivities around touch and personal boundaries. For example, if you have a participant who is a wheelchair user or with mobility issues, you might want to consider whether you ask the group to all stand up. Don't exclude those outside the binary (or questioning) by splitting the group into men/women. Offer possibilities to do an energiser that doesn't require touching other people.

Analyse diversity in your external guests/representation: if you are having expert input or organising a panel discussion, consider what the demographic of the representation says. If a panel consists of all men, or all white people, or all people from one socioeconomic background, then it is not reflective of the diversity in society. Not only does this elevate only certain voices and experiences but will likely not elicit diverse or interesting discussions.



Use well-known methods when exploring sensitive issues: if you are exploring an issue that is sensitive and unfamiliar to you, look to pre-existing methods that are available from reputable organisations and adapt them to your context. You may want to look to Council of Europe Youth Department resources or materials from organisations that are known for their work on inclusion on a European level.

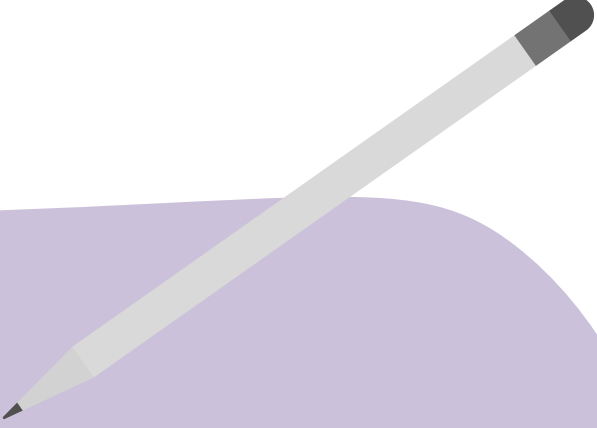
Go beyond an intercultural evening: be creative when thinking about spaces that could be used for participants to reflect on their similarities and differences. Weave experience-sharing processes throughout the programme, rather than just having a one-off activity that loses its impact due to the tendency of duplication in many international projects.

Schedule time for daily reflections: offer space for participants to reflect on their experiences in a project and an activity's programme on a daily basis. If something is missing or has not been approached sensitively, participants need space to share their experiences. You might want to split the participants into small groups and – with a team member or self-delivered – provide a reflective activity or leading questions for reflection. The team should allocate appropriate time to consider the feedback. For feedback to be meaningful, it needs to be acted on.

Collect good practices: don't start the work from scratch each time round – collate inclusive practices and new initiatives you've tried at the end of each activity for use in future projects. Even better, make sure to share these with the EYF so they can share them with future project coordinators!

Conduct an undertaking an inclusion audit: using an external inclusion auditor, you can seek a critical analysis of the programme of your project prior or during the programme. You might not use this every time, but it can be good practice for your organisation once in a while.

Checklist – content



- Consider how to discuss inclusion and intersectionality throughout the programme
- Utilise participants' personal experiences
- Have a process to deal with triggers
- Have procedures and training to challenge discriminatory language and/or behaviour
- Reflect on norms or assumptions in the programme by getting a second opinion, speaking with experts and/or conducting an inclusion audit
- Assess the diversity of speakers and/or external guests
- Use established methods to explore sensitive issues
- Schedule daily reflection spaces in the programme
- Compile good practices during and after a project

Online activities



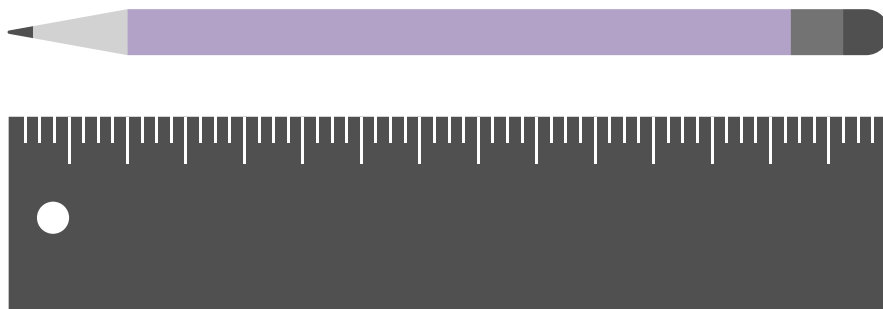
Top tips

1. Recognise needs still exist in cyberspace: everyone still has access needs – you should make sure this is part of the dialogue for online activities.
2. Online shouldn't mean less interactive: interaction can overcome many barriers and access needs, including trauma of past experiences in formal education. Allocate time in the programme for different methods including small group discussion, energisers, activities off screen and online social spaces.
3. Timing is key: plan activities during accessible hours considering the participant profile, their needs, and their other commitments. Consider that tiredness can be intensified for certain groups when online, such as people with language barriers, those experiencing chronic conditions or people with cognitive impairments. Breaks and respecting timetables is even more important online than in person.

Barriers to inclusion

- Digital exclusion: this refers to the unequal access or capacity to use IT that hinders full participation in society. To overcome this form of exclusion we must work with communities to address issues of opportunity, access, knowledge and skill, especially in relation to internet access. Particular groups are more likely to be excluded, such as the economically disadvantaged and those with limited or no literacy.
- Digital overload: in the covid age with many activities moving online, many people have experienced apathy towards online activities. Online activities often take a lot more effort to concentrate and the methods used tend to be less interactive and innovative than activities in person.

- Barriers to understanding: body language makes up a significant amount of communication, which is more limited online than in person. Language barriers can be exacerbated online as informal interpretation tends to be challenging to facilitate.
- Distractions: particularly when participating at home, there are often more distractions. This can be smaller things such as answering the door and intrusions by pets, but also could be related to childcare or other caring responsibilities.
- Physical discomfort: sitting in front of a screen for longer periods of time for most people can be uncomfortable or tiring. For people with certain disabilities or conditions, simply sitting up or using a screen is not possible or painful.
- Lack of access to private space: if someone does not have their own space, such as a young person that shares their bedroom with a sibling or has to use a common living space, they might not be able to speak as freely as someone who has access to their own space. This might hinder the meaningful participation of certain participants.



Inclusive approaches and actions

Ask about digital competences and available devices or internet connection: during the application process, ask what participants would need to be included from a digital perspective, in addition to their other needs. Try to avoid asking people to disclose access needs for the first time in a public setting.

Offer training in advance: if there is capacity, provide optional group or one-to-one training sessions for the participants about how to use the relevant online platforms and IT equipment needed for the project.

Have a test session: in advance of the activity, offer a drop-in space for participants to use the platform on which the activity will be taking place. This provides a space to try out the system, to resolve any of the participant's tech issues and for the team to troubleshoot any problems from their side.

Provide equipment: if within the means of an organisation, having an equipment lending service where participants can borrow equipment such as laptops, headsets and dongles can facilitate digital inclusion and overcome financial barriers of online participation.

Create structures for communication: agree and implement hand gestures to facilitate non-verbal communication. This will make the person speaking more aware and allow them to better read the room, which can be a challenge during online activities. The team should choose whether the chat is used for discussions, decide how speakers' lists will work and how timings will be managed in advance.

Utilise the function of your platform: try not to slip into the habit of everything being in plenary in online activities. Breakout rooms are your friend. Be aware on some platforms you have the option of having random groups or assigned groups, and this should be decided in advance for each session. You may want to use other tools such as whiteboards and screen sharing if available. When using breakouts, always keep an extra breakout room open for the team, in case you need an impromptu discussion space, for the team or for a one-to-one with a participant.

Use closed captions and read things out: to help people with hearing or language difficulties, offer the option for closed captions. You can use programmes like Otter.ai and Rev to enable live transcription in a separate window. Don't forget to pause transcriptions when the team is having any internal discussions, or sensitive issues are being discussed. To support those with visual impairments, make sure that any written content is read out loud and images are described.

Assign a logistics person or team: managing the logistics of an online session is a full-time role. It includes sharing content, arranging breakouts, managing speakers, and responding to participants' specific tech or connection issues. So, make sure this role is assigned separately to the facilitator or trainer position. This person can also support those who need extra support one-to-one, either by phone, email or direct chat. This person's details can be shared in advance as a clear point of contact.

Respect breaks: some people's access needs mean that longer breaks are necessary. Be aware some people will have to take screen regular breaks too. Just because a meeting is online doesn't mean it's acceptable to remove or reduce breaks.

Make sure to have breaks at the assigned times because some people, for example those who need assistance to visit the toilet, may have already scheduled in those break times to get support. Make it clear to participants that they are welcome to take their own additional comfort breaks if they need to.

Get off the screen: tasks that participants do by themselves, for example by taking a walk outside or moving around the house, can overcome screen fatigue and allow people to take better care of their own needs in the moment. Allow the options for participants to leave and re-join when they need to.

Encourage but don't enforce meeting norms: there can be access reasons why people are unable to have their video on or make it difficult to switch the mute on and off. This can be throughout an activity or at specific times. Therefore, you can recommend that people have their video on or be on mute but be sensitive to different abilities to be able to do so. If recording a session, seek consent in advance.

Pick your platform carefully: select your platform with the needs and abilities of your group in mind, as well as any organisational policies, for example around data protection. You could try: BlueJeans, Zoom, GoToMeeting, Gather Town, Whereby, Wonder or Google Meets.

Use tools for interactive methods: these can help you keep your online activities interactive and consider different learning styles. Most have a basic function and a paid function. You could try: Padlet, Trello, IdeaBoardz, Mentimeter, Slide, Pads or Google Jamboard.

Checklist – online activities

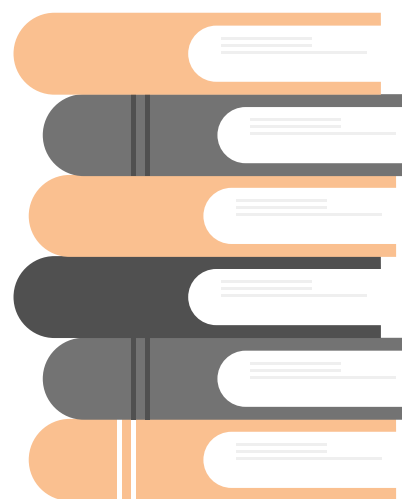
- Ask about digital competences in your needs analysis
- Offer group training and one-to-one support
- Arrange a test session
- Provide equipment for loan
- Create mechanisms for communicating during activities
- Use closed captions and read things out
- Assign a logistics person or team
- Respect breaks, incorporate off-screen activities and utilise the platform functions (e.g., breakouts, whiteboards and screen sharing)
- Select the appropriate platform and tools

Chapter four

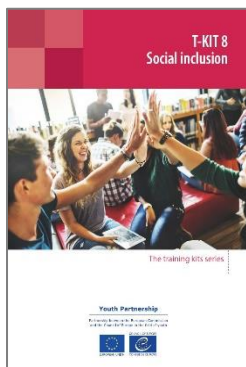
BEYOND THIS TOOLBOX

There will be many other inclusive practices that are not included in this toolbox. We encourage you to share with the EYF what you do well in your projects to promote inclusion. If you have any inclusive practices you would like to share, or if you have any feedback on anything within this toolbox, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

If you want to learn more about inclusion and diversity in the context of youth work, there are plenty of valuable resources offered by the Council of Europe. In this closing chapter, we would like to share with you some examples that you might find relevant for your work.



Relevant Council of Europe resources



T-Kit 8: Social Inclusion

This Toolkit equips youth workers with a better understanding of real experiences of social exclusion and how the related challenges are taken up in youth policy. The practical part includes examples of educational activities and inspiring projects on social inclusion.



Promoting Accessibility of the Training and Education Programme at the European Youth Centres

This manual was aimed at people working in the European Youth Centres, but it is relevant to anyone who would like to involve young people with disabilities in their activities. The manual is a result of a Consultative Meeting on Inclusion of Young People with Disabilities in Youth Activities of the Council of Europe. For further information on Disability and Disablism, have a look at practical activities and background information included in Compass.



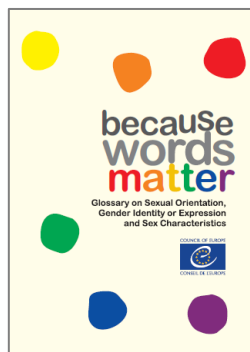
#IntersectionalityTransformsOurRealities campaign

The awareness-raising project "Promoting diversity and equality" was carried out by the CoE North-South Center and co-funded by the governments of Spain and Portugal. The campaign #IntersectionalityTransformsOurRealities is one of the results of this project, as a series of materials and resources that can be found on the Intersectionality page of the North-South Centre website.



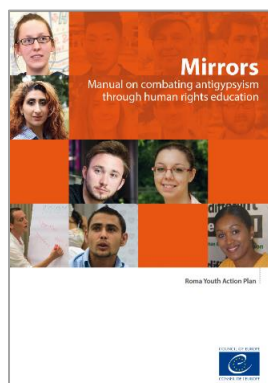
Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

The Toolkit provides knowledge, guidance and tools on how mainstreaming gender in Council of Europe's cooperation activities: it is a practical guide on gender mainstreaming and can also provide guidance to partners and other stakeholders. The Toolkit includes stand-alone tools, information and thematic factsheets.



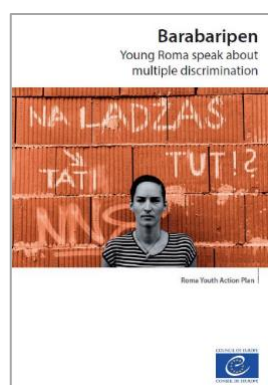
Because Words Matter - Glossary on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression and Sex Characteristics

This publication was developed by the Sexual Orientation and Gender identity (SOGI) unit of the Council of Europe. In this glossary we have gathered a set of basic terminologies to better understand the issues related to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression and Sex Characteristics.



Mirrors – Manual on Combatting antigypsyism through human rights education

This manual was produced within the Roma Youth Action Plan of the Council of Europe to provide teachers, trainers and facilitators of non- formal education processes with essential information and methodological tools to address antigypsyism with young people of all ages and in any social-cultural setting. It is equally suitable for work with groups of non- Roma, Roma only, or mixed groups.



Barabaripen – Young Roma speak about multiple discrimination

This publication was produced within the Roma Youth Action Plan, to serve as an awareness raising and educational tool on multiple discrimination. It collects life stories of nine young Roma who face discrimination on several levels and includes proposals for educational activities with young people to learn about multiple, intersectional discrimination.



All Different - All Equal

The Education Pack "all different - all equal" is an educational resource collecting ideas, methods and activities of non-formal intercultural education and training. The publication is relevant for anyone working with young people, seeking to explore issues of discrimination, diversity, promote equality and challenge prejudice.

This is not an exhaustive list: much more can be found on the Council of Europe website.



