

# MANUAL FOR FACILITATORS

A guide for organising and  
facilitating the educational process  
of study sessions held at the  
European Youth Centres



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# **MANUAL FOR FACILITATORS**

A guide for organising and facilitating the educational process  
of study sessions held at the European Youth Centres

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The manual is the revised version of the original publication (2009), which was to a large extent based on the experience accumulated in the from the first occasions when the Training Course for Facilitators of Study Sessions (TC4) was run in 2004-05. It is a result of the collective effort of current and previous educational advisors and other members of the Education and Training Division of the Council of Europe's Youth Department. Their professional contribution, feedback and administrative support has been also essential for the completion of this work.

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We have made all possible efforts to trace references of texts and content to their authors and give them the necessary credits. We apologise for any omissions and will be pleased to correct them online and in the next edition if requested.

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# 1. ABOUT THE MANUAL

## *Introduction to the manual*

The current manual is aimed primarily at members of preparatory teams of study sessions at the European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe, and intended to be a useful handbook for course directors and facilitators of the sessions. It offers support and guidelines on three different levels, namely through presenting the *concept and criteria* for sessions and by developing *individual* and *team* competences. However, it will also hopefully be useful for facilitators and organisers of other similar youth activities.

The first *Manual for facilitators in non-formal education* was published in 2009 and has been extensively used by teams of facilitators in preparing and running study sessions and other activities at the European Youth Centres and beyond. The authors of the manual relied heavily on the learning accumulated through the Training Course for Facilitators of Study Sessions (TC4) when compiling the publication. However, in order to maintain the high quality of its educational activities, the Youth Department carried out an evaluation of its programme of study sessions in 2014-15, and its results and suggestions for improvement have been approved by the Programming Committee of the youth sector.<sup>1</sup> This version of the *Manual* is one of the direct results of the evaluation, and primarily targets those young people who work on study sessions but may not have had the possibility of attending preliminary training courses.

Following a brief introductory first chapter on the necessity and use of the manual and the role of a variety of persons normally involved, Chapter 2 – ‘What is a study session?’ presents the concept and quality standards of study sessions and leads through the first steps of developing an idea and applying for an activity. Chapter 3 – ‘Personal preparation’ sidetracks by giving an insight into the basics of non-formal and human rights education and other skills of extreme importance for facilitators when preparing and running study sessions. Chapter 4 – ‘Team preparation’ focuses again more on practical issues: the importance of setting up a team, collaboration and programme design, and debriefing. Both Chapters 3 and 4 also give practical guidance in relation to group dynamics and facilitation of workshops. Chapter 5 – ‘Evaluation and reporting’ provides support for facilitators regarding rules and good practices of evaluating and reporting study sessions, and Chapter 6 – ‘Follow-up and dissemination of results’ calls attention to the importance of making the outcomes of the sessions visible and thus ensuring a multiplying effect and long-term impact. Finally, the ‘Conclusions’ are followed by an extensive list of Appendices which form an integral part of the publication: they include background materials for supporting individual and team preparations and learning, as well as documents and templates of practical use that help in making study sessions more accessible and inclusive, and support reporting.

The overall publication is designed to serve as a stimulating and hands-on manual for the teams of study sessions and will hopefully be widely used throughout the application process and preparatory meetings, as well as during the implementation of the activities in the European Youth Centres.

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<sup>1</sup> All related administrative and financial documentation, along with the *Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe*, have been updated and can be found online: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/study-sessions](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/study-sessions).

## WHY A MANUAL FOR ORGANISERS OF STUDY SESSIONS?

The nature of youth work implies a regular turnover of volunteers and staff in the organisations active in this field, especially those facilitating educational activities on a sporadic and voluntary basis. Therefore, regular training of new generations of young people and youth leaders is required.

The programme of study sessions at the European Youth Centres, organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with international youth organisations or networks, consists of some 20-25 activities every year. They include more than 800 young people per year and more than 100 people are involved in preparing them.

The study sessions of the European Youth Centres have been trendsetters in European youth work and remain a benchmark for intercultural youth activities. Successful study sessions have always been dependent on the appropriate selection of a relevant topic, recruitment of participants with the right profile and a competent team of facilitators, trainers, youth workers or youth leaders.

This manual is published to support the quality of study sessions and other educational activities in its programme. Preparing study session team members and developing their competences is one of the essential prerequisites for enabling exchanges of views and dialogical learning, preparing the participants to act as multipliers in their day-to-day lives, and ultimately contributing to the values and priorities of the Council of Europe and its youth sector. We hope that international youth organisations and other organisers of study sessions will find value in this manual and make its use a standard feature in the preparation of teams running study sessions.

When revising the *Manual*, all attempts have been made to complete and update the information in the publication, with special regard to general quality standards, as well as human rights education and intercultural learning. The intention is to make the content easy-to-use, practical and short, while referring the user to other educational manuals for more guidance on specific issues, such as designing training courses and workshops, planning evaluation or integrating human rights and intercultural learning into the programme.

Additionally, the content is complemented with considerable practical information on administrative processes and regulations that are indispensable for ensuring a smooth preparatory process and implementation, as well as information relating to accessibility and gender mainstreaming.

## TRAINING COURSES FOR FACILITATORS

The first Training Course for Facilitators of Study Sessions (TC4) was held in April 2004. Since then, the aim of TC4 has been to train facilitators from youth organisations in non-formal education for ensuring a quality process, including preparing, implementing, evaluating and securing effective follow-up of international youth training activities in specific study sessions, organised and run in co-operation with the Council of Europe's Youth Department. The courses addressed the needs of youth organisations and other youth work institutions in having competent and autonomous volunteers and staff capable of facilitating training and education activities to meet the needs of their membership. The course became one of the generic training courses run principally every two years in a two-year frequency by the Youth Department and was reintroduced with a new curriculum as from 2018.

As not all young people who are involved in preparing and delivering study sessions are able to participate in such a specialised training course, this guide was produced to help them to prepare in their roles as facilitators / preparatory team members. The text has largely benefited from the *Youth Department guide for study sessions*, the two reports produced by the participants of the Training Courses for Facilitators and other training publications. The objectives and the methodology of this manual follow the logic and the educational rationale of the two training courses for facilitators.

# ***Objectives and use of the manual***

## **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL FACILITATORS**

This manual aims to equip facilitators with a basic knowledge of study sessions and to raise future preparatory team members' awareness of the Council of Europe quality criteria and principles related to their responsibilities. It is designed to increase their knowledge and awareness of the values underpinning non-formal educational youth activities taking place at the European Youth Centres. Objectives also include giving a basic insight into different concepts of learning in non-formal education, and developing preparatory team members' competences in, and motivation to use, intercultural learning and human rights education in study sessions.

The manual is also intended to assist facilitators in non-formal education to develop essential skills with multicultural youth groups (e.g. programme design, leadership, teamwork, chairing and facilitating, communication, group dynamics, evaluation and follow-up). A specific emphasis is placed on the development of preparatory team members' awareness of and skills in organising the follow-up, in particular in writing reports and securing other forms of dissemination of the results of study sessions. The Council of Europe's intention is to provide facilitators with a concise insight into the political and administrative framework of study sessions run in co-operation with the European Youth Centres.

## **FOR YOUTH ORGANISATIONS**

This manual promotes the values connected with study sessions, as well as the means to call attention to study sessions as a unique opportunity for youth organisations to implement their strategies and programme in co-operation with the Council of Europe. It also enables facilitators to achieve meaningful follow-up with their member organisations after the study sessions, and the communication of the results to a wider public. Ultimately, it contributes to the quality and impact of international activities initiated by youth organisations.

## **HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL**

This manual provides background information and suggestions on non-formal education, human rights education and intercultural learning applicable to study sessions. It also proposes links to related resources and information on the criteria set by the Council of Europe for the successful preparation, implementation, evaluation and follow-up of study sessions organised in co-operation with the European Youth Centres.

The publication reflects the life cycle of a study session from the initial idea to the implementation and follow-up. Certain issues inevitably appear more than once and are presented from different perspectives and in varying detail. For example, human rights education is reflected on in both Chapter 2 (defining study sessions as specific educational activities) and more in-depth in Chapter 3 on personal preparation. Similarly, the importance of follow-up and relevant expectations are both discussed in the chapter on writing a study session proposal, as well as at the end of the publication separately.

Additionally, a number of textboxes are included in the publication to highlight issues of key importance, and, through reflection points and case studies, we provide guidance to increase the quality of the study session in all phases of its implementation:

## KEEP IN MIND!

This box is designed to point out some specific **rules** which are applicable to study sessions. These rules might already be mentioned in the call and criteria for applications, the quality criteria applying to educational activities of the Council of Europe youth sector, or the technical and administrative requirements.

## REFLECTION POINTS

Reflection points propose questions that can be used when preparing a proposal or during the preparatory process with your team members. They are usually directly related the preceding chapter or part of the text, and help the facilitators to connect the content in the manual with their own realities, and to apply the findings to their study session.

## CASE STUDIES

A few case studies are also presented, based on previous experiences from certain study sessions and other activities. These give an insight into how the programme of study session can be planned and defined in relation to the context of a specific youth organisation and help in handling typical challenging issues during the implementation of a study session.

For more detailed and up-to-date information on the rules and conditions applicable to study sessions, please consult the relevant website of the Council of Europe: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/study-sessions](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/study-sessions)

## MAIN ROLES OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A STUDY SESSION

**Person (or people) responsible for the application on behalf of the organisation(s):** Official representative(s) of the organisation applying for a study session. They are notified about the decision of the application and are responsible for initiating the preparatory process by putting the Secretariat in contact with the course director.

They also bear overall responsibility on behalf of the organisation for the implementation and follow-up of the activity, even if the *practical work* is in the hands of the course director. They may need to be involved in communication concerning issues and specific requests regarding the co-operation between the Council of Europe and the organisers.

Depending on organisational structure, sometimes – besides the person responsible for the application – there is also a person responsible for the activity who is ultimately in charge of the organisation's commitments *specifically related to the given study session*. This role does not necessarily fall into the hands of, or overlap with the course director, even if it is often the case.

**Course director (and facilitator):** The course director is the main person in charge of the preparation and implementation of the activity on behalf of the youth organisation(s). They take a leading role in co-ordinating

the preparations of the activity and are the liaison person between the organisation(s) and the Council of Europe. The course director should be experienced in managing a team and an international group of participants. They also secure practical and logistic work and deal with eventual conflicts and matters that may arise during the study session. They also co-ordinate the team of facilitators with the support of the educational advisor and, as member of the team, are often also involved in facilitating parts of the educational programme of the session.

**Preparatory team member (and facilitator):** Preparatory teams of study sessions are in general composed of three or four team members selected by the organisation(s) involved. Sometimes they are already mentioned in the application, but it is also valid if they are appointed after the activity is confirmed by the Council of Europe. All preparatory team members must have previous experience in national / international youth work and in organising youth activities; they must have knowledge of the topics of the study session and experience as a facilitator. The level of experience of facilitators varies; however, there should be always a balance of more and less experienced people in the team and, all in all, the team should have the capacity to run the educational programme safely. They should all be involved throughout the whole preparatory process, including the preparatory meeting and implementation of the study session and provide input to the assessment of the session. *Read more in Chapter 4.1.1 about team composition.*

**Educational advisor:** The Council of Europe provides educational support to the study sessions held at the European Youth Centre through an educational advisor. Educational advisors are staff members of the Council of Europe based in one of the two European Youth Centres, and have specific expertise in non-formal education, intercultural learning and human rights education. They also have institutional, political and administrative roles, beside their educational one. The Council of Europe sometimes contracts a trainer (from its Trainers Pool) to fulfil the role of educational advisor (external educational advisor).

The educational advisor is the organisation's contact person in the Council of Europe and administers the session, including when an external trainer is appointed to the study session. Youth organisations are expected to contact them to discuss the preparation of the activity and to arrange the first meeting of the preparatory team. *Read more on the role of advisors in Chapter 2.1.2: The specificity and unique value of study sessions.*

**Participant:** Participants are the direct beneficiaries of study sessions. In line with the pedagogical basis of human rights education, their participation – including making decisions about what and how they learn – as well as their learning and co-operation are at the centre of the programme. Also, as a result of the study session the expectation is that they become motivated to apply human rights values in their lives and take action for promoting and defending human rights. According to existing criteria, study sessions are intended for a group minimum of 20 and a maximum of 40 participants, including the preparatory team (with the exception of double study sessions). The recruitment of the participants is the sole responsibility of the youth organisation(s) involved, but they should ensure an adequate balance of participants from the various member states of the Council of Europe (minimum eight member states). Participants coming from one country should not exceed 20% of the total number of participants. Up to 15% of all participants may come from non-member countries. The organisation should also seek a balance of participants of each sex, unless running a single-sex activity already approved by the Programming Committee. The activities of the EYCs are designed for participants between the ages of 18 and 30 – with a maximum of 25% over the age of 30. Participants are meant to fully and actively take part in the study session for its full duration and they must be able to act as multipliers and contribute to the follow-up of the activity within their own context and organisation. The Council of Europe (and partners) welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the expected profile, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

**Lecturer or resource person:** Preparatory teams of study sessions are encouraged to bring in specific expertise to complement the programme of their session if needed by inviting external lecturers. They can be academic lecturers, experts in certain topics related to the theme of the session or practitioners in the field of formal or non-formal education. Their contribution intervention should be well integrated into the flow of the overall programme. In order to respect participant-centredness and encourage dialogical and non-dogmatic approaches, no single expert should take over major parts of the programme alone: contributions are usually limited to one or two sessions within in the activity. Travel, board, lodging expenses and a fee for up to two lecturers per activity are paid by the Council of Europe. Youth organisations wishing to invite one or more lecturers from countries outside Europe should first discuss this with the educational advisor. *More on the rules of inviting lecturers can be found in the document 'Administrative and technical information – Reference document for youth organisations holding study sessions at the EYCs' and in Chapter 4.2.3 In between meetings of this manual.*<sup>2</sup>

**Administrative assistant of the European Youth Centre:** The logistical and administrative support of the Council of Europe for the study session is provided by an administrative assistant, under the supervision and guidance of the educational advisor. The assistants are the contact people for the team and the course director / team member for matters related to administrative and practical issues, such as visa and travel arrangements, handling the participant list, and playing a role as liaison people with the EYC in logistic matters.

**Interpreters:** Study sessions can normally be held in two working languages with simultaneous interpretation by professional interpreters contracted by the Council of Europe. The need for interpretation is to be indicated in the application for the study session, and organisations are required to ensure that the need for interpretation is real and to inform the educational advisor as soon as possible regarding any necessary changes to the interpretation request or if interpretation is no longer needed and should be cancelled. *International sign interpreters and palantypists* can be also invited to support study sessions if requested in the application, and if their presence is justifiable.

**Personal assistant:** Personal assistants assist individuals with physical disabilities, mental impairments, and other health and practical needs in their daily life. The European Youth Centres take appropriate measures also to ensure the participation of young people with special needs with respect to, among others, mobility and personal assistance. In case youth organisations anticipate participants wanting to attend the activity with their own personal assistants, please consult with the educational advisor about practical details before sending invitations. *Appendix V. Access needs of participants* offers help with managing the preparations of sessions with mixed-ability groups.

**Financial officer of the European Youth Centre:** The financial officer / accountant at the Secretariat of the EYC takes an important role in handling reimbursement of travel expenses for participants of study sessions. They may be consulted by the educational advisors and administrative assistant on questions related to the budget of the overall activity (preparatory costs, general financial rules for study sessions). One of their main roles is to inform and consult the preparatory teams and participants about the rules for reimbursement of travel costs, and to manage the reimbursements after the submission of all necessary supporting evidence. Please note that roles and processes may, to a certain extent, differ at EYC Strasbourg and Budapest.

**Executive Director of the European Youth Centre:** The Executive Director of the European Youth Centre provides leadership to and management of the centre, including services, human resources, premises, facilities and occupancy of the EYC, with special concern for safety, logistical and health matters. Traditionally, they

<sup>2</sup> Documents on financial, administrative and technical information related to study sessions: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents); on lecturers, consult the 'Administrative and technical information – Reference document for youth organisations holding study sessions at the EYCs', p. 6.

are invited to welcome participants of study sessions and provide information about the expectations and conditions of the European Youth Centres applying to the participants; they may also address issues specifically related to the theme of the study session and the overall work and mission of the Council of Europe.

**Head of the Education and Training Division:** The Head of the Education and Training Division is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the programme activities of the Youth Department, including the study sessions. The educational advisors report to the Head of Division; they can also be directly contacted by course directors and external educational advisors about any matter relating to the study session.

**Head of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe:** The Head of the Youth Department provides leadership and management to the Youth Department that is a part of the Directorate of Democratic Participation within the Directorate General of Democracy ('DGII') of the Council of Europe. In relation to study sessions, the Head of Department represents the Youth Department as a signatory party in the agreement of co-organising the activities with the youth organisation(s), and takes decisions in matters requiring changes to the decisions of the Programming Committee or any exception to the administrative and financial rules applying to study sessions.



*European Youth Centre Budapest*

*European Youth Centre Strasbourg*

## 2. WHAT IS A STUDY SESSION?

### ***The concept of a study session and its place in the programme of the Council of Europe and its Youth Department***

Study sessions are international educational youth seminars (meetings), lasting between four and eight days, which bring together young people, members of international / European youth organisations or networks, to deepen their understanding of a specific subject relevant to the priorities of the Council of Europe youth sector and of their youth organisation / network. They are held at one of the European Youth Centres, in Strasbourg or Budapest. Study sessions **are based on co-operation** between the international youth organisations / networks and the Council of Europe.

The selection of topics and partner organisations for study sessions is based on applications submitted by youth organisations twice a year, and decided upon by the Programming Committee on Youth.<sup>3</sup> These activities are financed by the Council of Europe's budget to the youth sector and decided according to biennial work priorities set by the Joint Council on Youth. The specifics of the financial rules applying to the study sessions are to be found in the document 'Criteria for study sessions'.<sup>4</sup>

Every year, the European Youth Centres host some 20 to 25 study sessions. These activities address a variety of subjects, corresponding to the work priorities of the Council of Europe youth sector.<sup>5</sup> The scope and extent of the subject matter indicate that they remain a key tool for co-operation with youth organisations in developing their own thematic focuses and multiplying their organisational cultures. The objectives are set by the youth organisation(s) and accepted by the Programming Committee on Youth. Youth organisations recruit the participants and are responsible for the follow-up. Creativity and innovation in methodological as well as thematic terms are also important aspects of study sessions.

Within the Youth for Democracy programme of the Council of Europe, a study session is emblematic in youth work by combining pan-European youth work with work at grassroots levels and by directly associating young people to the priorities of the programme. The contents of study sessions filter down to the grassroots, as participants in a study session are mostly national level or local leaders. This means that the results of study sessions can be implemented and used by participants in their role as multipliers with other young people.

#### **⚠ KEEP IN MIND!**

##### **Double study sessions and special projects**

Besides regular study sessions that bring together between 20 and 40 participants from four to eight working days, youth organisations may also apply for *double study sessions* and *special projects*.<sup>6</sup>

4 Criteria for activities to be held in co-operation with the European Youth Centres [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents).

5 The priorities for each biennial programme of the youth sector are defined by the Joint Council on Youth, which is the central co-managed political body of the youth sector and can be found at: [www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth).

6 For more detailed information on study sessions, consult: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/study-sessions](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/study-sessions).

## REFLECTION POINTS

We have presented the different organisational and institutional contexts of a study session.

What is the main use of study sessions within your organisation / network?

What is the difference between a study session and other activities of your organisation?

The following criteria might help reflection on the definition of a study session:

What is a study session?	What is a study session NOT?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A co-operation activity between the youth organisation and the Council of Europe. As such it is linked with the organisation's mission and the priorities of the Council of Europe's youth sector</li><li>• Held at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg or Budapest</li><li>• An international activity with and for young people (majority aged between 18 and 30) from at least eight countries</li><li>• A non-formal education activity, run by a team of facilitators, based on participants' learning needs and providing space for holistic, experiential and co-operative learning</li><li>• An activity that entails an intercultural learning process and a human rights education approach</li><li>• An activity that has a well-developed and flexible programme in accordance with quality criteria of the Council of Europe</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An activity of based on ad-hoc co-operation of a number of youth organisations; it has to be initiated and run by existing network(s) of youth organisations</li><li>• An academic seminar</li><li>• A youth festival</li><li>• A sports activity</li><li>• Open to everyone; specific criteria for selection of participants are defined</li><li>• A holiday or study trip</li><li>• A statutory meeting for the organisation</li><li>• Individual work</li></ul>

## The study session as a holistic learning experience

Participants in a study session go through an intercultural experience of living and learning together in a multicultural group, a situation of personal and group learning. According to the pedagogical basis of Human Rights Education (HRE) in the *Compass* manual, as human rights issues concern the whole person (body, mind and soul), HRE necessarily also involves a holistic learning approach. Therefore, study sessions as educational activities are also meant to promote the development of the whole person, their intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potentials. It also means that educators should seek to address and

involve cognitive, practical and attitudinal dimensions of learning.<sup>7</sup>

A study session is considered to be a participatory learning experience because it is an activity *for* young people, *by* young people and *with* young people. Young people in a study session have the opportunity to discuss an issue of concern to them and their organisation from a variety of perspectives.

The micro-society formed within the study session is a great source of social and intercultural learning. As the group will have a diversity of opinions, values, and styles of learning and communication, it is essential to learn to live together, to communicate across linguistic and cultural divides, and to respect others. The primary educational methodology to be used for facilitating these processes is non-formal education (NFE), taking the ethical and education standards of the Council of Europe as applied to youth work and non-formal education into consideration. Participation, co-operative and experiential learning are some of the pillars of NFE and form the basis of the educational approach in study sessions. Intercultural learning and human rights education are based on these methodologies and are the key to study sessions as well. The values, identities, stereotypes and prejudices of the participants may be challenged while their learning experiences are influenced by the issues discussed in the intercultural environment of the European Youth Centres and by the personal experiences they bring with them.

Participants are also expected to become aware of their role as social actors and to become motivated to take social action – not only to learn *about* and *through*, but also *for* human rights. This may manifest itself in multiplying processes after the study session, in follow-up projects within the youth organisation and/or its member organisation, in co-operation activities between participants, and in different kinds of online and offline actions.

The term used at the Council of Europe to refer to young participants / youth leaders who share their experience after study sessions or after other educational activities and use their newly acquired knowledge to promote human rights and social change on local, national level or international levels is ‘multipliers’. An added value of a study session is that these multipliers can become key actors in different fields in their communities and organisations, and may play key roles in education as well as in political contexts.

.....  
7 *The pedagogical basis of HRE in Compass, Compass. Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people.* p. 32.

# The specificity and unique value of study sessions

The specificity and unique value of study sessions at the Youth Department comes from four main characteristics:

## A. Institutional support and context

- Possibilities to create links with the work of the Council of Europe and meet experts and high-level officials
- The programme benefits from, and may provide input to, the work of the various Council of Europe sectors about human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
- The label of the European Youth Centre makes it easier to attract experts and lecturers.
- It facilitates participation through support of visa application processes (invitation letters issued by the Youth Department), smooth reimbursement of travel costs and low registration fees.
- Study sessions are a catalyst for creativity: organisations tend to be more creative in their choice of themes, adopting topics of greater general interest, because the activity has to face competition to be accepted.
- Outcomes of study sessions and recommendations by participants can be directed to the political level by addressing the statutory bodies of the youth sector of the Council of Europe, and the Advisory Council on Youth specifically.
- The sessions themselves, and the EYCs facilitate contacts between different organisations, when both have a study session at the same time (through meeting other leaders and participants) or when two or more organisations apply together.

## B. Educational support by professional educational advisors<sup>8</sup>

- The educational advisors / external trainers have expertise in non-formal education and on specific topics. They also have political and administrative roles, as well as their educational one.<sup>9</sup>
- The educational advisors / external trainers provide immediate use of different Council of Europe publications and methods developed at similar activities, which are much more accessible and easier to use and understand when activities take place in a youth centre.
- The educational advisors / external trainers provide support for people on the leadership in the team.
- The educational advisors / external trainers have accumulated expertise through working with different organisations and therefore provide a selection of methods, contents, findings and conclusions made by previous groups, which are transferred from organisation to organisation.
- The involvement of educational advisors / external trainers during the preparation phase emphasises the need for a careful preparatory process.
- The special educational support provides opportunities for a good combination of methods and contents, allowing the sessions to be simultaneously process-orientated as well as product-orientated.

## C. Logistical and administrative support

- Holding an activity at an EYC means the organisation and team in charge do not have to waste time on technical and financial questions and can therefore concentrate on the programme and educational aspects.
- Professional simultaneous interpretation is provided free by the Council of Europe (on request, for two languages with simultaneous interpretation), including International Sign and palantyping.

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8 Educational advice may be provided by the educational advisors of the European Youth Centres or by trainers / educational consultants contracted by the Council of Europe.

9 More details on the role of the educational advisor can be found in 2.2.2. *Writing a proposal for a study session*, point E: *What can be expected from the educational advisor?*

- EYCs are spaces with competent staff and services for working and living together, catering for the needs of all to the extent possible, and accessible to young people with disabilities.
- Working rooms and spaces appropriate for different types of meetings and collective activities and individual rooms are offered for good and lively social and intercultural learning experiences. Common areas are accessible, as are some of the individual rooms.
- Support with visa procedures is also provided to facilitate the process for participants and team members.

#### D. Financial support

Financial support for study sessions include the following:

- Provision for accommodation, meals, working rooms and materials by the Council of Europe
- Preparatory costs of the study session, including reimbursement of expenses for a preparatory meeting
- Reimbursement of travel expenses for participants and team members
- Payment for up to two external lecturers to be invited to the programme
- The framework for financial support also enables disadvantaged young people or young people with additional access needs, who usually have less access to activities, to participate.

For details regarding financial support, please consult the financial and administrative documents for study sessions, with special regard to 'Technical information for the partners of the Youth Department holding study sessions at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest'.<sup>10</sup>

## Quality assurance in study sessions held in the European Youth Centres

The quality assurance system has at its core the *Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe*. This document reviews the main steps of the life cycle of study sessions and provides standards, criteria and information about the existing tools to be used for reaching the desired quality; it is available for consultation online. The following model gives an overview of the process, which is based on a continuum, meaning that measures have been put in place for ensuring that the study sessions generate further feedback, which will be used for continuously improving the programme.

Model of quality insurance and tools for the study sessions



<sup>10</sup> The documents here provide you with financial, administrative and technical information related to study sessions: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents).

## Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

The Quality Standards describe what should be done in certain activities and also relate to how they are prepared, delivered and evaluated. The notion of quality is socially, institutionally and culturally marked, and it concerns the whole spectrum of context, partners, people, methods and stages of the activity or project. Therefore, different understandings of it may occur between partners, but a minimum common understanding of what it entails is needed. Quality in non-formal education should be seen as a permanent endeavour to those responsible for its practice, and the standards below are intended to provide practitioners with a *minimum* set of criteria.

Many of these criteria may be difficult to measure in the short or even medium term; however, this does not mean that they cannot be evaluated. The standards should apply to all the activities organised by or in co-operation with the Youth Department having a predominant education or training nature, regardless of the place where they are held. This model should also serve as inspiration for other activities in the youth field.

The purpose of these standards is also to ensure that the education and training activities can benefit from the best conditions possible and are run according to the most efficient and effective usage of educational, financial and technical resources.

### The quality standards as applicable to the activities of the Youth Department are:<sup>11</sup>

1. **A relevant needs assessment** – basing activities on clear needs and expectations of the Council of Europe and its partners and on the political, social, cultural and educational reality they are meant to address.
2. **Specific, achievable and assessable objectives** – each activity, in addition to the overall aims that derive from the needs analysis, must always have specific educational and social objectives that will allow for a suitable programme to be developed, for the identification and recruitment of the best suited target groups, for an appropriate evaluation process and for consistent follow-up. Objectives must be specific, achievable and assessable.
3. **Definition of competences addressed and learning outcomes for the participants** – activities should have explicit and identifiable learning outcomes, with a clear set of competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) to be developed.
4. **Relevance to the Council of Europe programme and Youth Department's priorities** – study sessions are a means of making the priorities and programme of activities of the Council of Europe known and accessible to its target groups; they are therefore meant to be reflected in the aims and programme.
5. **An appropriate and timely preparation process** – a successful activity depends largely on a timely, thorough and complete preparatory process. Study sessions must have a two-day preparatory meeting at the latest six weeks before the activity, and should be facilitated by the same team of facilitators that prepared them.
6. **A competent team of trainers and facilitators** – multicultural and multinational team of facilitators should be composed of at least three people; their profile and competences should be in accordance with the needs of the activity; gender balance, geographical and cultural diversity must be ensured, as well as a balance of senior and junior facilitators. The team is supported by at least one member of the Youth Department staff, or by an external trainer with the supervision of an Educational Advisor.

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<sup>11</sup> This is only a list of the standards with a brief explanation with special regard to study sessions. For the full description and explanation, please consult the [original document online](#) on the Youth Department's website.

Teams are also encouraged to bring in expertise from outside the team.

7. **An integrated approach to intercultural learning, participation and human rights education** – Intercultural Learning (ICL) should be part of the formal programme (in an explicit or implicit manner) and should enable everyone to contribute to and benefit from the activity regardless of, and with respect to, their cultural backgrounds and identity affiliations. Participants should take part in making decisions about their learning, and methods need to be adapted to facilitate everyone's active participation. HRE is a fundamental human right itself; it should therefore be mainstreamed in all activities with respect to all its three dimensions – learning about, through and for human rights.
8. **Suitable recruitment and selection of participants** – transparency, objectivity and equality of chances for all those applying and the reaching of the intended target groups.
9. **A consistent practice of non-formal education principles and approaches** – activities should apply the commonly accepted pedagogical principles of non-formal education, notably participant-centeredness, action-orientation and be value-based in nature.
10. **Appropriate, accessible and timely documentation** – activities must be documented especially with regard to their results and outcomes, and final activity reports are to be presented within four months of the completion of the activity. Documentation should be made available to all participants and their organisations and potentially to all those concerned.
11. **A planned and open process of evaluation** – adequate evaluation of the activities is crucial to secure, among other things, stocktaking of the results, the evaluation of the quality of the learning process and the follow-up. Evaluation meetings of study sessions may be held immediately after the end of the activity with the team of facilitators at the EYC.
12. **Optimal working conditions and environment** – an appropriate, accessible and favourable physical environment for learning
13. **Appropriate institutional support and integrated follow-up** – institutional and educational support from the Council of Europe should create synergies for the advancement of co-operation with youth organisations.
14. **Visibility and communication** – visibility supports the recognition of the value of the activities, a condition for their viability and an effort in transparency of the organisation. Activities should be promoted using the offline and online communication channels of the Youth Department and of the partner organisations, and institutional logos are to be used.
15. **Concern for innovation and research** – organisers of study sessions should make use of relevant research and should seek to bring in specific expertise relevant to the topic addressed. It is also advisable to leave space for new methods, approaches and interpretations of issues.

The *Quality Standards* also include a glossary with the terms used in it, especially for readers less familiar with the “jargon” of the Council of Europe’s youth sector. It should not be understood as an official definition of the Council of Europe of those terms but might be useful for organisers and facilitators of study sessions.

## **⚠ KEEP IN MIND!**

### **Human dignity and safety and security at study sessions**

The quality standards listed above actually implicitly include that study sessions are also a “safe space” for participants. Facilitators have an important responsibility in this respect: they need to be aware and fully respect safety and security rules of the European Youth Centres and, in addition, abide by the principles and norms applying to human dignity in a workplace and make all the necessary efforts to be a role model in this respect for other participants.

Also note that none of the advice provided in the current publication should be understood as an exemption for a facilitator for taking personal responsibility for their individual acts in this respect.

## **▶ REFLECTION POINTS**

When and where does it make sense to reflect on the *Quality Standards* during the process of implementing a study session? Could you identify one or more points in the process?

Does quality depend more on an organisation(s) and their working culture, or more on the competences of the actual team of facilitators?

When it comes to your organisation, can you think of any strengths and weaknesses with regard to these standards?



# The life cycle of a study session

## First steps – needs assessment and preparing the proposal

Organising an international intercultural educational activity with participants from many countries requires thorough and timely preparation. Below are the main stages of a study session in chronological order. Subsequent chapters of the manual discuss the steps in detail, and also suggest timeframes.

1. Needs assessment
2. Preparing the proposal (concept, aims and objectives and links with the work of the Council of Europe, target group / profile of participants, identifying up to five team members)
3. Preparation of the study session and recruitment of participants
4. Implementing the programme of the study session
5. Evaluation of the study session
6. Financial report to claim the reimbursements of costs related to the preparations (before or after the session)
7. Preparation and submission of the narrative final report
8. Follow-up.



## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

When conducting a needs assessment for a study session, youth organisations should tackle the following questions:

- What are the current needs of our members or of our organisation as a whole?
- Are these needs being addressed through other activities? How?
- Can they be addressed in one study session of four to eight days?
- Are the needs linked to Council of Europe mission and priorities of the youth sector? How?

There are various approaches and methods for conducting a needs assessment, depending on the context of your work and the given study session itself. Nevertheless, you might find the recommendations below interesting and adapt them as needed:

## Different ways of identifying needs

- Consultation with national movements / branches
- Questionnaire (to member organisations / e.g. at a General Assembly)
- Follow-up of previous activities – suggestions from former participants and teams
- Identification of priorities of the organisation / network
- Strategic development plan of the organisation
- Analysis of achievement of the organisation's objectives / aims to date
- Analysis of current issues / "hot issues" affecting young people in society

### **⚠ KEEP IN MIND!**

#### **In the application for a study session**

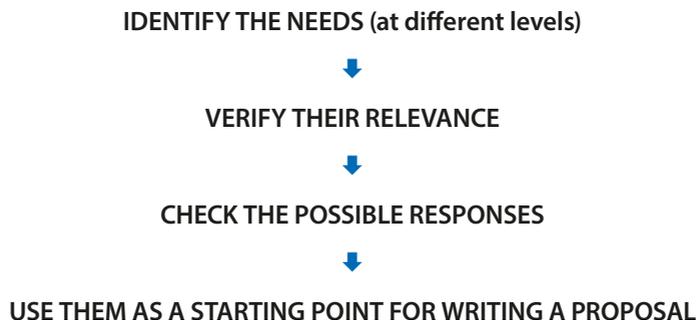
#### **12. Links with organisational strategy and annual programme**

Here you should explain the need for the activity and its purpose in the organisational annual / long-term programme, and indicate previous experience (if any) in the subject area of the activity. This is a point when you have to identify clear links between your organisation's strategy, related needs and the planned study session.<sup>12</sup>

In most of the cases it is necessary to combine different ways of identifying the needs listed above. Depending on the structure and functioning of your organisation(s), you may need to gather information from various levels (international, national or local branches), management and supervisory bodies and possibly also consult future team members if they are have already been anticipated at this point.

The application also has to be written in a concise format and length and connect to wider social-political context and the realities of young people.

Before using the identified needs as a starting point for your proposal, it may also be useful to cross-check the relevance of your findings:



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<sup>12</sup> The numbers in the 'Keep in Mind' textboxes refer to the corresponding question on the application form for the study session.



## CHOOSING THE FORMAT OF YOUR ACTIVITY

Most of the study sessions hosted in the European Youth Centres bring together between 20 and 40 participants for four to eight working days. Study sessions can be held in two languages with simultaneous interpretation. If, after reviewing the needs, it emerges that they cannot be addressed in a study session of four to eight days, it is worth considering other possible formats.

**Double study sessions** have the same function as study sessions, with the following specifications:

They are proposed and implemented by at least two applicant organisations

They bring together a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 70 participants, including the preparatory team

They have a maximum duration of five working days (exceptions are possible, if justified)

They may benefit – when justified – from interpretation into three working languages.

**Symposia** are activities addressing themes and matters of common concern and interest for both the governmental and non-governmental partners of the Council of Europe youth sector. Symposia are aimed at knowledge production and contributing to the youth policy development of the Council of Europe and its governmental and non-governmental partners. As with special projects, consultation with the Secretariat of the Youth Department is recommended.

**Special projects** are activities of an innovative character that fall outside the specific conditions of study sessions and symposia.

Such projects should provide benefits for the organisation, network or youth structure concerned and have a wider application in the youth programme of the Council of Europe. Consultation with the Secretariat of the Youth Department – is recommended before applications are submitted.

### KEEP IN MIND!

#### In the application for a study session

##### 3. Type of study session

Here you have to give the type of activity you are applying for – study session, double study session or special project. In the case of a special project, you will need to provide details at this point, explaining the general idea and its structure.

Chapter 3 of *Compass* 'Taking Action for Human Rights' provides useful tips for young people to take action about a specific issue. For example, one may use the 'Problem Tree' method to reflect on a certain topic you plan to work on.<sup>13</sup>

## PREPARING AN APPLICATION FOR A STUDY SESSION

**Study the application procedures:** The Council of Europe invites non-governmental youth organisations, networks and other non-governmental structures involved in areas of youth work relevant to the Council of Europe's youth policy to submit applications for study sessions to be held in co-operation with the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, respecting the following deadlines:

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<sup>13</sup> *Compass*, Chapter 3 – 'Taking Action for Human Rights' (p. 355-378) and *Knowing the problem – Problem tree* (p. 372-373).

<b>April</b>	For study sessions in the first semester of the following calendar year, taking place between 1 January and 30 June.
<b>October</b>	For study sessions in the second semester of the following year, taking place between 1 July and 31 December.

To be supported, activities should contribute to the programmes and the objectives of the Council of Europe’s youth sector. All organisations and networks interested in submitting applications are asked to consult the website of the Youth Department ([www.coe.int/youth](http://www.coe.int/youth)).<sup>14</sup> With this link, you can also access the application form for study sessions, check on the specific criteria and find all relevant financial and administrative documents for applying to run study sessions.

**Assessment process:** Study session applications are initially assessed by the Secretariat of the Council of Europe (usually the Educational team of the Youth Department) and decided upon by the Programming Committee on Youth. The Programming Committee meets to review the assessment of the Secretariat of the youth organisations’ / movements’ applications and takes the final decision concerning which study sessions are accepted.<sup>15</sup> The Programming Committee may also set specific conditions with the acceptance of a study sessions that must be respected and considered by the organisers. More information on the assessment process can be found in the document *Criteria for activities to be held in co-operation with the European Youth Centres* online.<sup>16</sup>



.....  
 14 The *Quality assurance in study sessions held in the European Youth Centres* (DDCP-YOUTH DEPARTMENT/ETD (2016) 202) is a document that reviews the main steps of the life cycle of study sessions and provides information about the existing tools to be used for reaching the desired quality standards. It can be found and consulted online at the web page of the Youth Department: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents).

15 The Youth Department Programming Committee on Youth meets twice a year, in June and December.

16 Financial and administrative documents – *Criteria for activities to be held in co-operation with the European Youth Centres* (2017): [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents).

# Writing a proposal for a study session

## DEFINITION OF AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND CONTENTS OF STUDY SESSIONS

In the following section of the manual, we draw from experience – based on a case study. It may be easier to understand how aims and objectives of a study session work, based on the specific needs of an anticipated group of young people.

### **Advice: How to formulate aims and objectives**

The application form for a study session requires a clear formulation of the aims of the activity. Making such aims operational and formulating them in such a way that both the preparatory team and the participants can understand them and relate them to their work in the organisation demands thorough reflection.

Aims and objectives are frequently confused with each other or even with the contents and the programme elements of a given activity. It is therefore important to spend enough time on the formulation of the aims and objectives in order to facilitate the planning of the programme later. In a very simplified way, the aim could be considered as the main goal of the activity within the long-term planning of the organisation. The objectives are the concrete steps towards reaching this aim.

The following case study demonstrates an example of a needs analysis for a study session. It may facilitate your reflection on how to define internally the need for the activity in your organisation before preparing your application.

### **Needs assessment from the Study session “Inclusion culture”**

ENIL – European Network on Independent Living Youth and ESN – Erasmus Student Network will cooperate in this study session, because we feel that there is knowledge, skills, and resources in both networks that should be shared to strengthen both organisations and to promote social cohesion and inclusion across Europe. In the current climate, we believe that intercultural skills and understanding are essential. Often, young disabled people have limited opportunities to gain intercultural competences and our organisational experience suggests that culturally-focused organisations struggle to be inclusive of disability. At the same time, disability organisations tend to neglect intercultural challenges. For ENIL and ESN, this study session would provide an opportunity to build the capacity by exchanging the different types of expertise that both organisations have. For this activity, participants from ENIL would bring their experiences of inclusion and accessibility (as well as exclusion and barriers they face), while ESN participants would bring extensive intercultural youth activities. The complexity and the sensitivity of the study session would require a combination of trainers from both organisations in order to facilitate discussion and to meet the needs of *all* participants.

The Youth Network of the European Network on Independent Living has been among the few European networks which offer a platform and work on empowering young disabled people. As the network is developing, the need for intercultural skills and understanding is becoming more apparent. For ENIL, this activity would support the network’s continued development by providing activities that could be used elsewhere by the organisation. It would benefit our members if they could become leaders in inclusive intercultural understanding within the disability community. Erasmus Student Network is the biggest student association in Europe. It advocates on behalf of international students and aims to improve their social inclusion. ESN has been working on improving its access for disabled students over

the last seven years. The Youth Network of the European Network on Independent Living has been among the few European networks which offer a platform and work on empowering young disabled people. As the network is developing, the need for intercultural skills and understanding is becoming more apparent. For ENIL, this activity would support the network's continued development by providing activities that could be used elsewhere by the organisation. It would benefit our members if they could become leaders in inclusive intercultural understanding within the disability community. Erasmus Student Network is the biggest student association in Europe. It advocates on behalf of international students and aims to improve their social inclusion. ESN has been working on improving its access for disabled students over the last seven years. During this time, ESN has worked with disabled people's organisations to increase its understanding of disability issues. For both organisations, this study session would be the first time they would be running a mixed-ability training course which is not focused on disability. This is an important step for both organisations because it embraces the concept of intersectionality and the belief that full inclusion happens when it supports all people, regardless of their background or needs, in a safe space. The purpose of having a joint study session is to create an opportunity for young disabled and non-disabled people to share skills and build each other's capacity, thus enhancing intercultural understanding and promoting active citizenship. We hope that this experience could be used to strengthen the wider youth field by highlighting the methods, challenges and solutions developed during the study session. We also believe that the study session would encourage other youth organisations to start their journey to inclusion and intercultural dialogue. The learning from the study session will be used by both organisations to facilitate a deeper understanding of what inclusion means on the grounds of both disability and culture.

Based on this overview we can conclude the following needs:

*ESN: There is a need to develop competences of their pool of trainers to work with mixed ability group, and a need to promote inclusion of people with disabilities.*

*ENIL: There is a need to develop capacity to facilitate intercultural activities with mixed ability groups, and to understand and promote further intercultural dialogue among members.*

**As a result of this needs assessment, the organisations have set up the following aims and objectives:**

The aim of this activity is to promote leadership in intercultural learning among mixed-ability youth groups, and solidarity among disabled and non-disabled young people.

-> The aims should contain in brief, information about *the issue to be addressed*, the *participants*, the *approach* and/or the *results expected* or pursued.

**Specific objectives of the study session are as follows:**

- To understand the framework and the essential dimensions of intercultural learning
- To understand the concepts of inclusion and disability, including the concept of social model of disability
- To develop the skills and competence of participants around delivering inclusive, intercultural youth activities, including how to celebrate diversity in non-formal education settings
- To enhance intercultural co-operation and leadership between young disabled and non-disabled people
- To provide methods and tools which participants can take to their local communities in order to promote inclusive intercultural activities.

## Tips for formulating aims and objectives:

First of all, it helps to phrase the aim and objectives as specifically and clearly as possible. The T-Kit on Project Management points out that defining the aims is the first step to “rationalisation and concentration of efforts” and that “aims should be condensed and expressed in one or very few sentences that contain the essence of the project”. Reading the aims and objectives should provide a general picture of the following: “the issues / needs addressed, the target group(s), the methodology, the promoter, the geographical scope, the change that the project intends bring about.”<sup>17</sup>

The objectives must give a clear framework for the construction of the programme: a clear definition of the aims and objectives will significantly facilitate the design of the programme, and help the team of facilitators to specify the means with which achieve the overall aim. Objectives can and should be ambitious, but they must remain realistic and achievable at the same time. They must be specified keeping in mind the envisaged target group of the activity.

### KEEP IN MIND!

#### In the application for a study session

#### 13. Aims and objectives

You need to describe the anticipated aim and objectives of the activity. This means defining a general aim that includes the main content / topic, target group and expected (learning) results of the activity. Under specific objectives, the exact areas to be tackled can be listed. These aims and objectives will be considered when the decision is taken by the Programming Committee on Youth as to whether the study session can take place or not. The aims and objectives may be slightly, but not significantly changed by the team of facilitators if justified during the preparatory meeting.

It is important to make sure that the aims and objectives are fully in line with the rest of the application – especially the programme and in relation to the overall mission of your organisation(s) and of the Council of Europe

## Links with the priorities of the Council of Europe’s Youth Department

Study sessions must incorporate clear links to the priorities and mission of the Council of Europe in their objectives. The sessions should be built on and contribute to these priorities and make the programme of activities of the Council of Europe known and accessible to its target groups and especially new groups of young people. Each activity should take into account previous experience in study sessions and other relevant activities of the Council of Europe youth sector, and provide indications for others in the programmes to come.

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<sup>17</sup> T-Kit 3: *Project Management* (Council of Europe and European Commission, 2000). 3.2.3 *Defining the aims*, p. 52-54.

## ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

*Have you thought about the main aim of your study session already?*

This can be close to the vision you have for the activity. You can also say the *aim* is what you see if you take binoculars and look into the future at the final result, that is, where you want to get to, and that the *objectives* are the single steps which will take you there.

## ▲ KEEP IN MIND!

### In the application for a study session

#### 21. Priorities of the Council of Europe

Youth organisations need to consider and clearly indicate to *which* priorities of the programme Youth for Democracy of the Council of Europe the activity will contribute. The priorities are always listed in the relevant call for applications and can also be found on the web page of the Youth Department.

Also, in the second step the applicant must explain *how* the activity will contribute to the priorities selected.

It is equally important to consider links between the activity and the work of the Council of Europe in a specific thematic area, such as human rights, education policies, gender equality, and so on. They may feed into the activity, and meetings with Council of Europe officials can be incorporated into the programme of the session. More importantly, this is a guarantee that the policy frameworks and standards of the Council of Europe are taken into account when discussing (“studying”) the issues addressed in the session.

*What will the objectives for your activity be?*

A good thing to keep in mind, and which might help you to formulate objectives, is the “SMART” acronym, which represents:

**S – Specific**

**M – Measurable**

**A – Achievable**

**R – Realistic**

**T – Timed**

Once your objectives have been defined, it is worth checking how “SMART” they are.

The aims and objectives must be defined for the application form submitted to the Council of Europe, even if the study session is to take place many months later. Sometimes the initial writer of the application is not a member of the team. Therefore, it is crucial that the team – the course director and facilitators – is aware of and understands the objectives. In the preparatory process it may be necessary to review or update them, but these should only be minor adjustments. The objectives define the scope of the activity as approved by the Programming Committee

on Youth. Therefore, any changes must preserve the main scope, purpose and approach of the study session as presented in the application.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, it is recommended that you:

- negotiate / discuss the objectives with those concerned (team members, colleagues, partners)
- get second opinions about the way the aims and objectives are formulated and defined
- check if they can be evaluated, and if so, how and when
- consider that, if the aims and objectives are not clear to the people who write them, they will be even less clear to other people
- use the objectives in your communications and presentations.

*(T-Kit 3: Project Management, p. 54)*

## TIMETABLE FOR PREPARATION, RUNNING AND EVALUATION OF THE STUDY SESSION

The following is a recommended timeline for the implementation of study sessions, including important deadlines set by the Council of Europe:

Time in months in advance of the study session	Things to do
12 months <sup>19</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of the subject, definition of the organisational framework and objectives of the study session</li> </ul>
11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing and submitting the application to the Council of Europe</li> </ul>
10 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision and selection by the Programming Committee</li> </ul>
9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Department sends letter of acceptance including special conditions and with the basic data to the organisation</li> </ul>
8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of the final dates with the European Youth Centre</li> <li>• Agreement with the Youth Department on the administrative procedure</li> </ul>
7 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composition of the preparatory group</li> <li>• Arranging date for the preparatory meeting</li> <li>• Announcement of the dates and theme of the activity to national member organisations.</li> </ul>

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 18 There are certain limits for this, however. The activity should not be completely changed and any revised objectives should be closely related to the originals.

19 These dates differ depending on the required date of the study session. Deadlines for applications in April and in October, and the decisions of the Programming Committee are made in June and December respectively. According to whether the study session is held at the beginning or the end of a semester, the remaining time for preparation can vary between seven and twelve months.

<b>Time in <u>weeks</u> in advance of the study session</b>	<b>Things to do</b>
<b>8 weeks (at the latest)</b>	Preparatory meeting (minimum two working days) with the full team including the educational advisor of the Council of Europe <sup>20</sup>
<b>8–7 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send relevant information about the activity to member organisations (before or after the preparatory meeting, depending on when final Call for participants is published)</li> </ul>
<b>8–6 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening of applications and selection of the participants (with regard to leaving enough time for possible visa procedures)</li> </ul>
<b>6 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where applicable, request the Youth Department for authorisation of non-European participants (in case it was not anticipated in the application).</li> <li>• Send information required for visa applications to the Council of Europe about participants that need a visa and any assistance required for visas</li> </ul>
<b>5 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send confirmation letters to participants with detailed information about travel and other rules for participation</li> <li>• Contact with, selection and engagement of lecturers / speakers</li> </ul>
<b>3 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send information pack for participants (including detailed programme, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>2 weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the Council of Europe about lecturers' names, contact details and time and title of contribution for official invitations</li> </ul>
<b>2–1 weeks (the latest)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send complete list of participants and the Technical needs list to the European Youth Centre. For specific and unusual needs for equipment or materials, it is recommended that a request be sent not later than two weeks before the activity.</li> </ul>
<b>STUDY SESSION</b>	
<b>+1 week</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of the activity</li> <li>• Compiling and submitting the team evaluation report</li> <li>• Planning of the follow-up</li> <li>• Compiling and submitting the financial report on preparatory costs<sup>21</sup></li> </ul>
<b>+2 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing the final narrative report with the support of the educational advisor</li> <li>• Submission of the final report to the Council of Europe</li> <li>• Publication of the report on the Youth Portal of the Council of Europe and of the organisation(s)</li> </ul>

.....  
20 This is an “ideal” planning table. Past practice shows that most organisations would have the preparatory meeting about three months before the activity.

21 It is also possible to submit the financial report immediately after the preparatory meeting in the case where there are no other expenses foreseen till the study session.

## REFLECTION POINTS

Start to think about / draft the timeline for your own study session.

*Are there any special things to consider?*

*How does this activity fit with the overall programme of your organisation?*

*When is it realistic to have the first preparatory meeting? Have you already checked the availability of the EYCs as a venue for the meeting, and of your educational advisor / external trainer and the team members?*

*How much time does your organisation usually allow for participants to apply? What other deadlines should you set up? And when?*

## Conclusions and recommendations

The timeline needs to take into account the requirements of the Youth Department and the specificities of the study session, experience gained from previous meetings and the annual agenda of the organisation. Hence, to avoid last minute surprises, things should be planned in advance. It can be useful to plan backwards from the date of the session. This gives you a clear idea of when to start planning.

## KEEP IN MIND!

### In the application for a study session

#### 22-23. Preparatory team and process

Applicant organisations need to provide details of the composition of the multicultural preparatory team of facilitators (names if known, country of residence, gender and age, role in the organisation), including details of the previous experience of each team member in organising and implementing educational activities.

Some organisations only decide on the team set-up after receiving confirmation of the acceptance of their application. In such cases, it is enough if names are not yet known. Still, it is important to explain the process of identification of the members and the approach to securing gender and geographical balance, and diverse and sufficient level of experience.

Organisations also need to provide details of the preparatory process, including meetings envisaged (dates, places, purpose and short description). The specific rules for the preparatory process for study sessions need to be respected, especially the need to organise the preparatory meeting of a minimum two full working days, at the latest two months before the activity.

## Further elements of the study session application

The application form for study sessions also contains numerous other sections. When applying, an organisation and those compiling the application are not necessarily expected to have a clear and detailed plan for everything, as many elements can be fine-tuned and finalised during the preparatory process in co-operation with the educational advisor in charge. However, it is important that the organisation is aware of these as-

pects, and is able to clearly describe them and explain its own choices effectively. It is as important to draft convincing aims and objectives so as to be clear who you are targeting with this activity and how a team will deliver the session:

- the profile of the participants
- educational approaches and methodology to be used during the study session
- ideas for follow-up of the study session.<sup>22</sup>

The case study below might facilitate reflection on how to define needs, aims and objectives of a study session.

### **Needs assessment from the study session “ADV-ENT-ure: Joint venture for ENTer ADVocacy”**

The Youth Social Rights Network and the Youth Express Network have been involved in the ENTER! Project since its origin, both working at local and European levels on social inclusion and access to social rights of young people. In January 2015, the Committee of Ministers adopted CM/Rec (2015)3 on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights (Enter! Recommendation).

Now the work of the two networks continues in the direction of promoting the Enter! Recommendation as a tool for social inclusion and for equipping young people with knowledge, skills and meaningful attitude to promote and use it in their communities. The key next step is to work on ensuring that youth policy is translated into practice, and therefore they have identified that youth councils have a specific role in this process. The main target groups for the study session are the youth councils as key players in advocating for implementation of the Enter! Recommendation, working at local or national level closely with (or even directly inside) local authorities and representing young people and youth organisations.

Y-SRN is a relatively “young” network that for several years operated informally, organising activities in the area of improvement of access to social rights of young people. After the adoption of the Enter! Recommendation, the network has been actively working to promote it further, and support access to social rights and autonomy for young people. In this process the organisation has already worked with other youth organisations, youth workers, local authorities and business sector representatives. Working with youth councils is a new opportunity to expand the existing strategies used for supporting access to social rights.

Youth Express Network has organised more than 100 international youth projects, training courses, seminars, cross-border and mobility projects bringing together social workers, youth workers and young people with fewer opportunities to engage in social inclusion. In order to promote social inclusion for young people, it runs the campaign Inclusion Express, aiming at informing young people about their social rights and at supporting youth and social workers to defend these rights and advocate for inclusive youth policies in Europe.

The study session provides an opportunity for the two organisations to work together and jointly explore the options to promote the Enter! Recommendation to youth councils and join the efforts to advocate on access to social rights.

.....  
<sup>22</sup> This is not an exhaustive list of all the questions from the application form. The part on designing a programme and the profile / competences of team members is covered in depth in Chapter 5.

### **Based on this overview, we can conclude the following needs:**

Joint interest and needs from the two organisations: to work on advocacy for access to social rights, to engage youth councils in their work, to explore ways to work together.

The needs assessment also shows the direct connection with the Council of Europe and how the study session can contribute in promoting the Enter! Recommendation.

### **Profile of participants:**

The target group is primarily representatives of youth councils working at local or national level closely with (or even directly inside) local authorities, and representing young people and youth organisations and young people, youth workers and leaders of local projects from both youth networks with experience in the areas of social rights.

### **As a result of this needs assessment, the organisations have set up the following aim and objectives:**

The aim of this study session is to increase the capacities of youth councils to improve access on social rights of young people and the implementation of the Enter! Recommendation.

The objectives of this study session are:

- a. To deepen their knowledge and understanding of social rights and map ways of addressing social rights challenges in different realities
- b. To introduce CM/REC (2015)<sup>3</sup> Recommendation to youth councils
- c. To map what is already being done, what needs to be improved, and what needs to be started in relation to the Recommendation in different realities
- d. To increase competences for advocating, and draft plans and tools for improvement of access to social rights and implementation of the CM/REC (2015)<sup>3</sup> Recommendation at the local level

*(Extract from the documentation of the project "ADV-ENT-ure: Joint venture for ENTer ADVocacy")*

## **PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **Basic requirements of the Council of Europe**

The definition of the aims and objectives will already have opened the discussion on the profile of participants. These are two items which are difficult to separate, and discussions might cover both items at the same time. The correlation between the aims and the participants has to be guaranteed to ensure the most effective planning and recruitment.<sup>23</sup>

The European Youth Centre imposes a number of criteria regarding the participants in study sessions:

- At least 75% of the participants (including the preparatory group!) have to be aged between 18 and 30.
- Geographical and gender balance have to be taken into consideration.<sup>24</sup>
- At least eight countries must be involved, and participants from one country should not exceed 20% of the total number of participants; participants from non-member states of the Council of Europe may not exceed 15% of the total number of participants. It should be noted that it is the country of residence,

.....  
<sup>23</sup> Another planning approach can be to start from the participants' profile and then establish the objectives, since for some NGOs the target group is fixed.

<sup>24</sup> Exceptions are made in the cases of single-sex organisations and/or specific topics.

and not the nationality or country of origin that is taken into account.

- Participants should attend the entire session. In exceptional cases, participants may miss some parts of the session but this must not exceed 20% of the official programme and should be communicated to the Secretariat of the Youth Department before any travel arrangements are made.
- Participants should be in a position to act as multipliers of the study session's outcomes.
- Participants should be able to work in one of the working languages of the study session.
- In addition, the organisation and the preparatory group should describe the profile of the participants as regards their function in the organisation and their level of involvement after the session.

### **Participants' profiles – results from the YSRN-YEN case study**

- Active members of youth councils working at local or national level closely with (or even directly inside) local authorities and representing young people and youth organisations
- Interested in advocating for implementation of the Enter! Recommendation
- Motivated participants available and willing to attend and actively participate for the full duration of the study session and interested in working / learning together for achieving the objectives and foreseen results
- Primarily aged between 18 (or under) and 30
- Multipliers (potential)
- Experienced or having experience in dealing with conflict situations / discrimination
- Involved in YSRN-YEN's activities at different levels: local, national and international
- Knowledge of English as a working language

Secondary criteria (for selection): one or two people per country; gender and geographical balance; and diversity of participants.

### **Comments on specific cases related to the selection process**

Some organisations / networks have specific nomination procedures which can prevent the selection of participants according to the general criteria above. For example:

- national member organisations nominate participants to attend study sessions as a reward for their active participation in national events
- when a network uses an invitation to a study session specifically as a tool to boost and motivate participants from less-active member organisations.

One more constraint on recruiting participants according to the desired profile is the necessity to secure gender / minority / geographical balances. In specific cases, single-sex organisations can ask to run single-sex study sessions or exclusively invite participants of certain gender identities or/and sexual orientation. This nevertheless remains an exception.

### **The need for timely selection process**

The call for participants is often published and distributed too late by the organisation. This may result in it being difficult to find enough participants, and it not being possible to conduct a proper selection process.

Organisers are also likely to receive late cancellations from selected participants; therefore, it is advisable to create a waiting list and ask for the confirmation of all applicants of their interest. Organisers may want to replace cancellations in case the conditions for travel and visa arrangements can still be secured.

The purpose of having a clearly identified target group, and a selection procedure, is to have a group of participants which is close to the profile as described in the application.

### **Inclusiveness and non-discrimination**

The Council of Europe welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the specific profile of the activities, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation – an approach that the youth organisations co-organising study sessions are encouraged to follow and communicate to applicants.

#### **Participants under the age of 18**

The criteria that the majority of participants have to be between 18 and 30 years old is to ensure that the group mostly consists of young people, avoiding first of all the attendance of too many people over the upper age limit. Young people under the age of 18 are welcome and encouraged to apply, depending on the objectives of the activity. In such cases, the organisation must ask for an official authorisation from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and inform the EYCs, and provide the documents in advance of the activity.

#### **⚠ KEEP IN MIND!**

##### **In the application for a study session**

##### **26. Profile of participants**

Under this point, applicants need to describe the type / profile of participants to be invited and also explain their relation to the theme and the objectives of the activity. Details on the procedure for recruitment and selection of the participants should be also provided, as well as how gender equality in the selection process and composition of the group is taken into account. An estimation of the average age of the participants should be given; bear in mind that at least 75% of the participants (including the preparatory team) have to be between 18 and 30 years old. The envisaged number of participants per country of residence also needs to be indicated. A limited number of non-European participants can also be involved if clearly explained and justified in the application.

### **EDUCATIONAL APPROACH**

The education and training activities of the Youth Programme are marked by the ethics and values of the Council of Europe as applied to youth work and non-formal education. This is commonly translated into the following approaches that must be combined and articulated in each given activity according to its specificities.

**Intercultural learning** aims to develop understanding between cultures through exploring similarities and differences between cultures and people. It is a central part of a study session's content and process, as the lack of intercultural understanding often leads to various forms of intolerance, discrimination and violations of human rights – something that the intercultural youth activities of the Council of Europe set out to address through educational activities and campaigns.

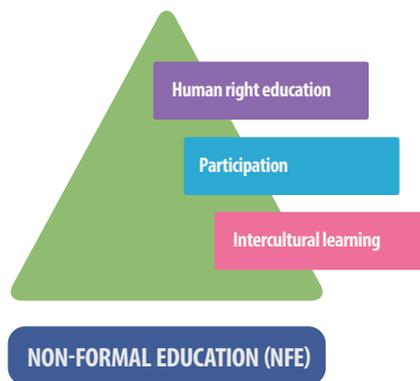
**Participation** is central to all youth activities. In educational processes, it also entails young people consciously taking part in making decisions about their learning, everyone being equally treated and included in the activity, and also adopting measures or methods which will facilitate everyone's active participation.

**Human rights education** is a fundamental human right itself, and in the work of the youth sector of the Council of Europe includes three dimensions – learning *about, through* and *for* human rights. Human rights education should be mainstreamed in all activities. This includes adopting human rights-based approaches to the analysis of the issues, favouring awareness of the human rights standards of the Council of Europe and adopting educational approaches and methods that support learning through human rights.<sup>25</sup>

The learning process of participants of study sessions should integrate the three approaches above and be complemented by the methodology of experiential learning. (See also 2.1.1. The study session as a holistic learning experience.)

Transversal dimensions of study session programmes

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### ⚠️ KEEP IN MIND!

#### In the application for a study session

#### 16-17. Participatory approach and Intercultural learning and human rights education

Under these points the applicant needs to explain how a participatory approach and how intercultural learning and human rights education as transversal dimensions will be integrated into the activity. When outlining plans, the overall process should be taken into consideration, including the preparations and the implementation of the activity itself. The description should be also very specific about the *approach* and working *methods*. None of these approaches can be taken for granted; they must be meticulously planned and evaluated – even if they are not explicitly present in the programme.

For example, the necessity of including 'human rights education' does not equate with reserving a single session for human rights in the weekly programme: it means that the principles of human rights education should be applied throughout the overall activity. For more details, consult the section in Chapter 3.1.2 *Intercultural learning, participation and human rights education in study session* below.

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<sup>25</sup> Read more on the educational approach here: [Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe](#) (Revised in 2016).

## Experiential learning and non-formal education

Adding to the approaches above, a consistent use of non-formal learning methodology and experiential learning are essential tools for supporting the holistic learning of participants and do help facilitators in their work to build a programme based on participation, human rights education and intercultural learning, and eventually to achieve the objectives of the activity.

Within an experiential learning cycle, participants first experience an activity, report and reflect on their observations and insights, then create a link to reality and finally apply what they have learned. This model of experiential learning is explained in more detail later in the publication, in the Chapter 3.1.1 *Concepts of learning: Methodology and principles in non-formal education*.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, it is essential to point out here that debriefing of the learning experience is what helps learners to connect the newly gained knowledge to their realities – which may enable them later to efficiently apply their learning in practice. In order to identify learning points, participants' awareness about their own learning must also be consciously built in throughout the programme from the very beginning.

“Human rights issues concern the whole of a person (body, mind and soul) and all dimensions of life from cradle to grave. The whole person lives in the whole world where everything is interrelated; human rights education necessarily involves a holistic learning approach.”

*The pedagogical basis of HRE in Compass*

Study sessions are by no means meant to offer a holistic learning experience for young people: they should promote the development of the whole person, their intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potential. It also means that organisers should strive to address not only cognitive, but also practical and attitudinal dimensions of learning and to apply methods built on a range of learning styles. This does not only improve the flow and dynamics of the programme but also allows participants with different needs to benefit from a learner-centred activity to their full potential. Eventually, every learning experience should lead to changing participants' thoughts and behaviour and/or their initiating activities to make a difference in their environment.<sup>27</sup>

### REFLECTION POINTS

- *Does your organisation / network have a specially developed educational approach, philosophy or methodology?*
- *What was the educational approach in your last study session or other previous activities?*
- *What do you think are the specific features and/or advantages of experiential learning? Does this correspond with what you have planned for your study session?*
- *Which working methods are you going to use?*

For more information and help: Several basic methods can be found in Chapter 3.7 Basic methods that underpin the Compass activities – such as group work, brainstorming, buzz groups, statement exercises, case studies, drama and audio-visual methods.<sup>28</sup>

26 Chapter 3.1.1 *Concepts of learning: Methodology and principles in non-formal education – Kolb's experiential learning cycle*

27 *Compass*, Chapter 2.2 *The pedagogical basis of HRE*, p. 32-35.

28 *Compass*, Chapter 3.7 Basic methods that underpin the Compass activities, p. 61-69.

## What can be expected from the educational advisor of the Council of Europe?

A study session at the European Youth Centre also has the advantage that each preparatory team receives some educational support from the Council of Europe with an educational advisor or external trainer. Educational advisors are staff of the European Youth Centre, whereas external trainers are educational consultants contracted by the Council of Europe for a particular study session. Whenever there is an external trainer, an educational advisor would still be allocated to the study session, serving as the person directly in charge of the activity on behalf of the Council of Europe. The roles, rules and practical conditions applying to trainers in study sessions can be consulted online on the web page of the Youth Department.<sup>29</sup>

The educational advisor or external trainer is present at the preparatory meeting and at the study session in order to facilitate the process of planning, and to offer advice on educational and methodological matters. The study session is built on a shared ownership of the organisation, the team that represents it and the Council of Europe. It is run in partnership – the team of the organisers should be the body that decides, in consultation with the educational advisor in all relevant matters of the programme. The educational advisor also ensures that the quality criteria are respected. They may have different educational roles and tasks, for example, the presentation of certain themes and the leading of particular sessions, or the introduction of particular educational methods, appropriate to the objectives of the programme.

They also advise on or organise the input of the Council of Europe and ensure that it is linked properly and meaningfully with the theme of the study sessions. This may, at the minimum, be the introduction of the Council of Europe, its overall mission and its youth sector – but often also includes presenting the work of other specific areas of the organisation – for example, the work of the Gender Equality Division and/or the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Unit for a session tackling gender mainstreaming, or of the Roma and Travellers Team for a study session with young Roma participants. In addition, they may also carry out technical and administrative procedures, such as the organisation and processing of the travel reimbursement.

Youth organisations holding a study session at the European Youth Centre can expect the following from an educational advisor:

- Expertise on the theme of the session
- Knowledge of the Council of Europe, its overall mission and work related to the topic of the session
- Professional guidance and support in running study sessions
- Expertise in human rights education, intercultural learning and youth participant applied to educational activities
- Appropriate and supportive methodologies and working methods for experiential learning in an intercultural context
- Skills in conflict resolution and facilitating work in a multicultural team
- A good knowledge of logistical, administrative and technical tasks related to the preparations and implementation of the study session
- Support with evaluation methods and reporting
- Commitment and motivation
- Flexibility and tolerance
- Being a good team worker (respect for other team members)
- Good communication (before, during, after).

.....  
<sup>29</sup> [Roles, rules and practical conditions applying to trainers in study sessions](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents) – Financial and administrative documents: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents).

## **⚠ KEEP IN MIND!**

### **In the application for a study session**

#### **20. Do you have specific reasons for holding this activity in co-operation with the EYC?**

Under this question, the applicant needs to reflect on the added value of organising the activity at the European Youth Centre, on why the organisation decided to propose to run a study session at one of the EYCs in co-operation with the Council of Europe. What are the specific reasons for holding this activity at one of the EYCs? What particular educational, institutional and administrative support is expected from the Centre? What else is expected from the educational advisor / external trainer?

Does the organisation need any specific support? Are there any specific needs to take into account regarding your organisation / team / target group?

Further rules to keep in mind include the following:

- Organisations cannot choose their educational advisor
- Organisations should not work with external trainers involved in their management or supervision (e.g. board members, etc.)
- Organisations do not have the same educational advisor / external trainer two years in a row

If the application is accepted, the first preparatory meeting is an opportunity for clearly communicating and negotiating the expectations and role of the educational advisor in that specific session. It may include discussing the extent and form of involvement of the educational advisor at different stages of the process, also in view of the needs and competences of the other facilitators in the team. In order to guarantee fruitful co-operation, it is important to keep in mind that the advisor is also accountable to the Council of Europe and that their role remains first and foremost in supporting the team of the partner youth organisations to prepare and implement a successful activity.



## FOLLOWING UP THE STUDY SESSION

As study sessions are considered an integral part of a larger strategy for development of the organisation running them, it is essential that results of the session are followed up. The follow-up is important not only for the organisation but also for the Council of Europe, which wants to see tangible outcomes from the activities it supports. Therefore, it is crucial that the follow-up is planned and agreed on in advance with the organisation and the team. Sufficient time must be allocated to this issue in the preparation meeting(s) as well as in the evaluation meeting. Support must also be guaranteed at an organisational and institutional level for participants and team members.

After evaluating the study session, the next steps should be related to how to implement the recommendations, suggestions and action plans (if applicable) made by the participants. These steps should also focus on how to further develop work on the theme of the session in the future within the organisation and its activities, and the prospects for disseminating and using the new knowledge developed in the context of the session.

In general, it should be clear from the very beginning what the session is expected to achieve for the organisation, and how the participants are involved. This will make it easier to communicate the plans that the organisation has for the implementation of the results and will avoid disappointments in the long run.

Therefore, the organisers must seriously consider the following questions:

- Will there be another seminar / training course / study session?
- What will the theme be?
- What kind of continuity can there be with the session that has just finished?
- What kind of follow-up can be provided?
- What will the organisation and the Council of Europe do with projects, recommendations and action plans that have been developed from the study session? How will the results be disseminated?
- How will the organisation support those attempting to implement the outcomes of the study session?

What kind of networking of the results of the study session will be undertaken, by whom and with which objectives?

- What kind of information and publicity will be generated by the study session and to whom will this be made available?
- In the future, how will the organisation work with participants of the study session? Can any participant become a team member of future sessions? Can others become involved in networking?
- How can the youth sector of the Council of Europe contribute to and benefit from the follow-up?

Ideas for follow up:

- Web page / social media group / newsletter / mailing list / blogs / fora
- Smaller regional activities dealing with the theme / multiplying
- Awareness-raising campaigns
- Policy change at the level of the organisation / network
- Report / documentation (with pictures, etc.)
- Informing media or creating your own content
- Application to European Youth Foundation for international youth events or local pilot projects
- Applications to other donors
- Further European-level event(s) based on the outcomes of the study session.

## KEEP IN MIND!

### In the application for a study session

There are two points where applicants can elaborate on the **expected practical outputs and on the follow-up plans** after the study session:

**14. Is there any practical output of your activity foreseen?** A brief description of anticipated practical output of your activity is to be given if relevant.

### **23. In what way do you expect / intend to follow-up the activity and its results?**

A detailed explanation of the way organisers expect / intend to follow up the activity and its results is to be provided under this point. The follow-up should not be limited to the obligatory narrative final report.

Not all study sessions necessarily have very concrete practical output, but the process of creation and the result can often be an added value. Also, all study sessions need to have a consistent and realistic follow-up with a multiplying effect. It can be an additional asset if the session can provide input to the work of the Council of Europe.

Very often, the study sessions serve as a one-off event that initiates important debates within the organisations / networks. Many of the study sessions of the Council of Europe have initiated a whole series of similar activities at national and international level. Occasionally, study sessions have successfully advocated new work priorities for this network. A typical example is the subject of human rights education, which has become a standard priority area for many organisations, or specific topics such as gender equality, migration, and war and terrorism.

**Immediately after the session, the team / organisation is responsible for the following administrative tasks:**

- submission of the financial report for the preparation costs of the session
- submission of the study session report (up to two months after the session)
- evaluation of the session by the preparatory team and the educational advisor / external trainer (to be handed in by the educational advisor / external trainer two weeks after the session)
- evaluation, by the preparatory team, of the co-operation with the educational advisor / external trainer and the EYC (up to two weeks after the session).

The standard evaluation forms can be found here: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents).

## REFLECTION POINTS

- What possible follow-up actions / activities could there be for your study session? What is planned on behalf of the youth organisation / network?
- Can you think of a study session that served as a springboard for new ideas and follow-up activities in your organisation?
- What is the biggest threat if a study session is not properly followed-up? This subject should be fully discussed at the draft proposal stage.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> More on this issue can be found in Chapters 5 and 6, which deal with the organisational responsibilities regarding evaluation, reporting, follow-up and dissemination of results.

## CONCLUSIONS – PREPARING A PROPOSAL FOR A STUDY SESSION

The above chapter does not deal with every single element given in the application form for study sessions, but just the most relevant ones where applicants usually face difficulties. There is no description and advice for writing the section on the ‘background to a study session’. However, this is not a difficult task, since it always depends on the motivation and strategic development programme of the NGO. In Chapter 4 of this manual, you will find a detailed section, 4.3: *Programme design of study sessions*.

**To conclude this section on dealing with writing an application / preparing a proposal, here are a few general recommendations:**

- Be concise, clear and specific.
- Be clear on the objectives of your study session and their link to the Council of Europe’s priorities.
- Do not be afraid of using specific “Council of Europe vocabulary” but at the same time use clear and simple language, and define your own organisation’s terms. Do not misuse Council of Europe vocabulary just to include certain “trendy” terms. Instead, remain down to earth in order to explain what is important to you in your own words. Also make sure you understand the words and concepts you are using.
- Ask someone unrelated to the project to read your draft proposal and then explain it back to you. The chances are that, if they understand it, the Council of Europe will too.
- When answering the question about the educational approach and working methods, do not describe specific methods, but explain the overall learning philosophy.
- When preparing your proposal, do not forget to consider the possible attendance of young people with different access needs. If it is your specific intention to organise an activity for a mixed-ability group, indicate what kind of support you might need from the EYCs (accessible spaces, interpretation, sign language interpretation or palantyping, etc.)<sup>31</sup>
- From the very beginning, it is worth reflecting on your approach towards ensuring gender equality and awareness in all phases of the project.<sup>32</sup>
- When addressing the section, “Please explain how your activity will contribute to the programme(s) and highlight possible links envisaged with other activities of the Youth Department”, be aware of the campaigns, publications, and so on of the Council of Europe. For example, using *Compass* or any of the T-Kits is a link to the Council of Europe. Check the web page of the Council of Europe to find out what else is going on at the moment (campaigns, new programmes, etc.) to use possible synergies.

### Common mistakes

- Applications give too many repetitive explanations and there is lack of coherence between different parts of the application.
- Applicants do not respond directly to the questions.
- There is no clear vision about the place and the purpose of the activity within the overall work and strategy of the organisation (e.g. “The network must organise the study session because they have always had one in autumn.”).
- The aims and objectives are not clear: applicants cannot convey their vision about the study session.
- The study session as a format does not match the aims. Discuss thoroughly within your organisation if a study session is the appropriate setup for your plans / ideas / aims / needs.

.....  
31 For more information, consult *Appendix V – Access needs of participants*

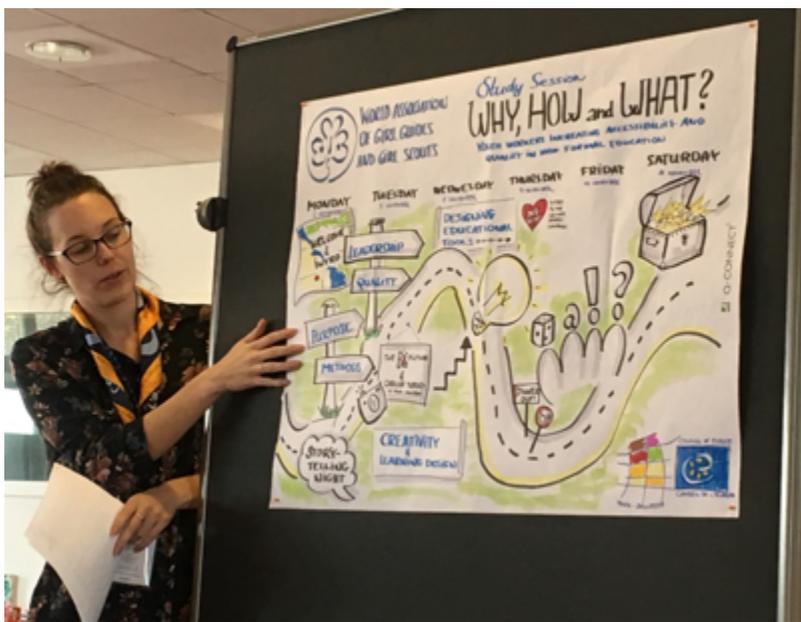
32 For more information, consult *Appendix VI – Guidelines on integrating gender equality and mainstreaming in intercultural youth activities of the Council of Europe and its partners*

- Copying and pasting from previous proposals seems like a quick fix, but very often results in a patchwork of different ideas. Also, keep in mind that very often the same people in the Council of Europe read and assess your proposals each year.

## Mapping conditions for successful study sessions (personal, team, organisational)

Writing a good application is only the first step in organising a successful study session. After receiving the positive news about the approval of the study session, each organisation / network should map the resources and competences they will require for the activity. As the success of a study session depends on the thorough preparation of many different team members with various responsibilities, the following issues should be handled with utmost care:

- **Personal preparation** – This refers to the development of competences, i.e. skills, knowledge and attitudes of the facilitators (preparatory team members). These include, among others, facilitation and presentation skills, assertiveness and self-confidence. Chapter 3 of this manual covers this subject in depth.
- **Team preparation** – This has to do with the parts of the study session which are the tasks of the study session team. Programme design and running programme elements are only a few of the tasks that should be completed together by the study session team. This is explained in Chapter 4.
- **Organisational responsibilities** – These refer to the tasks for which the organisation is held accountable, for example, evaluating the study session, producing a final report and ensuring follow-up. Chapters 5 and 6 provide detailed descriptions of these tasks.



# 3. PERSONAL PREPARATION

## *Essentials of non-formal education for organisers*

### Concepts of learning

*“Education is what people do to you. Learning is what you do for yourself” (Joichi “Joi” Ito, entrepreneur)*

**Education** can be defined as the process through which a society, an institution, organisation or an educator passes on the knowledge, values and skills; in the case of societies, this may also mean passing on competences from one generation to another.

Distinctive of education, **learning** can be defined as the acquisition of new skills, knowledge, and values more from the perspective of the individual.

Learning may entail ...

1. A change in behaviour as a result of experience or practice
2. The acquisition of knowledge
3. Studying, teaching, instruction or practical experience
4. The process of gaining knowledge, skills or a process by which behaviour is changed, shaped or controlled
5. The individual process of constructing understanding based on experience from a wide range of sources.<sup>33</sup>

**Education** provides the framework and defines how the process of gaining knowledge, skills and attitudes is done. Study sessions are organised within a framework of non-formal education. Within the study sessions, the learning process is supported following specific principles and values, but mostly based on the participants learning needs and preferences. The educational approach therefore provides a relatively fixed, yet flexible, framework whereby individual learning processes can happen in many different forms, ways and directions.

There are many different forms of learning, all of which depend on the educational context.

Young people learn within youth clubs, at schools, within their family, at informal meetings, at university, from daily experience, at church, at summer camps, at work, and so on. All these learning contexts are parts of different kinds of educational concepts:

**Informal education** refers to the lifelong process whereby each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience (family, neighbours, marketplace, library, mass media, work, play, etc.).

**Formal education** refers to the structured education system that runs from primary school to university and includes specialised programmes for technical and professional training.

.....  
<sup>33</sup> The University of Warwick, Centre for Teacher Education (CTF).

**Non-formal education** refers to any planned programme of personal and social education designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational curriculum.<sup>34</sup>

If we take the understanding of these three notions rather stereotypically, we could say that young people encounter formal education in schools, while in youth work contexts they benefit from non-formal education (or learning). Formal, non-formal and informal learning approaches (or education) are complementary and mutually reinforcing elements of lifelong learning processes.

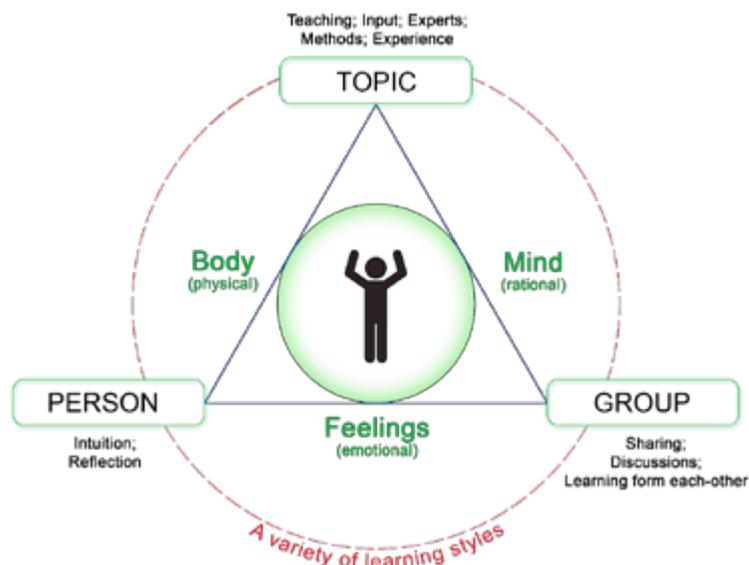
### What are the characteristics of non-formal education in youth work contexts / training events?

Non-formal education is characterised by the following features:

- a planned learning process
- personal, social and political education
- designed to improve a specific range of skills and competences
- outside but supplementary to the formal educational curriculum
- where participation is voluntary
- accessible to everyone (ideally)
- learner-centred
- holistic and process-orientated
- organised on the basis of the needs of the participants

Non-formal education methodology/principles – a holistic approach

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34 *Compass*, p. 30, (2nd edition, reprinted with revisions), 2015.

**Firstly**, the diagram points out that in non-formal learning settings you need a balance between *body, mind* and *feelings*; that only when all three are engaged can socially engaged learning take place.

**Secondly**, co-operation is more important than competition. Non-formal learning approaches combine learning at individual and group levels. It capitalises on a *group dynamic* through which participants help and inspire each other in their learning processes. The learning process of one member is an essential part of the input into the learning processes of the other members of the group.

**Thirdly**, while non-formal education and formal education use a *variety of theories and concepts* as well as input from experts, non-formal learning is more open to the input of participants in the learning process (which may include theories, research and expert input). It places great importance on participants' own exploration in finding commonly accepted definitions. For example, there are many definitions of human rights in books and expert literature. Nevertheless, participants will internalise the concepts best if they are invited to define them on their own first, as concepts that would be applicable for their own environment and real-life situations that they face. Therefore, non-formal education is closer to participants' reality and real life because it does not always rely on the strict application of a set curriculum and therefore is more apt to be centred on the learners' needs and preferences.

Holistic learning is also at the core of pedagogical approaches of human rights education. In *Compass*, it is explained as follows:

Human rights issues concern the whole of a person (body, mind and soul) and all dimensions of life from cradle to grave. The whole person lives in the whole world where everything is interrelated; human rights education necessarily involves a holistic learning approach. Holistic learning promotes the development of the whole person, their intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potentials.<sup>35</sup>

Adding to this, learning activities should also be designed to address a range of learning styles and different intelligences and teach to both cognitive and affective domains.

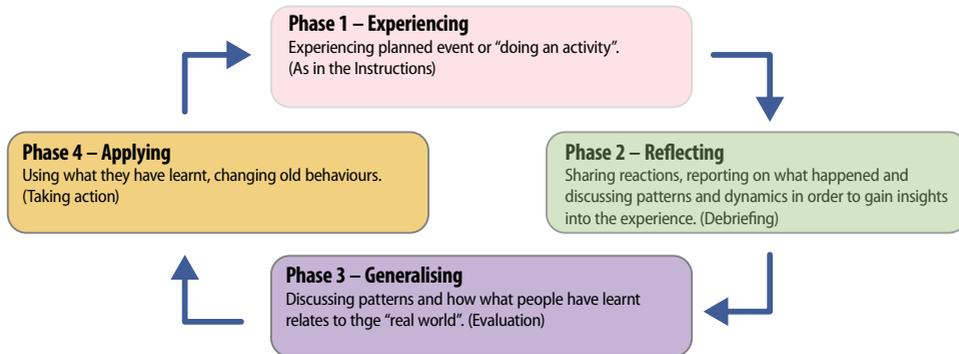


.....  
35 *Compass*, Chapter 1 – *Human Rights Education and Compass: an introduction*. p. 33.

## Methodology and principles in non-formal education (NFE)

NFE is based on *active participation* (deciding on what and how they are going to learn about and taking full part in the activity), and co-operation (working and discussing together with respect). An important part of the learning process is *self-reflection*. Exercises in NFE are often of an *experiential* nature (e.g. simulations and role plays) and input will always be *interactive* (a product of the facilitator and participants; they contribute with their experiences and knowledge).

David Kolb devised one of the essential theories of experiential learning and he was very much inspired by the theories of Kurt Lewin.



See: *Compass, Approaches to human rights education in Compass*, p. 34-35.

## Learning styles – related to the theory of David Kolb’s Learning Cycle

All four steps in the cycle can be considered an “entrance door” to learning. We have different doors by which to enter learning. Entrance doors can differ from person to person.

The same person may often use a different “entrance door” each time they are in an experiential learning process.



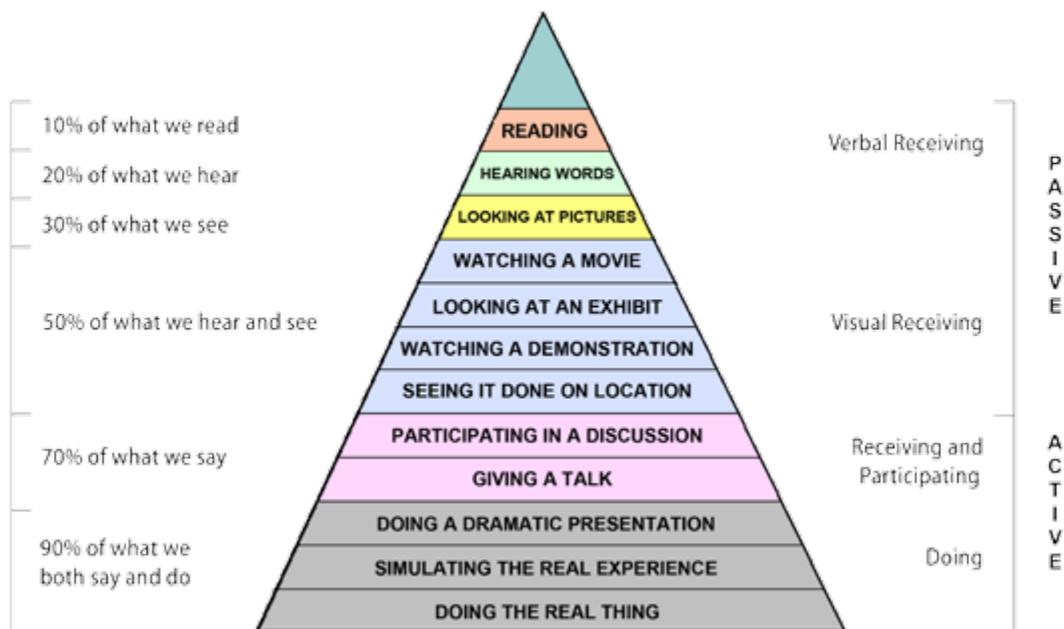
## THE ADVANTAGES OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING – DALE’S CONE OF EXPERIENCE

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand. (*Confucius*)

Dale’s *Cone of Experience* (also often referred to as the Cone of Learning) shows us that, in a study session, a regular lecture alone will not suffice, and neither will running only a simple exercise. You always need a balance of various methods. Therefore, it is important to use a variety of methods every day of your study session and check the overall balance of the entire programme of the activity. You have to take into account how various people learn, remember and perceive things. It is essential that a study session varies between theory, exercises and discussions. This variety should be taken into consideration when developing training aids since you will always have visual-, audio- and/or kinaesthetic-orientated participants in your group.

Cone of learning (developed and revised by Bruce Hyland from material by Edgar Dale)

### WE TEND TO REMEMBER OUR LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT



Edgar Dale, *Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Holt, Rinehart, and Winston (1969).

When categorising different learning styles, one differentiates between three different levels of learning. Learning takes place on *cognitive, emotional, and behavioural* levels.

**Cognitive learning** is the acquirement of knowledge or beliefs: knowing that  $3 + 3 = 6$ , that the Earth is conceived of having the shape of a ball, or that there are currently 47 member states of the Council of Europe. It is about “knowing”.

**Emotional and social learning** is about improving one’s capability to recognise and understand one’s own emotions and those of others. Rooted in the research about emotional intelligence in psychology, this concept is important, as individuals’ awareness about their feelings and the ability to distinguish between them can help to guide their thinking and behaviour. In the context a non-formal education, for example, after an activity a young person may look back and remember how they have learnt to express feelings, and how these feelings have changed over time. Maybe something that made them afraid 20 years ago might not make them afraid anymore; people that they did not like at first might now be their best friends after an activity that helped to overcome fears and mistrust. Emotional learning is learning about and through emotions and feelings, and closely connected to shaping attitudes and internalising. As such, it is also a key element in study sessions with their holistic learning approach and intercultural learning setting.

**Behavioural learning** is a more visible, or, let’s say, the more practical part of learning: being able to hammer a nail straight into a piece of wood, to write with a pen, how to draw eye-catching posters, to eat with chopsticks, how to develop a new campaign or project, or simply to welcome somebody in the “right” way. You “see it” and have, in a sense, “proof” of the successful learning process.

Successful learning processes involve all three levels: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. To take a simple example: if you want to learn how to eat with chopsticks, you need to know *how* to hold them and how to make the right movements. However, neither will have a lasting effect if you do not like eating with them – or at least don’t see an advantage in doing so. Therefore, getting acquainted with the cultural background and learning *about* how and *why* they are used in some regions may be interesting and *motivating*.<sup>36</sup>

## Intercultural learning, participation and human rights education

In the previous chapter, we defined what learning is. However, it is also crucial to discover other concepts, namely intercultural learning, participation and human rights education, as they are at the core of the Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department. It is a requirement for all the activities, including therefore study sessions too, to follow an integrated approach in this respect.

**Intercultural learning** is seen as an essential feature of study sessions, which by their nature are international activities, and imply a great diversity of participants coming from various member states, but as well from different organisational backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, classes, gender, and so on. Intercultural learning enables the understanding of the impact of stereotypes, prejudice, and ethno-centrism on the relations with and between people from various cultural backgrounds. It aims to develop understanding and appreciation of diversity while exploring both similarities and differences between cultures and peoples. It also aims to prevent racism, xenophobia, discrimination, intolerance and violence.

**Participation** is essential to non-formal education with young people. It entails that participants take part in making decisions about their learning and that everyone is equally treated and included in the activity. It also translates into measures that ensure all activities in a study session are thought to facilitate everyone’s active participation.

**Human rights education**, a fundamental human right in itself, includes three dimensions: learning about, learning through and for human rights. At the level of study sessions, it involves the following: analysing the topics addressed from a human rights perspective, raising awareness of the human rights standards in place at Council of Europe level, and ensuring a programme that allows for learning through human rights.

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<sup>36</sup> More on the different levels of learning (and values, knowledge and skills addressed) is presented in the new *T-Kit 4: Intercultural learning* (2018): ‘Competences developed through intercultural learning’, p. 37-41.

## INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

### WHAT IS CULTURE? WHAT IS 'INTERCULTURALITY'?

All ideas about intercultural learning build on an implicit or explicit idea about culture. Culture has been referred to as the “software” which people use in daily life; it is commonly described as being about the basic assumptions, values and norms that people share. However, we also talk about being cultured, having a youth culture, cultural shock, peace culture, culture of human rights, a national culture, subcultures and acculturation, multicultural, cross-cultural and intercultural. Culture is referred to everywhere, yet it's hard to agree on one definition encompassing all that is meant. The definition in itself seems to be just as fluid as culture and identity seem to be.<sup>37</sup>

#### ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

In case your study session specifically addresses the question of culture and intercultural learning, or if you simply want to become better prepared with your team for implementing a study session with a multicultural group, you can use the following questions for reflection.

- Why is it important to talk about culture?
- What are the risks of “culturising” people?
- What is necessary for young people, related to a variety of cultures, to be able to co-operate and learn together?

Are stereotypes and prejudices related to culture?

**Tips:** Theories and background information can be found about culture, its elements and nature in the 2nd edition of the T-Kit 4 on *Intercultural Learning*, a publication by the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth that you may also find useful when preparing your study session.<sup>38</sup>

For some simple and practical exercises, you can also search for in the *Education Pack All different – All equal*.<sup>39</sup>

No culture is homogeneous. Within each so-called “culture”, the majority of groups and individuals are also linked to other “cultures” and their adherence to the “culture” is only partial.

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defines culture very broadly: culture

” *encompasses, inter alia, ways of life, language, oral and written literature, music and song, non-verbal communication, religion and belief systems, rites and ceremonies, sport and games, methods of production or technology, natural and man-made environments, food, clothing and shelter and the arts, customs and traditions through which individuals, groups of individuals and*

37 Further reading: Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth (2014) *Guidelines for intercultural learning in non-formal learning/ education activities*; Council of Europe (2008) *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue – Living Together as Equals in Dignity*.

38 T-Kit 4: Intercultural learning (2018): Chapter 2 'Intercultural learning: theories, contexts, realities'

39 Education Pack All different – All equal – Ideas, resources, methods and activities for non-formal intercultural education with young people and adults (3rd edition) (2016): <https://book.coe.int/eur/en/human-rights-democratic-citizenship-and-interculturalism/7234-education-pack-all-different-all-equal-ideas-resources-methods-and-activities-for-non-formal-intercultural-education-with-young-people-and-adults-3rd-edition.html>.

*communities express their humanity and the meaning they give to their existence, and build their world view representing their encounter with the external forces affecting their lives.*<sup>40</sup>

Studying culture implies looking at the interaction of different cultures. Many authors have stated that, if it were not for the existence of more than one culture, we would not think about culture at all. The apparent differences of how humans can think, feel and act are what make us aware of culture. Culture, therefore, cannot be thought of simply as “culture”: it has to be thought of as “cultures”.

The cultures we are exposed to are important to who we are and what we believe. Each of us is a unique individual for whom where we were born, where we grew up, the languages in which we communicate, the faiths we practise or not, the set of given circumstances and our choices influence who we are and make our identities, an ever-changing process. Diversity is a reality of our communities.

### **Intercultural dialogue and learning**

Intercultural dialogue has been defined as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different backgrounds, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect.<sup>41</sup> The purpose of the exchange is to create a co-operative and willing environment for overcoming political and social tensions. In order to be meaningful, especially in learning situations such as study sessions, intercultural dialogue needs to go beyond the superficial celebration of diversity and engage participants in the difficult and hot topics, major contradictions, the related questions of power, social and political contexts.

Educational activities, especially international ones, are an excellent environment for developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes to engage in intercultural dialogue, to practise it and to further transfer it in daily reality of the participants.

Intercultural learning has been described as the process of “social education aimed at promoting a positive relationship between people and groups from different cultural backgrounds, based upon mutual recognition, equality of dignity, and giving a positive value to cultural differences.”<sup>42</sup>

Intercultural learning has a long tradition in youth work, stemming and being motivated by the experience of the Second World War and the interwar period. It is seen as a way to combat racism, discrimination, xenophobia, to address stereotypes and prejudices. It comes from the understanding that stereotypes and prejudices are learnt through socialisation, rather than part of one’s own nature, and that culture and identity are not fixed, but fluid and in constant negotiation and development. The value of intercultural learning for European youth activities has been the subject of many studies. The following theses were proposed by Hendrik Otten in the seminar “Intercultural Learning in European Youth Work: Which Ways Forward?”:

- Intercultural learning is the characteristic for a learning multicultural society since intercultural learning processes are also aimed at active democratic citizenship
- Intercultural learning creates the conditions for enabling people to tolerate the integrity of all cultural ways of life as a matter of principle within the limits set out in thesis no. 5 and to debate about or dissent from these ways of life with the help of democratically legitimated and politically just procedures

.....  
40 General comment No. 21: Right of everyone to take part in cultural life (article 15, para. 1 (a), of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) (2009) adopted by Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the Forty-third Session, E/C.12/GC/21, 21 December 2009.

41 White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue ‘Living Together As Equals in Dignity’. Council of Europe, 2008. [www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper\\_final\\_revised\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf)

42 Equipo Claves, quoted in the *Education Pack All Different – All Equal* by the Council of Europe, and later in T-Kit: *Mosaic – The Training Kit for Euro-Mediterranean youth work*, Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth, 2010, p. 91.

- Intercultural learning is a lifelong educational process aimed at the development and stabilisation of all individuals' willingness and ability to acculturate
- Intercultural learning is part of the political socialisation process of European civil society.<sup>43</sup>

**Stereotype** = an oversimplified, generalised and often unconscious preconception about people or ideas that may lead to prejudice and discrimination. A generalisation in which characteristics possessed by a part of the group are extended to the group as a whole.

**Prejudice** = an unfavourable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason.

**Discrimination** = any distinction, exclusion or restriction of preference, which is based on any ground such as race, culture, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or faith, abilities / disabilities, class, etc.

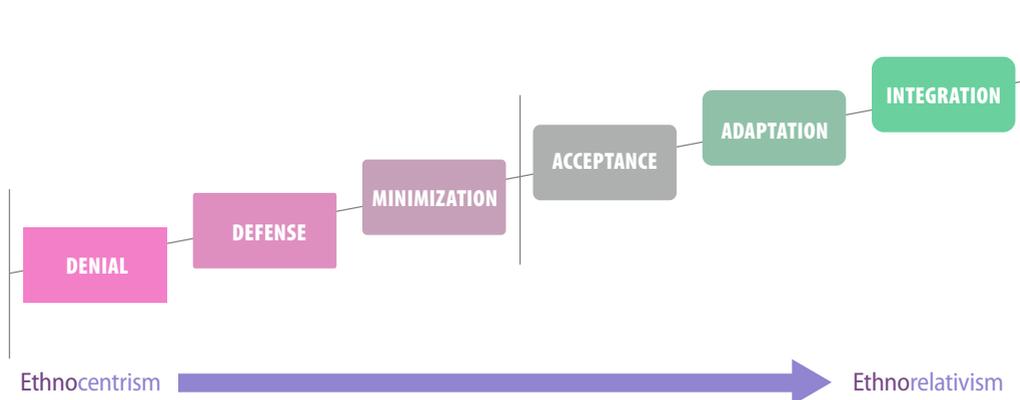
Milton J. Bennet (1993, and subsequent) has developed a model for the development of intercultural sensitivity in intercultural learning contexts that might be useful when reflecting to youth work and the experience of the young people. The main concept underlying his model is "differentiation", and how one develops the ability to recognise and live with difference. Cultures offer ways on how to interpret reality, how one should perceive the world around us. This interpretation of reality, or worldview, is different from one culture to the other. Developing intercultural sensitivity means to learn to recognise and deal with, the fundamental difference between cultures in perceiving the world.

#### **Bennet outlines six stages of development of intercultural sensitivity:**

- **Denial of difference** – in this stage learners are not aware of the ways culture impacts their own or other people's lives, failing to recognise culture as a category; they might pass superficial statements of tolerance or their attitude might dehumanise others.
- **Defence against difference** – cultural difference is experienced in a polarised manner of us/them; generally they maintain a view of cultural hierarchy, including attitudes of cultural superiority or inferiority.
- **Minimisation of difference** – is the experience of having arrived at intercultural sensitivity, marked by an understanding that deep down we are all alike. Learners are recognising own patterns, understanding others making adaptations in reference to one's own culture.
- **Acceptance of difference** – the learner starts to experience cultural difference in context, accepts different behaviours and values that exist in cultural contexts, including their own. The learner however might find it difficult to apply ethical principles across cultural contexts.
- **Adaptation to difference** – the learner consciously shifts perspectives and intentionally alters behaviours, applying acceptance. This is the stage of intercultural empathy.
- **Integration of difference** – the learner is not anymore defined by any one culture, but rather shifts to a bi- or multi-cultural identity.<sup>44</sup>

43 Otten H. (2007), 'The Role of Intercultural Learning in European Youth Work. Ten theses – Yesterday and Today', *Intercultural Learning in European Youth Work: Which Ways Forward?*, Seminar Report by Ramberg I., European Youth Centre Budapest, p. 49.

44 Bennet M. J. (2014), *The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, available here: [www.idrinstitute.org/page.asp?menu1=15](http://www.idrinstitute.org/page.asp?menu1=15) (accessed 17 December 2017).



(Milton J. Bennett's Model of development of intercultural sensitivity, 1993)

Several competences are helpful in the process of intercultural learning, including the following three key ones – relevant both for participants and facilitators:

- Role distance
- Empathy
- Tolerance of ambiguity (in some literature, also known as tolerance of uncertainty, although the concepts are not identical).

**Role distance** implies that participants, including facilitators, reflect on their own beliefs, views, behaviour patterns and the connection with the socio-cultural norms of the places in which they reside, allowing them to look at them through relative terms, rather than absolute ones. In *Appendix VII* of this manual you will also find the “Sunglasses Story”, which can be used for reflection on role distance and the link with intercultural learning.

**Empathy** allows us to step outside ourselves and imagine the another person's world. In intercultural learning and dialogue, empathy supports us in moving beyond our own worldview and understanding our interlocutors' experience in aiming to achieve a synthesis of the perspectives in order to overcome differences that might separate us from each other.

Applied to European youth work, Hendrik Otten defines the **tolerance of ambiguity** as “the ability to tolerate different interests, expectations and needs” and “the degree to which a person can endure not being able to implement his or her own ideas and expectations. Intercultural learning can help us to avoid using competing stereotypes as a means of maintaining and asserting our own position.”<sup>45</sup> The concept stems from the study of authoritarian personalities in Nazi Germany<sup>46</sup>, and, in psychology, it is understood to include three main areas of tolerance levels towards insolubility of problems and novelty and complexity.

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45 Otten H. (2007), 'The Role of Intercultural Learning in European Youth Work. Ten theses – Yesterday and Today', *Intercultural Learning in European Youth Work: Which Ways Forward?*, Seminar Report by Ramberg I., European Youth Centre Budapest, p. 51.

46 Frenkel-Brunswick E. (1948), 'Intolerance of ambiguity as an emotional and perceptual personality variable', *Journal of Personality*, 18, p. 108-123.

## Intercultural learning in study sessions – a transversal element

In study sessions, intercultural learning must be integrated as a transversal element, regardless of the topic of the activity. Transversality in this case means that the setting of such activities in itself necessarily provides a space for intercultural encounter and consequent chance for discovering similarities and differences between cultures and people.<sup>47</sup> However, a safe and open space should be designed by the organisers in order to build on the experience of participants and turn it into learning.

More importantly, intercultural learning must be applied to secure that everyone is able to take a full part in the educational process, regardless of their cultural background and in the respect of their dignity and rights.

Regardless of how accustomed participants might be because of strong organisational cultures, intercultural aspects of the group work or of their views on the specific topic need to be consistently addressed.

### Tips to address intercultural learning in study sessions

- Build confidence and an atmosphere of openness – essential for intercultural learning
- Reflect on aspects of identity of participants and culture
- Favour bilingual study sessions and reflect with participants on working in a foreign language
- Ensure the team reflects on the multicultural composition of the group of participants
- Adopt in the team a broader understanding of culture than referring to countries, ethnicities and nationalities, and include reflection on the organisational cultures that might influence these
- Bring these aspects explicitly into the session through debriefing and reflection with participants on their experience
- Address stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination when they occur in the educational setting and use the opportunity for an educational process
- Use a variety of references / materials that also refer to participants' background and come from more than one national source.

In case you wish to learn more about intercultural learning and related concepts, you can consult publications such as the Seminar report 'Intercultural Learning in European Youth Work: Which Ways Forward?', T-Kit 11 – *Mosaic: The training kit for Euro-Mediterranean youth work*, the *Education Pack All different – All equal* and T-Kit 4 – *Intercultural Learning* on the Youth portal of the Council of Europe.<sup>48</sup>

### Tackling discrimination at study sessions

Even though one may not necessarily expect it in such a setting, discriminative attitudes and behaviour can also occur in study sessions. All human beings have stereotypes, and transformative learning processes of human rights education-based activities are intended to challenge them. Therefore, they can be also considered as normal elements of the group's learning process – an aspect that should be seriously considered throughout the whole implementation of a session. However, explicit acts of discrimination of any form should sometimes be immediately reflected on and handled with the group – or possibly the programme should contain space for discussion on the topic at an early stage of group formation, in order to avoid potential manifestation of discrimination. This is crucial for ensuring a safe and inclusive space is provided for a successful learning process through principles of human rights.

.....  
<sup>47</sup> *Compass*, p. 40. *Intercultural education* under the section of 1.2.4 HRE and other educational fields.

<sup>48</sup> Council of Europe Youth Portal – resources: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/resources](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/resources).

One should also not forget about the intersections between different forms of oppression or discrimination when facilitating the learning process of highly diverse groups at study sessions – which may simply also mean differences in working language skills, in level of experience or in socio-economic or cultural backgrounds (e.g. traditionally more conservative or more liberal countries). Intersectionality has a rich literature, also in the context of youth work – something in which study session teams should have a basic understanding. As a framework, it attempts to identify how interrelated systems of power impact those who are marginalised for some reason within society or a group. It considers classifications such as class, race, sexual orientation, age, disability and gender, and states that these do not exist separately from each other but are interwoven together. In a study session setting, it is important to keep this approach in mind in order to provide a safe space with equal access to participation.<sup>49</sup>

### Using exercises to reflect on discrimination

There are several activities that can be used to reflect on the topic, to be found in publications of the Council of Europe. In the *Education Pack All Different – All Equal*, the exercise ‘Force the Circle’ allows participants to discover how it feels to be a minority or majority.<sup>50</sup> The ‘Silent Floor’ discussion activity described in the *Domino* manual can help the group to explore terms such as intolerance, xenophobia, discrimination, racism – something that can be easily adapted to the profile and needs of participants in specific study sessions. It is also very inclusive as an activity in itself, as it gives space to those for whom speaking in a big group is more difficult or for whom it takes more time to formulate and express opinions.<sup>51</sup>

In case the team decides to run such an activity, in the debriefing it is necessary to include questions that help the group to reflect on possible forms of discrimination at their study session.

#### Questions for debriefing in such cases can include:

- Do you think that discrimination can happen in a study session group?
- Is discrimination a conscious or unconscious act?
- Is it easy to resist / intervene if you experience discrimination? Whose responsibility is it to act against discrimination?

#### Other opportunities for dedicating time to the topic of discrimination

- **Group rules:** Tackle the topic as a part the reflection on group rules / agreement. Ask participants what forms discrimination takes and how a group can handle it.
- **Team building:** Touch on the topic in the debriefing of team building, if possible. Discuss if they have experienced any behaviour that may lead to excluding or discriminating others. Ask them to come up with suggestions on how discrimination can be avoided and handled.
- **The ‘Inclusion card’:** Some organisers of study sessions use the so-called ‘Inclusion card’: just like in football, in the case where a participant experiences or observes any kind of discrimination in the group, by “raising the Inclusion card” they can call the attention of the facilitators and the group. The card can be symbolic or can even take the shape of a real, colourful card.

These methods are especially useful in case there is no time for dedicating a full session to the topic.

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49 Materials developed by youth organisations, for example the *Intersectionality* Toolkit by IGLYO can help you to explore the topic of intersectionality more deeply: [www.iglyo.com/resources](http://www.iglyo.com/resources).

50 *Education Pack All Different – All Equal*, 3rd edition 2016. ‘Force the Circle’, p. 85-87.

51 *Domino*: A manual to use peer group education as a means to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance. Session 8.3, p. 68-69.

In general, it is crucial that the team of facilitators constantly pays attention to this issue, and, just like in the case of managing conflicts, either acts immediately on the spot to clarify the situation, for example, reacting to a discriminative joke in a plenary session, or processing information from reflection groups and observations of facilitators to decide if there is a need to handle potentially discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in the group.



## PARTICIPATION

Enhancing youth participation at all levels in society has been a long-standing goal of youth work. Participation, including youth participation, is an on-going process that is both learnt and practised.

The revised European Charter on Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life claims that “the active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional level is essential if we are to build more democratic, inclusive and prosperous societies. Participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements.”<sup>52</sup>

Participation of young people happens, and needs to happen in all areas of life, including:

- political life – exercising power in relation to authorities and governments, public policies, and the distribution of decision at different levels
- economic life – through employment and work in general
- cultural life – through expression in different forms of art and having the capacity to access it
- social life – through engagement in the community life, its social issues and benefits.

### The RMSOS model

However, such a complex involvement of young people in all areas of life can only be possible if a number of conditions are provided. The Charter’s definition of participation below entails that participation is a process in the community, and also explains the key prerequisites:

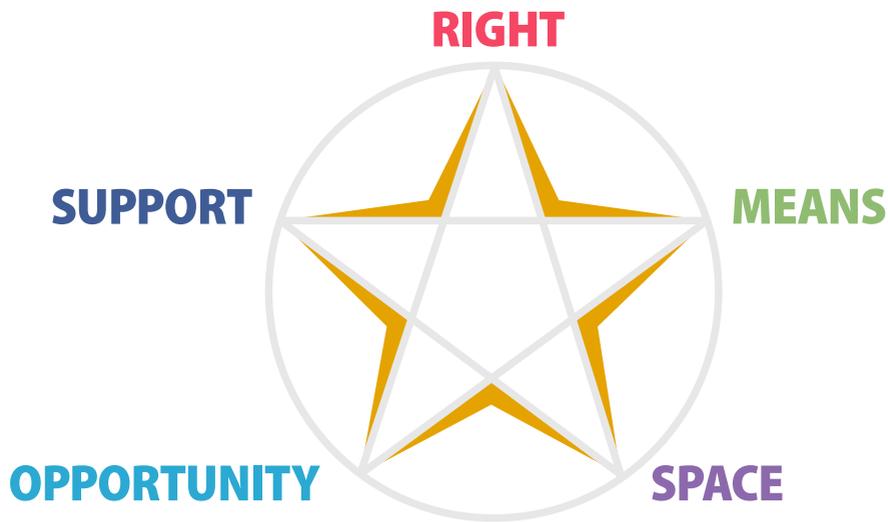
Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.<sup>53</sup>

This definition is translated into the so-called “RMSOS model”, which refers to:

- **The right to participate** – derives from human rights, implying young people have a fundamental human right to participate, regardless of this right being written down in different documents used at local and national level. It also implies young people should advocate and exercise their right to participate.
- **The means to participate** – in order to participate in society one needs to have the conditions to do so. This means that basic needs should be provided for in order for young people to be able to take part meaningfully. For example, some young people might not be able to afford transportation to attend a meeting of their youth council. This includes knowledge about participation and its benefits.
- **The spaces to participate** – institutional frameworks should provide for spaces (including physical) for meeting, organisation, and consultation. These spaces should be accessible to everyone concerned.
- **The opportunity to participate** – if spaces exists, young people need to know how they can take part, and this information needs to be clear and accessible. Decision-making processes and systems need to be youth-friendly, so that young people understand them and have sufficient time and supportive structures to make sense of them.
- **The support to participate** – relates to ensuring young people can have the means to participate, such as the financial means to do so. Equally, they might need training and advice in respect of participation.

.....  
52 Revised European Charter on Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, 2003, Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, available here: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/adopted-texts-and-recommendations](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/adopted-texts-and-recommendations).

53 Preamble, Revised European Charter on Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, 2003, Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.



Source: *Have Your Say!*<sup>54</sup>

Participation is essential for democratic life and should not be taken for granted. As with intercultural learning or human rights, participation needs to be learnt and supported through measures and systems that encourage it and make it possible. Depending on the concerned area, the spaces, means and opportunities for participation might be more formal (and regulated), but nevertheless, even when they are not required to be so, an audit is necessary.

### ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

- What do you understand by participation in your organisation?
- How are decisions taken in your organisation?
- What models of participation do you promote to young people?

### Participation in education

If participation is advocated for in society, it should also be practised in non-formal education. This entails that participants take part in making decisions about what and how they are going to learn. It equally means that participants are responsible for actively getting engaged in the learning activities and processes initiated by the team. This means that the role of the team is to facilitate and organise the learning process, rather than to act as instructors who share and control what is learnt and how.

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<sup>54</sup> *Have Your Say!* Manual on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, Council of Europe, 2015, Chapter 3.2. 'RMSOS framework': <https://rm.coe.int/16807023e0>.

Participation in decision-making about the learning process is not limitless, so this requires transparency from the facilitators' team on what can be affected, and how. Participants should be able to influence the objectives, the contents and the methodology of a study session.

Participation in the learning process can also involve decisions at an individual level to step out of certain activities that a learner has a valid reason not to engage with, within respectable limits.

Ensuring learners have a say with respect to both what and how is being learnt ensures ownership over the learning process and its results. It also ensures that responsibility over individual and collective learning processes is shared between teams and participants, where an atmosphere of collaboration is created.

Furthermore, this entails an approach where it is recognised that expertise is not held only by the facilitator team, but by participants as well. The experiences and knowledge of the participants should be the starting point of the discussions, and reflection should always support participants make sense of how to apply learning in their contexts (organisations, communities, etc.).

Ensuring participation in the learning process is also about being consistent with the values adhered to. This is an essential step for participants to be able to develop the necessary competences for participation in society:

- A sense of self-worth and dignity
- A sense of responsibility over one's own learning and group processes
- Autonomy and self-efficacy
- Decision-making skills
- Collaboration skills
- Negotiation and conflict transformation skills
- Listening and observing skills
- Critical thinking
- Argumentation and self-advocacy

### **KEEP IN MIND!**

#### **In the application for a study session**

#### **16. Please describe the approach and working methods that will enable the achievement of the objectives. How will a participatory approach be integrated into the activity?**

Adding to the general guidelines above, it is worth keeping in mind that ensuring an adequate level of participation is a prerequisite for a successful study session. Under this question, organisers need to provide details of the participatory preparation process, and indicate that a participatory approach to programme design is thoroughly applied. This includes the internal consultations within your organisation, involvement of preparatory team members in the application, planning and implementation and the approach to allow participants to plan and decide on their own learning path before, during and after the study session.

Think about *all the stages* of a study session – preparation, implementation, evaluation and follow-up. How can you ensure participation of learners? How will you get their feedback? How will you make decisions based on their feedback? Can they initiate and have complete ownership over some of the elements?

## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

### What is human rights education?

*Compass – Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People* defines human rights education as:

” ...educational programmes and activities that focus on promoting equality in human dignity, in conjunction with other programmes such as those promoting intercultural learning, participation and empowerment of minorities.<sup>55</sup>

Another definition of human rights education can be found in the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education:

” ...education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>56</sup>

**There are many other definitions of human rights education; however, as *Compass* argues, there are three dimensions of human rights education:**

ABOUT	THROUGH	FOR
Learning <b>about</b> human rights means knowledge about human rights, what they are, and how they are safeguarded	Learning <b>through</b> human rights means recognising that the context and the way human rights learning is organised and imparted has to be consistent with human rights values (e.g. participation, freedom of thought and expression, etc.) and that in human rights education the process of learning is as important as the content of the learning	Learning <b>for</b> human rights, by developing skills, attitudes and values for the learners to apply human rights values in their lives and to take action, alone or with others, for promoting and defending human rights.

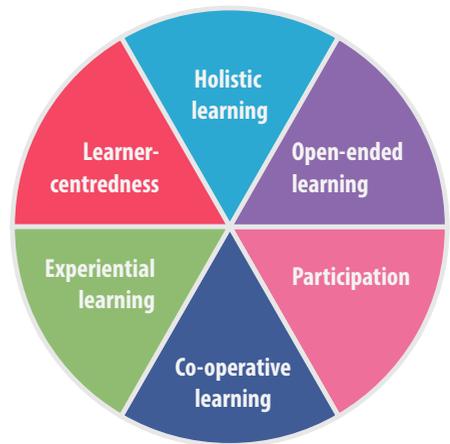
Human rights education essentially aims to limit the number of human rights violations and to support the creation of a universal culture of human rights.

.....  
55 *Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people*, Council of Europe, October 2012, p. 17.

56 Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

The pedagogical approaches of the Council of Europe in respect to human rights education are outlined in Compass. They entail:

1. **Holistic learning** – involving cognitive, practical and attitudinal dimensions of learning as the entire person lives human rights issues.
2. **Open-ended learning** – allows for multiple and complex answers to problems that are being seek together with the participants, rather than pointing them to the “right” answer.
3. **Values clarification** – allows participants to identify, clarify and express their own beliefs and values and confront them in a safe environment based on the respect to the dignity of every participant. This also entails that participants hold the ultimate choice over what they choose to hold as value at the end of a study session.
4. **Participation** – ensures that learners are engaged and make decisions over the learning process and contents.
5. **Co-operative learning** – people learn through working together with the aim of seeking outcomes that are beneficial both to themselves and the group.
6. **Experiential learning** – is at the core of non-formal learning as practised by the Youth Department, and entails learning through discovery as a way to learn and practise essential skills for human rights.
7. **Learner-centredness** – is about placing the participant at the centre of the learning process.



*(From Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people)*

### Competences in human rights education

If study sessions provide young people with an experience of human rights education where human rights perspectives are to be favoured, facilitators need to have some knowledge and skills, and relevant attitudes and behaviours. As a result of study sessions, participants are also expected to acquire the same competences.

#### Some basic knowledge about human rights would include:

- An understanding of the main concepts underlying human rights
- The understanding of human rights as a framework of negotiation and agreement for behaviours in public and private sphere
- The historical development of human rights
- Main instruments and mechanisms for human rights protection and the associated standards and means of appeal.

#### Some basic skills relevant for young people:

- To speak about an issue in human rights terms
- To advocate for human rights in private and public life
- To critically assess situations in terms of human rights



and be able to identify human rights abuses

- To deal with conflict and its transformation while observing human rights principles.

### **In terms of attitudes and behaviours:**

- A sense of responsibility for one's own actions
- Commitment to learning and development
- A sense of human dignity, self-worth and others' worth
- A sense of justice
- Commitment to the protection of human rights
- Empathy and solidarity with others.

### **Human rights education in study sessions**

Study sessions are non-formal education activities realised in partnership with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. They are not value-neutral activities; on the contrary, they are value-based educational activities. These values – which are the values underlying human rights – should be reflected in both the learning content and the learning process in a study session.

This means that participants should experience learning in a context where their human rights are respected and reflected upon and where they can learn and develop skills for defending and exercising human rights.

What does this mean in practice?

#### **▶ REFLECTION POINTS**

- *How much do you know about human rights in your team?*
- *Which human rights does your study session relate to? Can you identify the values, principles and existing standards?*
- *What knowledge, skills and attitudes would participants need in order to tackle the topic from a human rights perspective? How can you integrate them into the programme of the study session?*
- *What conflicting human rights issues might arise? How can you integrate them into the programme of the study session?*

## **i CASE STUDY**

### **Training Course for Trainers in Human Rights Education (TOTHE)**

One of the key activities of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme is the Training Course for Trainers in Human Rights Education which have regularly been held since 2002. As such, it is meant to be a model for activities in its approach towards giving space for learning *about, through* and *for* human rights. The overall aim of the training course is to develop the competences of trainers in non-formal education in their role as trainers or multipliers for human rights education with young people in international or national activities or local pilot projects.

Besides developing the knowledge of participants, also partly through an e-learning phase complementary to the residential seminar, it also allows participants to prepare ideas for follow-up projects focusing on the active promotion and protection of human rights in their local / regional setting.

Nevertheless, the training is also unique in the way it strengthens participants' understanding of key concepts of human rights education with young people in a specific setting of *living and learning together*. The participation of young people from several nationalities, ethnic minorities, young people with disabilities and different gender identities and sexual orientation in itself creates a learning environment for trainers to understand each other's needs and consequently rights – both through the informal time spent together or while participating in sessions or designing workshops for the practice day together. As an example, to develop a workshop with a young deaf co-trainer with the support of sign language interpreters is a way for a facilitator / trainer to learn about the necessity and the know-how of working with such specific target groups. Also, using certain methods (e.g. the 'Where do you stand?' activity in *Compass*) that allow space for discussing our identity in a safe setting can facilitate mutual understanding and solidarity in a very powerful way.

**Learning about human rights** – most, if not all, the issues that fit with the priorities of the Youth Department, and therefore qualify as topics for study sessions, have a human rights dimension. For some, the human rights dimension might be more obvious than for others, but it does not mean it does not exist. This is valid for organisational issues as well as community problems.

Participants and teams should learn about the human rights perspective over a certain topic. Sometimes, this might require introducing them all together to human rights and the framework of their protection. In other cases, this might require the review of the specific topic in light of human rights developments.

**Learning through human rights** – requires of teams and participants that they create a context where human rights principles are respected, principles such as freedom of expression respect for the dignity, equality, inclusion and accessibility, and so on. It also requires that the overall context in which a study session takes place respects these principles, from the information provided for the study session to the measures taken to ensure that everyone can participate. The context in which a study session takes place would also need explicit reflection with participants and can be brought into the content to support learning.

**Learning for human rights** – means supporting and preparing participants for taking action for human rights at personal, organisational and community levels. This requires that learning favours skills development and reflection on how they can follow up the learning experience.

## Learning more about human rights

The Youth Department has published the manual *Compass* for human rights education with young people, in which you can find all kinds of background information on human rights and HRE, on educational approaches, related educational fields, the evolution of human rights, activism and the role of NGOs, global themes, international human rights instruments, and so on. Furthermore, the manual includes around 50 human rights education activities related to themes such as children, citizenship, democracy, discrimination and xenophobia, education, environment, gender equality, globalisation, health, human security, media, migration, peace and violence, poverty, social rights, sports and war and terrorism. All activities are up to date for use with young people; they are ready to use, practical and experiential; they address values and attitudes and encourage action; they are easily adaptable and perfectly suitable for study sessions (for non-formal as well as formal educational contexts). All the exercises are described step-by-step and the complexity level is graded (from one to four), which means that for facilitators with little experience there are easy exercises to run, with plenty of tips on how to put them into practice and what to consider when working with specific target groups. Debriefing questions for exercises are also included.

*Compass* has already been translated into more than 30 languages and details on how to access or acquire these translations can also be found here: [www.coe.int/en/web/compass](http://www.coe.int/en/web/compass). In addition, you will find on the web page of the Youth Department HRE materials such as the *Education Pack All Different – All Equal*, *Bookmarks* and *Domino*. All three publications are published by the Council of Europe and are enormously helpful materials for youth workers in study sessions.

*Compass* has been followed by that of its younger sibling, *Compasito* – the manual for human rights education with children. Both publications support the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.



COMPASS



COMPASITO



REPÈRES

### ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

Try to find out whether *Compass* has been translated into your language (check the website: [www.coe.int/en/web/compass](http://www.coe.int/en/web/compass)).

*If not, can you think of someone who would be interested in translating it?*

*Is the *Compass* manual already in use within your youth organisation / network?*

## ***Personal development for organisers of study sessions***

This part of the manual deals with the development of individual competences of preparatory team members. In this section you will find many practical tips on how you can improve your facilitation and presentation skills, what you need to know about group dynamics when working with or in an international team, which ethics and values should be of importance to you and how you can improve your leadership skills, assertiveness and self-confidence as a facilitator.

“Be prepared to hand over the responsibility for their learning to the learners.”

*(Compass manual, Chapter 1.3.2)*

### **Facilitation skills**

#### **WHAT IS FACILITATION?**

Facilitation is a service to others.

The most important job of a facilitator is to protect the process of those being facilitated (the participants). The process is how the group goes about accomplishing their task. The problem or content is what they are working on.

The facilitator’s toolkit is a set of techniques, knowledge and experience, which they apply to protect the process that the group is working through. The facilitator helps to create the process, adjusts it, keeps it heading in the right direction and, most importantly, keeps the people attached to it.

The function of facilitation is to keep a meeting or training event focused and moving, and to ensure even levels of participation. The facilitator makes sure these things occur, either by doing them or by monitoring the group and intervening as needed. The facilitator is the keeper of the task and does not influence the content or product of the group. The facilitator pays attention to the way the group works – the process.

The facilitator sometimes acts as a resource for the group in the area of problem-solving techniques. The facilitator must be comfortable with team-building techniques and group processes and group dynamics, in order to assist the group in performing tasks and maintaining roles essential to team building. The facilitator intervenes to help the group stay focused and build cohesiveness, getting the job done with excellence, while developing the product.

In a study session, a facilitator is often also a specialist and an expert of the theme of the session. While it is important to look after the *process*, the facilitator cannot ignore the substance of the work during the session. They are also entitled to shape the discussions and thus contribute to the successful outcomes. This, however, still needs to be balanced with the needs of the group of individual participants, of other facilitators and of the overall “process”.

#### **WHAT IS A FACILITATOR?**

A leader of processes, a provider of tools and techniques that can get the work accomplished quickly and effectively in a group environment. A facilitator assists participants to bring out the full potential of every individual and the entire group.

*(A definition of a facilitator developed by participants from the TC for Facilitators organised by the Council of Europe)*

In the *Compass* manual, the word “facilitators” is used for the “people who prepare, present and co-ordinate the activities”. A facilitator is someone who “makes something happen”, who “helps”, and who encourages others to learn and develop their own potential. By facilitating, you create a safe environment in which people learn through experimentation, exploration, giving and taking. It is not a question of one person, a leader, who is an “expert”, giving knowledge to others. Everyone should grow through the sharing of experience, participants and facilitators alike.<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, a facilitator is many things. Below can be found a list and detailed description of the different tasks of a facilitator:

### **A facilitator is ...**

- someone who designs work sessions with a specific focus or intent
- an advisor who brings out the full potential of working groups
- a provider of processes, tools and techniques that can get work accomplished quickly and effectively in a group environment
- a person who keeps a group meeting on track
- someone who helps to resolve conflicts
- someone who draws out participation from everyone, to ensure that the full potential of the group is achieved
- someone who organises the work of a group
- someone who makes sure that the goals are met
- someone who provides structure for the work of a group
- someone who is empathetic
- someone who organises space and time.

General necessary **attitudes** to consider include:

- Supportive and attentive presence
- Avoiding manipulating people and behaviours through their own feedback
- Not getting attached to certain outcomes
- Not taking sides on issues or people
- Avoiding judging comments of the group and liking some ideas better than others.

While the list above summarises what facilitators are *expected to do* and how they should generally approach the process and communication with the group, there are also a few **mistakes** that one should always *avoid*, including:

- changing the wording a participant has said or written
- fixing the group (even in the most loving way!)
- fixing the problem for the group
- refusing to record an idea (even if tired or distracted, or when too many ideas come at once)
- being closed to group suggestions on the process
- changing the agenda and intervening work processes without major reason and agreement of the group
- getting involved in the content of the group work
- monopolising conversation
- trying to give the impression of having all the answers.

.....  
<sup>57</sup> *Compass 1.3.2 Facilitation, Using Compass for Human Rights Education*, p. 46.

## ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

- Is there anything missing from this list?
- What do you think a facilitator is? Do you have a specific definition for it? How do you see yourself, or how would you describe yourself as a facilitator?
- When was the last time you facilitated a discussion? Did you enjoy it? Was it difficult? Why?

In conclusion, the facilitator is not a teacher and sometimes not even an expert. A facilitator is part of a team, but participants are also knowledgeable and could be experts in the subject. One should not forget that all participants are peers who gather their experiences from within the same or similar organisations or movements or youth work in general. There is a major difference between a study session and a training course, where trainers are expected to have more expertise than the participants.

However, just like any other educators, facilitators also have to face many different challenges. One of them is to handle “difficult” participants.

## FACILITATION CHALLENGE: HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT PARTICIPANTS THROUGHOUT A STUDY SESSION

Below, you can find a list of profiles of difficult participants and possible ways of dealing with them throughout a study session.

### Types of “difficult” behaviour:

- dominant participant (domination, sarcasm, hyperactive, talking too much, not giving space / time to others)
- “negative” participant (not constructive criticism, negativity, intolerant, negativism)
- non-motivated participant (always late, wants to leave, not motivated, or is negative)
- troublemaker (rude participant, offensive participant)
- not fitting the profile (too experienced or inexperienced, participant tourist, wrong expectations)
- introvert participant (not willing to share, excluding themselves, shy participant)
- participant with insufficient knowledge of the working language
- participant with personal issues (homesickness, food issues, personal problems, illness).

Possible strategies to be used in dealing with difficult participants, with special regard to two types of challenging participants:

### How to deal with dominant participants:

- give them responsibilities
- give them personal challenges
- suggest one-to-one discussion with a team member
- ensure that the participant has their space in the programme
- ensure all participants have an equal say (for example, one-by-one comments)
- get feedback from others (team + participants) to change attitudes, and promote self-reflection
- encourage whole group reflection on group dynamics + roles
- carry out a session as a team, and have a strategy before session
- ensure balance whenever possible (for example, in small working groups)
- check comfort of others

### **How to handle negativity / non-motivated participants:**

- create common and agreed seminar rules at the beginning of the study session; for example, write two posters: desired and undesirable behaviour
- break a big group up into different small ones more often, making sure the challenging participants rotate
- try to discover what motivates them
- acknowledge when they are right and when their comments are constructive
- be open to their point of view
- point out the difference between constructive criticism and negativity to the group
- make participant(s) aware that it is possible to be positive, and help them to express themselves in a positive way
- take them aside and talk privately, not in front of the group.

Please note that these lists are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. Descriptions of further difficult situations which one may face as a facilitator are given in *Appendices I and II* (connected to ethics and values). Furthermore, there are also limits to the role of a facilitator. Facilitators should not and cannot be responsible for everything.

## **GENERAL COMPETENCES AND SKILLS OF A FACILITATOR**

**The following description gives details of the relevant general competences and skills of a facilitator during a facilitation process. Here are some practical tips for you!**

### **BEFORE your programme session prepare:**

- the working space (room, chairs, air, heating, technical aids)
- the agenda (which is much more than just a timetable and tasks, but also includes methods and methodology)
- an approach to encourage new thinking skills
- consideration of the possibly different accessibility needs of participants.

### **DURING your programme session:**

- encourage full participation
- promote mutual understanding
- foster inclusive solutions (integrate opinions).

### **Complex competences of a facilitator:**

- ability to notice and react to group dynamics
- teamwork and supporting / relying on other facilitators
- time-keeper, and ensuring a good pace throughout
- being affirmative (looking out for and awarding positive contributions)
- keeper of personal integrity (no-one's personal integrity can be questioned)
- wrapping up and summing up.

### **Techniques for successful facilitation:**

- **Paraphrasing** is a fundamental listening skill. It is a foundation for many other facilitative listening skills, including *mirroring*, *gathering* and *drawing* people out.

**How:** use your own words to say what you think the speaker said.

- **Gathering ideas:** to help a group build a list of ideas at a fast moving pace, you want to *gather* ideas, *not discuss* them.

**How:** effective gathering starts with a concise description of the task. (E.g. "For the next 10 minutes, please evaluate the 'pros' and 'cons'. First I will ask someone to call out a 'pro' reaction. Then I'll ask for a 'con' and so on. We'll build both lists at the same time.")

- **Drawing people out** is a way of supporting people in taking the next step in clarifying and refining their ideas. It makes the speaker understand that you are with her/him and that you understand her/him so far. "Please tell me a little more!"

**How:** paraphrase the speaker's statement, and then ask open-ended non-directive questions: "Can you say more about that?" or "What do you mean by ...?"

- **Mirroring** captures people's exact words. It is a highly formal version of paraphrasing, in which the facilitator repeats the speaker's exact words.

**How:** if the speaker said one sentence, repeat exactly the same again. If she/he said more than one sentence, repeat back key words and/or phrases.

- **Encouraging** is the art of creating an opportunity for people to participate, without putting any one individual on the spot.

**How:** "Who else has an idea?" "Is this discussion raising questions for anyone else?" "Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken for a while", and so on.

- **Creating space** sends the quiet person this message: "If you don't wish to talk now, that's fine. But if you would like to speak, here is an opportunity".

**How:** keep an eye on the quiet members. Observe body language or facial expressions that may indicate their desire to speak. Invite them: "Was there a thought you wanted to express?" "Did you want to add something?"

- **Stacking** is a procedure for helping people take turns when several people want to speak at once.

**How:** a four-step procedure. Firstly, the facilitator asks anyone who wants to speak to raise their hands. Then she/he creates a speaking order by assigning a number to each person. Thirdly, she/he calls on people when it is their turn to speak. Then, when the last person has spoken, the facilitator checks to see if anyone else wants to speak. If so, the facilitator does another round of stacking.

For example: (1) "Would all those who want to speak please raise your hands?" (2) "Anna, you are first. John, you're second. Natasha, you are third." (3) [When Anna has finished] "Who was second? Was it you, John? OK, go ahead." (4) [After the last person has spoken] "Does anyone else have something to say?"

- **Tracking** means keeping track of various lines of thought that are going on simultaneously within a single discussion.

**How:** tracking is a three-step process. First, the facilitator indicates that she/he is going to step back from the conversation and summarises it. Then she/he names the different conversations that have been in play. Finally, she/he checks for accuracy with the group.

(1) "It sounds like there are three conversations going on here right now. I want to make sure I'm tracking them." (2) "It sounds like one conversation is about methods and methodology. Another is about finances. And a third is about the educational programme of the activity." (3) "Have I understood correctly?"

- **Balancing** undercuts the common myth that "silence means consent". In doing so, it provides welcome assistance to individuals who do not feel safe enough to express their views because they think they are in a minority position.

**How:** "Okay, now we know where three people stand; does anyone else have a different position?" "Are there other ways of looking at this?" "What do others think?" "Does everyone else agree with this?"

- **Intentional silence** is seriously underestimated. It consists of a pause, usually lasting no more than a few seconds, to give the speaker brief “extra quiet time” to discover what she/he wants to say.
 

**How:** with eye contact and body language, stay focused on the speaker. Do not say anything, not even “hmm”. Just stay relaxed and pay attention.
- **Listening for common ground** serves to resolve disagreements.
 

**How:** First, indicate to the group that you are going to summarise the group’s differences and similarities. Secondly, summarise the differences. Thirdly, note areas of common ground. Finally, check for accuracy.

### ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

- *Can you think of any other methods? Are there some you use more than others?*
- *What else is important to become a good facilitator?*

## PRESENTATION SKILLS

Good presentation skills are among the principle skills of a good facilitator. Therefore, you will find in the following section more information on how you can improve your presentation skills, what you need to be aware of while presenting, how you can reduce your nervousness, and so on.

When it comes to presenting, one may find it similar to the infamous Murphy’s Law “Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong”, meaning that a presenter at a study session should be prepared for all eventualities. Presentations involve use of all sorts of equipment – a projector, graphic facilitation, flipcharts, pin-boards, markers, post-its, and so on. As the participants put it, all these tools, rather than being a great help in “juicing up” their presentations, can also mess it up. However, preparing and delivering a good presentation after all is not such a difficult task. On the contrary, it is usually a very good learning experience for everyone, presenter and participants alike.

Here are a few tips on how to prevent and overcome some of these difficulties:

### **How to enhance the efficiency and (personal) perfectionism of presentations**

Before the study session, check what materials are available in the youth centre. On the first day of the study session, check the quality and quantity of markers and materials.

When using PowerPoint or any other online or offline presentation software, check if the Internet connection and/or your memory stick work on the computer in the room, and if the link between the computer and the projector works. You are always asked to send a detailed technical needs list to the educational advisor in charge of the session at least two weeks before the session, so that the EYC can provide any extra material needed. If there is anything you forgot to mention on this list, you will have to bring it from home! To sum up, never rely on technical equipment that may be available without also checking how it works!

The following table collects some key aspects by using two sets of key words: by keeping them in mind, or using them for double-checking when preparing your presentation, you can help make sure that your presentation will make the right impact. While the “four Ps” focus rather on the technical preparation and delivery, the “four Es” could help you to find the right approach for addressing your audience and the right balance in terms of content.

Preparing a presentation – key aspects for planning, and making it useful and enjoyable:

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The four Ps
• PLAN – Background information
• PREPARE – Researching
• PRACTICE – Mirror imaging
• PRESENT – Visual/Verbal presentation

The four Es
• EDUCATE
• ENTERTAIN
• EXPLAIN
• ENJOY

### Some basic tips for delivering a presentation

- smile: do not be stiff and serious all the time
- speak clearly and confidently
- keep your speech within the allotted time for your talk
- look at everybody (focus on their foreheads if you do not want to look into their eyes)
- involve your audience
- finish with a strong conclusion
- have a pen or any other tool you can use for pointing to the overhead slide, or a red light beamer, or a stick to point at the screen with a PowerPoint presentation
- water: always have a glass of water to hand
- assertiveness training: verbalise your concerns, your own mind; express feelings and emotions.

Step by step – in your presentation, make sure that you follow this basic logic:

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## Tips for posture and breathing: this is important – especially when you are feeling nervous

- Stand firmly, with both feet on the ground (so that you would not fall or stumble if someone were to push you slightly at your shoulders); try to be “stable like a rock” (feel the connection to the ground); avoid wearing uncomfortable footwear, especially high heels for females.
- Take in a long deep breath through your nose and then let the air out slowly through your mouth. By allowing enough oxygen into your lungs you clean out stress hormones (adrenalin and cortisone). Take a few of these deep breaths before doing a presentation. You will be much more relaxed!

*(For more tips and information on facilitation, consult the T-Kit 6 on Training Essentials)*



## Group dynamics

Every group has its own dynamics. Every study session group has them, every preparation team too, though they are not always visible or marked in the same way. It is normal that, at a study session lasting several days, conflicts will arise. In the context of experiential learning, these conflicts are also considered to be sources of learning. Therefore, it is important to be able to handle conflicts and to know about the different stages of behaviour within a group. As a facilitator, one should be able to develop the sense to read and understand the process of an international group, and to recognise patterns and indicators. Some basic understanding of group dynamics may be helpful. We provide some in this chapter.

The following practical exercises can help you during the first steps of building cohesion in the group by breaking the ice and by opening a space for simple physical exercises and communication. At the same time, even if this is not an aim in itself, by observing the behaviour and reactions of participants, facilitators can learn more about the group and even possibly foresee potential opportunities and challenges in the functioning of the group.

### EXERCISES FOR GROUP DYNAMICS

#### A. Warm-up exercise

1. Walking around the room covering the entire space and changing walking patterns
2. Walking around the room covering the entire space and maintaining eye contact
3. Walking around the room covering the entire space, maintaining eye contact and greeting the other participants; at first use smaller, and then bigger greetings
4. Facilitator giving commands "walk", "stop" and "jump" (then repeatedly speeding up the commands)
5. Facilitator then changing the commands into "green", "red" and "yellow", at the same time continuing to use also the old commands in order to make the participants more concentrated.

#### B. Balancing exercise

1. The participants are asked to imagine that the whole space has been placed on the top of a pyramid and therefore the group has to balance the platform by moving slowly and carefully.
2. Step one is repeated but the participants have to balance the platform faster.
3. The group is split into two. Both small groups take turns in balancing the platform to get someone off it.

#### C. The great game of power

1. The facilitator places a can, a table and some chairs in the middle of the room.
2. The participants are asked to place the objects so that one of them is the most powerful.
3. At the end, the participants are asked to place themselves into the scene so that they would be in the most powerful position.

#### D. 4 UP

1. Ask everyone to sit in a circle.
2. Explain that the rule of this game is that 4 people should be standing at any one instance and that no player may stand for more than 10 seconds, though they may stand for less if they wish.
3. There should be no attempts to communicate between players, but everyone in the group has to watch what is happening and share the responsibility to make sure that 4 people, no more, no less, are standing at any one time.<sup>58</sup>

.....  
58 This exercise, among others, is available and can be consulted in the *Education Pack All Different – All Equal*: Ideas, resources, methods and activities for non-formal intercultural education with young people and adults. 2nd Edition, 2016.

**After doing these exercises, during the debriefing it is possible to discover a variety of aspects of group dynamics that might prove to be relevant during the rest of the study session:**

- Could people detect how others and themselves acted and reacted?
- Was it possible to identify patterns for interpersonal and group competition and co-operation?
- Was there enough space for individual initiative for action, and expression of will? Did the group's behaviour influence or deviate from the action of individuals?
- Were they able to notice how physical features (e.g. energy levels, tone and strength of voice, bodily presence) influenced the process? Is this something to take into consideration?
- How do they see their ability and willingness for self-reflection? Why is this important?

Staying connected to the group is crucial if a team of facilitators intends to remain flexible and responsive during the implementation of a residential training activity in a non-formal educational setting. Facilitators are also part of the group dynamics, even if they have a more prominent role in the implementation of the programme. At the same time, their relationship also develops with participants during the session; they are responsible not only for the learning process but also for the general safety and comfort of all participants. During a study session, some issues will immediately become visible (e.g. which participants are more talkative) while others will only become obvious through the process of a developing interaction (e.g. if somebody is not only shy to talk, but actually lacks language competences, or if there are hidden tensions). It is also worth pointing out that during both the physically and mentally demanding implementation of the educational programme of a study session, a team cannot necessarily be aware of everything that is happening in the group. Moreover, they probably do not have to be aware of all processes, or at least it is not always necessary to take action. However, there are a few regular exercises that may help the team to keep an eye on the general "temperature" of group dynamics. These include:

- Integrating proper time for sharing expectations and concerns with the group
- Setting group rules and coming back to them as a reference point if needed
- Introducing reflection groups (facilitated by team members or self-facilitated) and collecting feedback
- Sharing and reflecting on observations in team meetings
- Having contact and interaction with the participants in informal time (breaks, evening programme)
- Applying necessary changes in the programme, e.g. slowing down the programme to dedicate enough time to discuss a conflict / challenging situations with the group.

**⚠ KEEP IN MIND!**

There are situations when a **team is fully responsible for taking appropriate action** (e.g. bullying, discrimination in the group) in a transparent way. However, overreaction by a team member can also cause harm in the group process. Therefore, the nature, the timing and the overall approach towards any contribution should be carefully considered, possibly together with all team members. Sometimes a conflict needs to be immediately tackled in plenary, while in other cases the issue can be discussed informally, solely with those who are directly involved after the sessions.

More detailed information and practical guidance on group dynamics can be also found in the T-Kit 6: *Training Essentials*, which includes specific chapters on managing the training process and tips for setting ground rules. The publication also specifically reflects on the challenges related to using a common language in an intercultural setting and on how they influence group dynamics.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> T-Kit 6: *Training Essentials*: 4.1.4. *Managing the training process*; 4.1.5 *Group dynamics and spoken language* and 4.1.3. *Theme-Centred Interaction (TCI)* with an exercise on communication breakdown and setting group rules.

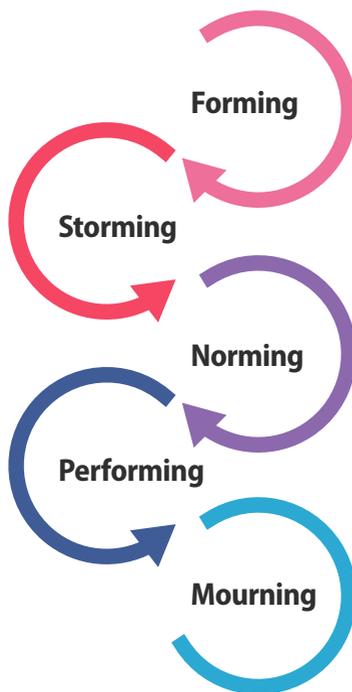
## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF GROUP DYNAMICS

In his theory of group dynamics, Bruce Tuckman identified four stages of group development, and later jointly with Mary Ann Jensen, added a fifth stage to the four stages: “mourning”. These phases are usually necessary and inevitable in order for the team or group to grow, face up to challenges, tackle problems, find solutions, plan work, and come to results.

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing
5. Mourning

### The four stages of group development

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The first phase is the “forming” phase, where the group comes together for the first time and initial contact is made. The “storming” phase is characterised by an exploration of roles and positions within the group, often leading to small conflicts. The “norming” phase follows: group norms are established, for example the implementation of group “rules” and working patterns. “Performing” occurs when the group reaches its peak, allowing itself to perform at an optimum level. “Mourning” follows after the peak performance, when the functioning period for the group comes to an end. In a study session, this would be during the farewell party and departure.

Group dynamics are not linear; they can better be described as a “spiral”: different “phases” of group dynamics repeat themselves throughout the functioning period of the group. It has also been pointed out that the duration and intensity of each phase will vary from group to group.

*(Based on the model by Tuckman, B. and Jensen, M.A.)<sup>60</sup>*

Full awareness of these stages will also allow facilitators to monitor the development of the group, plan it and intervene if needed. For example, input sessions by experts tend to be more useful / have a greater impact in the “storming” and “norming” phases than in the “mourning” phase – and while contributions and comments from “dominant” or outspoken participants are inevitable and welcome in the first phases, they should be less present or visible later.

60 Tuckman BW and Jensen MA (1997), Stages of Small-Group Development Revisited, SAGE Journals, Group & Organization Management: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/105960117700200404>

The first and main concern of facilitators regarding this process should be that the programme remains fully participative and provides equal chances for participation and creativity, and that the atmosphere remains motivating. This may entail the management of conflicts as well as making sure that the communication and contribution is balanced in the team and that no-one is excluded, while still giving voice to and using the expertise of more experienced or more vocal participants.

## **AN INSIDER'S THOUGHTS – AN INTERVIEW WITH A TRAINER**

### **“Why is tracking group development crucial for the success of a study session and any other activity based on non-formal education?”**

*Q: At school, the teacher was always in charge, but here, how do we start?*

A: When young people arrive at the youth centres and meet for the first time, it is natural to be reserved. New people, speaking a foreign language, a new environment, and tiredness after a long journey are all factors that shape this reserved attitude.

The role of the team is to make this new environment an enjoyable one. The facilitators should first allow people to greet each other, to learn who the others are and to find out more about their backgrounds; in other words, to start generating a feeling for the rest of the group, as they will spend a week together, which should be an enjoyable learning experience.

*Q: But how do I move to the content?*

A: The first day of a study session, after the welcome evening, always carries expectations for formal introductions and the beginning of “real work”. A facilitator should not be worried about whether contents will emerge at the study session. At the beginning, participants are very enthusiastic to share what they know and/or what they have learned in the past. Some of them might even be too assertive in this wish and the team of facilitators should provide a framework for everybody to have her/his own say. This is the time when a special group culture is being formed and participants define the norms of communication within this group.

*Q: How do I ensure that everything goes smoothly in this process of exchange?*

A: Actually, as a facilitator you don't want everything to go smoothly. People have different opinions and understandings of the subject of the study session and ways in which to communicate with others. As a result, expect conflicts to arise and for people sometimes to engage in argument. At this stage, the team should encourage the group to interact as much possible. That's why it is important at this point to introduce different group-building exercises and initial discussions on the subject of the study session.

*Q: How do I, as a facilitator, approach and handle conflicts?*

A: In my opinion, the beginning of the second day of the study session is the best time to throw in challenging concepts related to the subject to the group. This will certainly steer a lot of discussions towards the subject and help people to start communicating effectively. The team of facilitators should ensure that the conflicts arise more as an exchange of different opinions on the subject rather than at a personal level. It's the job of the team of facilitators to create a secure environment for participants, where they feel comfortable in expressing their opinions. Such an environment requires that there is mutual respect and tolerance among participants, which helps them to accept or understand contrasting views and differences.

*Q: What will make the group perform?*

A: Once the working atmosphere is established, the team should steer the group towards “producing” as much as possible. Discussions in small groups, individual reflections, larger simulation exercises and debriefings after exercises should all contribute to in-depth discussion of the study session subject. At this stage, the

group should also produce whatever the team defined as the result of the study session: a declaration, recommendations, a design for different exercises, action plans for projects, and so on.

*Q: How do I bring about a successful closure at the end of the study session?*

*A:* You have to keep the good spirits up and, despite the final work at the end of the study session, you have to ensure that participants go home motivated in order to multiply this work within their organisations or communities. There should space for the group to realise and celebrate what has been achieved, for example, through the evaluation of the session, and to get ready for the “mourning” – in this case, dissolving. At the same time, not everything is about content. Let the group “party well” and enjoy their free time!



## Ethics and values

**Ethics** is the science of human duty; the body of rules of duty drawn from this science; a particular system of principles and rules concerning duty, whether true or false; rules of practice in respect to a single class of human actions; as political or social ethics; medical ethics. **Values** are beliefs of a person or social group in which they have an emotional investment (either for or against something).<sup>61</sup>

According to the *Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department*, “trainers and facilitators should be acquainted with the values and work of the Council of Europe and able to introduce or put into practice its main standards, educational approaches and resources.”<sup>62</sup> Also, as written before, the programme of a study session must provide space for *learning through human rights* – which requires that teams and participants create a context and maintain an atmosphere where human rights principles are respected,

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61 Source: *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (1913). More on values in HRE in *Compass*, p. 30-39.

62 Point 6. ‘A competent team of trainers and facilitators’, in the *Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe*, revised in 2016.

including a respect for human dignity. This necessarily means that facilitators have a great responsibility to act and behave ethically and based on values that are shared and respected within the whole group throughout the whole activity, not only in workshop and during sessions but also in informal time.

Below, the most important aspects of such responsibilities are listed and practical tips are provided for study session settings.

## ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

### How to handle the situation when participants feel uncomfortable with an activity?

*Example:* While socialising in the evening, the preparatory team suggests a game that might be very challenging for some participants: it involves a lot of physical contact, which for some people might be very intimate or offensive. One of the participants obviously does not feel comfortable and the next morning wants to leave the study session.

- *How can you solve it? Give reasons for your choice of solution.*
- *How could you prevent this kind of situation happening again in the future?*
- *What ethics and values are important in this case?*

Ethics and values are an integral part of study sessions and they are also truly important for a facilitator, as she/he acts as a role model and challenges the views / opinions of young people. Below, you will find ethics contextualised, referring to real problems that can emerge during study sessions and within preparatory teams.

### Responsibility as a role model

As a preparatory team member of a study session, a facilitator, alongside the rest of your team, is in charge of the entire process that eventually should lead to other people learning and developing. Therefore, the overall behaviour of the facilitators should correspond with the rules agreed upon with the group. For example:

- If someone as team member shows up at a morning session at 10 a.m. instead of the scheduled 9 a.m. after a tremendous intercultural evening and few more glasses of wine than desired, participants are entitled to do the same
- If someone as a team member responds to a mobile phone call while in a small working group with participants, then participants too will be entitled to leave sessions whenever they have private business to deal with, want to send text messages, and so on.

### Responsibility as a resource person

As a team member of a study session, you are not solely in charge of providing every single bit of content at study sessions. The team has an educational advisor, experts, other team members and participants available, and all team members should read and prepare before the session and develop themselves to be resource people throughout the session.

- For example, if someone is a team member in a study session dealing with human rights education, the person should show up at least with a basic understanding of what *Compass* is, having read one or two chapters, and show a thorough understanding of some five or six exercises. It would be unethical not to prepare!

## Responsibility as a member of the team

The preparatory team represents a team effort and whatever happens within a team, the team members should stand together.

- For example, it can happen that, in evening preparatory team meeting, the team has lengthy and challenging discussions and there is a conflict between two preparatory team members. Individual team members should not run around and tell these things to participants. The team is part of the group and in general should share most things, but there are limits; otherwise it can become unethical. Also, it is important that team members are ready to support each other and stand up for each other if needed, while at the same time remaining responsive to the group. They should also stay ready to openly raise issues and discuss within the team: it can be harmful not to tackle emerging problems as this can lead to an escalation of potential conflict.

## The facilitators and their relationship with participants

As a facilitator, you will often find yourself at the centre of attention and representing a leading position towards participants.

- Therefore, facilitators must separate their private and professional life – even though they might be working on a voluntary basis in your study session and possibly with young people like themselves. A facilitator is not at the study session in order to make the most out of the parties and flirt with or seduce participants. Be aware that this is a highly sensitive issue and may be unethical! For example, there are a number of cases where a facilitator can find themselves in an uncomfortable situation:
  - Being an educator, a facilitator owns certain power, especially in the eyes of younger participants – they may find it more difficult to refuse somebody who is in charge of the activity.
  - It may be unethical to use such an activity as a chance for one-off adventures.
  - Such flirts never remain unnoticed and may create tensions in the group, and can lead to a lack of trust in the facilitator as an educator.

All in all, this is a widely debated issue within youth activities, and first and foremost any educator has to consciously consider their approach themselves – while keeping in mind that they are primarily there to work on the implementation of an educational activity and are responsible for the whole group.

- More case study material for reflection can be found in *Appendices I and II* on ethics and values.
- Further issues regarding preparatory teams are discussed in the following Chapter 4.

## BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR YOUTH WORK

### Ethical principles

- Treat each and every person in the session with respect.
- Respect and promote young people's rights to make their own decisions and choices.
- Promote and ensure the welfare and safety of young people.
- Contribute to the promotion and building of a universal culture of human rights.

### Professional principles

- Recognise the boundaries between professional and private life.
- Recognise the need to be accountable to young people, their parents or guardians (if they are under 18), employers, sponsors, wider society and other people with a relevant interest in their work.
- Develop and maintain the skills and competence required to do the job.

- Foster and engage in ethical debate in youth work.

(adapted by Y. Domuschieva from *Ethical Conduct in Youth Work*, prepared by the National Youth Agency, UK. For further information, see Appendix II.)

### ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

After having a look at the principles above, would you add anything, or is there any alternative that would be important to consider?

### ⚠ KEEP IN MIND!

When reflecting on ethics and values, it is of utmost importance that study sessions are human rights education activities, where learning is expected to happen *through* human rights. The *Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe* points out some aspects to consider:

- the composition of the teams should reflect the specificities of the group of participants
- facilitators / trainers and organisers must adhere strictly to the principles of human rights and their implications within a European training activity, and be familiar with the concepts and practice of human rights education
- facilitators / trainers must be able and committed to address cases of prejudice that may occur
- facilitators / trainers and organisers should be aware of the existence and functioning of discrimination and its possible expression among the participants and how to deal with it; they should consistently value and take into account perspectives and points of view of minority or under-represented groups, participants' access needs (e.g. related to disabilities or to faith or religious beliefs) and show a commitment to gender equality.

## Leadership / assertiveness and self-confidence

Being a member of a preparatory team for a study session also means taking on the responsibility of leading participants through a learning experience. It implies owning leadership of certain tasks (e.g. chairing sessions as well as team meetings, taking the lead in organising the delivery of key sessions in the study session and dealing with or supporting other team members' difficult conversations from time to time).

In order to improve the communication necessary for handling possible problematic conversations, this chapter of the manual focuses on leadership with regards to the effectiveness of assertive behaviour in general as well as the importance of self-confidence at an individual level.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that study sessions are also based on peer learning, in which a team member is a peer of the participants. It is also normal that some participants will have more experience than the team members, but this should not discourage team members. They just have to be aware of the situation and work on their self-confidence and assertiveness.

This chapter offers help to becoming acquainted with the knowledge and skills necessary to transmit *assertive behaviour in the management and facilitation of study sessions*.

## IMPORTANT COMPETENCES IN THE FIELD ARE:

- leadership
- assertiveness (verbal and non-verbal) and self-confidence.

### Leadership

There are numerous models for identifying and describing a variety of leadership styles – often focusing primarily on leadership and management in business context. However, they also have considerable relevance for teams of study sessions and, reflecting on individual attitudes and skills in leadership, can help course directors and facilitators alike to efficiently lead the implementation of the overall study session and the smooth running of workshops and discussions.

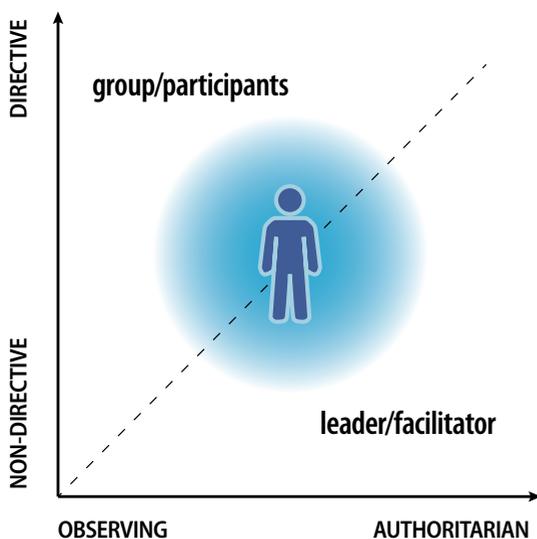
Most of the models focus on the level of control by the facilitator on the group: within this spectrum, it is possible to place oneself between being more or less directive and taking more of an observant or more authoritarian / controlling role.

The following graph refers to styles of leadership and how a facilitator's behaviour can be perceived:

- non-directive **or** directive
- observing **or** authoritarian

Styles of leadership in facilitating a group's learning process

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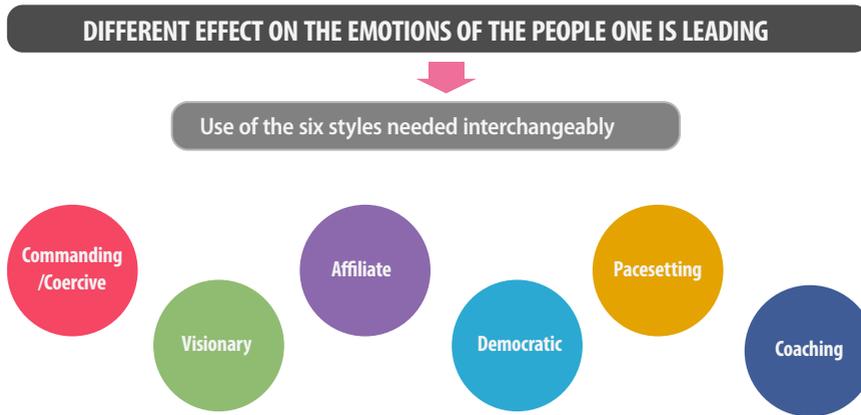
The human figure, representing the facilitator here, marks a point of intermediate behaviour which is directive to some extent, but allows for the active involvement of the participants of a session. It therefore corresponds to the behaviour ideally to be adopted by facilitators, trainers and coaches. The scale between 'Observing – Authoritarian' in this context refers to the level of involvement in / control over a process by the facilitator (passivity to control / inspiration), while the range between 'Non-directive – Directive' is more about setting directions, providing support and guidance. There are overlaps between the two, but the most important message is the necessity to find the balanced approach that fits the needs of the group in the given situation.

However, the model above may sound simplistic and possibly focuses strongly on the more authoritarian /

frontal approach in formal education situations as opposed to the less directive non-formal education. Other more recent models bring in more aspects – for example, the six leadership styles by Daniel Goleman<sup>63</sup> range from a commanding role to coaching:

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63 Goleman D., Boyatzis R. and McKee A. (2009), *Primal Leadership*. Harvard Business Publishing (2013) <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/16558-PDF-ENG>



(Six leadership styles by Daniel Goleman)

The model suggests that each has a different effect on the emotions of the people that one is leading, and that none of the styles should be used in all cases. As an alternative, the six styles should be used interchangeably, depending on the specific situation and the needs and profile of the group.

Therefore, it is worth noting that the productivity of a group or the success of the learning process of the group and the individuals within, largely depends on the way facilitators lead them, and while some groups perform well without strong guidance, some others may need more attention. Accordingly, a recommendable approach is the so-called *situational leadership*.

**Situational leadership** suggests that there is no single “preferable” or perfect style of leadership. Effective leadership depends on the nature of the task in question; most successful leaders can adapt their leadership style to the capacity and willingness of the individual(s) or group they are working with.<sup>64</sup>

In the upcoming chapter, the triangle of the *3Ps – product, process and people* is also introduced in relation to teamwork; however, it can also be especially relevant to use for the relationship and dynamics between facilitator(s) and participants. For example, this may entail reflection on the extent to which it is more important to push a group to produce something in a limited timeframe even if their capacity or readiness is weaker than expected, or whether it is better to focus on the process and leave time for learning and spontaneous discovery.

### Assertiveness

Another competence to consider for self-confident and efficient facilitation is assertiveness – something again that is, in general, relevant in almost any situation as a communication strategy. Nevertheless, it has specific importance in international educational projects such as study sessions, where often it is important to be firm in clearly communicating opinions while still remaining objective and able to handle personal emotions.

Assertiveness means that somebody is self-confident in communication and able to clearly convey needs and opinions without being aggressive; in both cases it entails verbal and non-verbal means of expression too. Even though our personal way of communication is of course deeply rooted in patterns acquired throughout our socialisation, assertiveness can be improved: it is a learnable skill and mode of communication.

64 The theory of situational leadership was first outlined in Hersey P. and Blanchard K. H. (1969), *Management of Organizational Behavior – Utilizing Human Resources*, New Jersey/Prentice Hall.

The simplified overview of three different types of behaviour below may help us to understand how assertiveness relates to passive and aggressive behaviours – the two latter being the extremes of a spectrum where assertiveness as an ideal attitude stands in the middle.

### Three types of behaviour

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PASSIVE	ASSERTIVE	AGGRESSIVE
Evasive Apologetic Being a martyr Helpless Being a victim Hesitant Shy Self-denying	Responsible Efficient Honest Spontaneous Accepting Brave Bold Forgiving	Pushy Arrogant Violent Dominating Accusing Being a dare-devil Reckless Revenge-seeking
Powerlessness	Inner Strength	Coercion

Of course, the lists above do not mean that being shy brings along all the other characteristics of passive behaviour, or that being pushier is arrogant and unacceptable. As written above about situational management, sometimes a team or a group may need somebody with more self-confidence, or, on the contrary, with more ability to step back and be more reflective: this is where assertiveness plays a role. Needless to say, reaching a constant level of efficient assertive communication requires constant self-reflection and practice. However, paying attention to improving this skill can contribute immensely to inner strength and can help one to get over the feeling of powerlessness or to be more co-operative without forcing his/her own opinion on others.

**If one considers assertive behaviour specifically, the following benefits and advantages of that behaviour and related important competences of a facilitator can be gathered:**

1. Efficient conflict management
2. Better achievement of purposes
3. More positive atmosphere for the individual facilitator and the team and the group
4. Good stress management
5. Promotion of human rights and values by working in line with them (inclusion, participation)
6. Equality and respect in communication.

If you are interested in going more deeply into this issue, a more detailed overview of the necessary skills and competences of an assertive facilitator and/or co-facilitator, and the design of assertive facilitation can be found in *Appendix III*, including questions on self-reflection on how to become an assertive facilitator or co-facilitator, and on designing assertive facilitation.<sup>65</sup>

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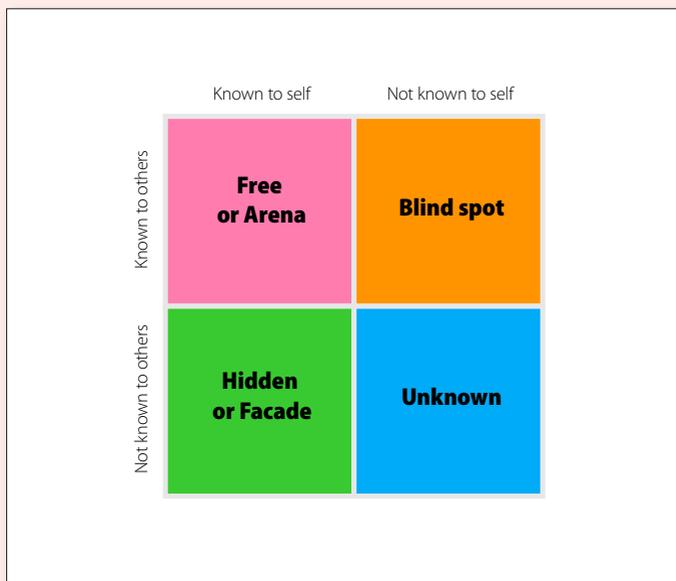
<sup>65</sup> Background documents and further reading: Willis L. and Daisley J. (1994), *The Assertive Trainer*, McGraw-Hill; Dickson A. (2012), *A Woman in Your Own Right. Assertiveness and You*, Quartet.

It is worth pointing out that the management of difficult conversations particularly related to study sessions and experiential learning environments is clearly connected to assertiveness and leadership and the image that facilitators may have about themselves. Previously, the chapter 'How to handle difficult participants' gives an insight into practical ways of handling conflicts and challenging situations when communicating with the group. Also, the following chapter explores how to work efficiently as a team and avoid conflicts.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that conflicts can always take place in the youth work context, and, while bringing a challenge for participants and educators alike, conflicts also present us all with opportunities for personal learning and development. However, only with constant openness and self-reflection and mutual communication can these experiences be turned into learning; it is also important to avoid situations when unresolved conflicts leave everlasting damages.<sup>66</sup>

## REFLECTION POINTS

A relevant theory in this context is the so-called '**Johari Window**', a model that illustrates how the individual sees the world and how the world sees the individual; it can be also referred to as a technique that helps people to understand their relationship with themselves and others better. It can be a useful tool for reflection in teams, for participants to reflect on their own performance and learn from the new experiences through giving and receiving feedback.



The Free zone relates to the things that both others and we know about ourselves. The Hidden zone corresponds to "secrets": what we know about ourselves but others do not. The Unknown zone corresponds to what we get to know about ourselves once we reveal our secrets to others and become aware of some unconscious elements about ourselves. Getting to know this zone better may require therapeutic support. Finally, the Blind zone includes elements of our personality that are known to others but not to ourselves.

From the analysis of the Johari Window, it can be concluded that the zone which someone as a facilitator should aim to improve the most is the *Blind spot*. Through self-analysis and asking for and receiving feedback, a facilitator can reduce the size of their Blind zone, therefore allowing for a greater awareness of her/his strengths and weaknesses, and improvement as a facilitator.

*(Developed by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham in 1955)*

66 For theoretical background on the nature of conflict and to find practical exercises in the T-Kit *Youth Transforming Conflict* (2012). The T-Kit 6: *Training Essentials* (2002) also contains a detailed chapter, 'Training in Action': 4.3 *Dealing with conflict*.

## 4. TEAM PREPARATION

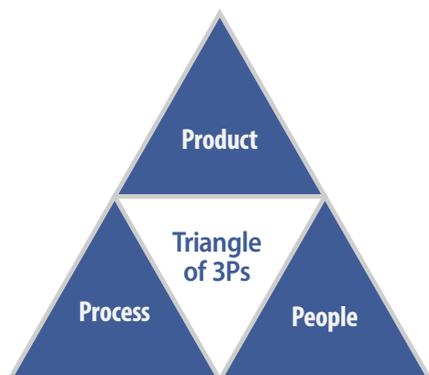
### Organisation of work within the team

*“A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they are held mutually accountable.”*

(Source: The Wisdom of Teams – J.R. Katzenbach & D.K. Smith)

The previous chapter focused mostly on the facilitators as individuals, on personal preparation and on their required competences, and it also touched on the importance of good communication and on handling conflicts. Nevertheless, it is also crucial to look at a facilitator as a member of a team – not least because by ensuring a timely and good preparation process and creating a strong team spirit, many difficulties can be prevented or handled more smoothly. To start with, it is worth having a look at the necessity of a balance in striving to reach aims and objectives, working together in a respectful and fruitful manner and valuing the teamwork process.

The triangle of the 3Ps of a team



The triangle of the 3Ps – product, process and people – represents the different poles that any team needs to consider in its work. Many teams tend to focus on the product, on the objectives, goals and results to be achieved, as this seems to be the most effective way to work, given that time is always limited. Some others focus on product plus process, but completely leave out the “people factor”. Don’t forget to pay attention to the individual members of a team. How do they feel about the work and the team? How does this impact on the team process? At different periods of an activity, one of the 3Ps might be more important to focus on than the others. Generally, the quality of an educational activity is enhanced if all three factors are in equilibrium.

It is hard to state that any of the 3Ps has utmost importance; however, in line with human rights values and principles, one may say that in an inclusive space of living and learning together, the safety and needs of individuals (i.e. *people*) always has priority over the *product* or the *process* – especially if it is about the safety of the group of participants. Sometimes a team has to consider giving up on some of the objectives (e.g. producing a publication together, or coming up with a resolution) if the capacity of the group to work together is, for some reason, difficult: providing a deeper learning experience for the people (participants) might be a

better idea. Slowing down the *process* to handle a conflict between *people* might also sometimes be necessary and can lead to hugely important learning: that is also why open ended learning is considered to be an important characteristic of human rights education.

In team work, however, we may also encounter situations where the *process* and the best interests of the group (*people*) requires the team to step forward, even if some of the team members do not agree; in such cases, the leadership skills of the course director may play a key role, and clear and honest communication is essential; time pressure and tiredness in long evening meetings can often bring such dilemmas. Of course, keeping the overall cohesion and team spirit is something to maintain despite occasional disagreements.

## Team composition

Preparatory teams of study sessions are in general composed of three or four facilitators, a course director,<sup>67</sup> and the educational advisor assigned to the study session by the Council of Europe: the educational advisor will have insight into the work of the Council of Europe, and experience of organising youth activities. Team members must have knowledge of the topics of the study session and experience as a facilitator. The course director should in addition be experienced in managing a team and an international group of participants, and in dealing with technicalities, eventual conflicts and matters that arise as part of the natural course of events of the organisation. The course director is the main person in charge on behalf of the youth organisation, and as such is responsible for making sure that, from the organisation's point of view, the activity is a success. The educational advisor is an experienced trainer contracted by the Council of Europe or a Council of Europe employee. They have an educational role but also an administrative and a political role. The educational advisor must make sure that the activity is a success from the educational point of view.<sup>68</sup>

### Crucial points for deciding on the composition of the study session team:

- Ask for the competences the team needs to achieve the objectives set (make sure team members have some experience in facilitation and or training). *Advice:* do not make up a team of board members alone. They might be good representatives at meetings and they can make sure that the results of the session are followed up, but they do not always have experience as facilitators / trainers.
- In case you plan to work with a mixed-ability group, or any other specific target group, it is indispensable to involve team members representing the group and having experience in organising or at least participating in similar activities before.
- Geographical and cultural diversity
- Gender equality
- Decide who will be the course director.

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67  
68 Details of the role of the educational advisor are given in 2.2.2. *Writing a proposal for a study session*, part E: *What can be expected from the educational advisor?*

## ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

If you are planning a study session, then when considering the set-up of your team, think about the following:

*Do you already know who is going to be part of your study session team?*

*Does your organisation launch a call for facilitators / trainers within the network? Do you agree in advance on the desired profile of team members? Have you defined the necessary competences of the team?*

*Do you have a balance regarding the represented countries / geographical regions in your team? Do you have a gender balance within the team?*

*Do all your team members bring along relevant experience in the field or on the topic of the study session? Do you have a balance between more- and less-experienced facilitators in the team?*

### **How to work in a team / distribution of roles**

We all have experiences of working in different teams or groups. With each team, it is important to discuss or consider what needs to be put into place for the proper functioning of the team.

Each team has to take some time to get to know each other. For example, it is useful to meet in a relaxed atmosphere at the first evening on arrival, before the team starts working on study session contents (e.g. have an evening out, do some team-building activities or simply share experiences). These first steps are crucial for establishing common ground, conquering language barriers and creating a common spirit. This will help to produce good and efficient work later.

Once the preparatory team starts to work on the content, it is crucial to clarify the distribution of roles, including the contribution of personal resources, qualities and competences.

There are many roles that people can take on in a team: some have a talent for coming up with creative ideas, others tend to get stuck on practical details; some love to talk a lot in front of the group, others less; some push the team forward and challenge its work, others ask painstaking questions; some members have a strong sense of objectives (or humour), while others are good at promoting the team. All of these roles are important and can be complementary for productive teamwork. Depending on the team's composition and the particular situation, people might change their roles. Different people bring out different qualities in us and a specific situation can demand specific behaviour and action.

For effective and fulfilling teamwork, it is important that all members can contribute according to their abilities and take on roles that they feel comfortable with, and that are recognised and valued by the others. This is easier said than done. Behaviour that is different from our own easily annoys us. Understanding theoretically that people have different needs and ways of contributing is very different from being able to accept this situation and to use it constructively. This is especially true for multicultural teams, where personal and cultural factors intermingle in determining team behaviour. Last but not least, good teamwork also depends on how we value the work with our team colleagues as a chance for personal learning and on how the team fosters this development. Reflective team analysis and careful feedback are essential elements in this process. Some methods for feedback within the team can be found in *Appendix IV*.<sup>69</sup>

.....

69 Source: T-Kit 6: *Training Essentials* (2002), p. 34

Clearly state in the preparatory meeting who is in charge of what, and what the roles of the various team members are, including the course director and the educational advisor / external trainer.

Make sure you discuss the following:

- prior experiences in youth work and training and other experiences of relevance for the particular study session
- what each of the team members expects from this study session and from the others, what they understand by team work, and that they are clear about their motivation to be a part of it
- how team members are going to support each other and handle possible crises within the team.

Furthermore, less experienced team members might need more support from the others, so this issue should be openly talked about and dealt with.

**To conclude this part, here is a checklist for successful teamwork:**

- Are you all committed? A team can only work effectively if every member wants it to work.
- Will you have the time needed to discuss basic approaches and ideas, to evaluate your teamwork and to give feedback to each other?
- Have you agreed on a “team contract”? Do not forget that everyone is in charge!
- Can you make sure that you act on the basis of commonly established basic values and objectives?
- Are you all willing to accept yourselves and the others?
- Are you ready to reflect on self-responsibility? Do not forget that you are responsible for your own actions and behaviour.
- Do you trust in and support each other’s abilities and performance?
- Are you aware that you sometimes also need to respect everyone’s limits?
- Are you ready to take the risk to do something new, and/or to challenge yourself?
- Are you ready to sometimes accept mistakes as a chance to learn?
- Keep in mind that the objectives are important, but the process is important as well (process-orientated thinking).
- Think about how the team is able to improve itself by examining its procedures and practices.
- Discuss how you as individuals usually handle difficult situations, and establish some procedures to analyse situations and solve problems.
- Be ready to accept conflict and emotions as part of the working process.
- Keep a balance between efficiency and social quality.
- Have pride in the accomplishments of the team.
- Teamwork is also fun! If it isn’t, something is wrong.<sup>70</sup>

The above issues need to be partly covered during the preparatory process through remote meetings as well as on the spot – sometimes teams must even come back to these dilemmas during the study session in challenging situations. However, a key step in the preparatory process is the team’s preparatory meeting that usually takes place at one of the EYCs not later than two months before the activity. The following chapter gives practical guidance on how to organise it.

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<sup>70</sup> The source of the original list is the T-Kit on Training Essentials (p. 39). Chapter 2 ‘Training in teams’ includes a lot more practical information, e.g. a model for a team contract, as well as practical experiential learning exercises to build trust in the team.

## ***The preparation process***

The preparation process of the team usually starts at the home of each individual when they are contacting the course director and other team members by email or phone, booking tickets for going to the preparatory meeting, which might also involve obtaining a visa,<sup>71</sup> and personally preparing for the preparatory meeting by reading background materials, for example.

### **A check list: To-dos before a preparatory meeting:**

- Agreeing on the dates with the Educational Advisor and the Secretariat of the EYC
- Reservation at the EYC or in other venue in exceptional cases)
- Informing the EYC's Secretariat about the number of team members, their arrival / departure times and any special dietary or access needs
- Travel and visa arrangements, and informing the team members about the process of their travel reimbursement for the meeting
- Checking the conditions set by the Programming Committee on Youth (confirmation letter)
- Reading the information documents
- Preparing a draft agenda for the meeting.

## **Preparatory meeting**

### **Agenda for a preparatory meeting**

Depending on the money and time available, the number of preparatory meetings might differ from organisation to organisation. In this chapter, we start from the assumption that only one meeting can take place and that it is in this meeting that the majority of the preparation work will be tackled. Depending on the previous experience of the members of the preparatory group, the target group and number of participants, the complexity of the theme and the clarity of the mandate, one and half to three working days should be planned for tackling the agenda below; teams are usually recommended to dedicate two full working days to the meeting:



.....  
71 Make sure you send passport details of the group, including team members, to the Secretariat assistant two months before the training is due to take place, so that the Council of Europe can issue official invitation letters.

## Draft agenda for a preparatory meeting of a study session

1. Introduction of team members in the meeting
2. Adoption of Agenda, and division of roles (note-taking, chairing)
3. Background to the activity
4. Working with and in the European Youth Centres – introduction to the role of the Council of Europe, quality standards and administrative procedures related to the study session and the deadlines involved
5. Role of the educational advisor
6. The role of the preparatory team / how to work in the team / roles in the team
7. Definition of aims and objectives of the study session
8. Specific conditions related to the approval of the activity by the Programming Committee (acceptance letter, other expectations) and introduction to relevant instruments of the Council of Europe
9. Profile of participants
10. Invitation letters and recruitment procedures
11. Designing the programme and choosing the working methods (programme flow, setting objectives for sessions, task distribution and methodology)
12. Job description for lecturers / experts to be invited
13. Working languages, translations
14. Report and documentation
15. Materials / technical and other equipment
16. Distribution of tasks within the team
17. Setting the timetable for the preparation (discussing teamwork and communication in the time between the preparatory meeting and the study session)
18. Dates of the next team meeting
19. Evaluation of the preparatory meeting and closing

Adding to the agenda above, the preparatory team may also consider reserving a time slot for consultation in person with EYC staff responsible for financial matters during the preparatory meeting. This can provide space for clarifying details of the administrative and financial processes throughout the implementation, including the reimbursement of preparatory expenses and travel costs.

### **KEEP IN MIND!**

When planning your preparatory meeting, you may use the list of agenda points suggested by the Youth Department, something that your Educational Advisor can provide you with. The list is not obligatory, and obviously needs to be tailored to the needs of your team; however, it can be a useful guiding thread, and many of its elements are essential.

## Ensuring equal access to study sessions

Considering the different ways in which organisers can ensure equal access to their study session is essential from the very beginning of the project's life cycle. This does not only concern physical accessibility but a lot more – and taking the right decisions and measures can contribute immensely to the fruitful learning process of all involved, in line with human rights education principles. This chapter therefore provides guidance on an integrated approach to safeguarding gender equality and accessibility during study sessions.

### Gender equality in study sessions

As a result of the seminar Gender Equality Matters (2016), and of further consultation with stakeholders of the youth sector, the *Guidelines on integrating gender equality and mainstreaming in intercultural youth activities of the Council of Europe and its partners* was adopted by the Joint Council on Youth. The purpose of these guidelines is to support organisers and educational teams of intercultural youth activities of the Council of Europe and its partners in ensuring gender equality in all the phases of an activity / project. They are an expression of the commitment of the Council of Europe and its youth sector to advance gender equality.

#### **The Guidelines on integrating gender equality and mainstreaming in intercultural youth activities covers the following aspects:**

- A human rights-based approach
- Gender-balanced participation in youth activities and measures to ensure participation of young parents
- Language and representation in materials related with educational activities
- Gender-sensitive educational approaches
- Creating safe environments and practical concerns: accommodation, working facilities, access to toilets, etc.

Organisers of any study session are required to consult the complete document *Guidelines on integrating gender equality and mainstreaming in intercultural youth activities of the Council of Europe and its partners*. (Appendix VI) and discuss in the preparatory meeting how they are going to implement them.<sup>72</sup>

The European Youth Foundation (EYF) also actively promotes the integration of a gender perspective in the youth projects it supports. Youth NGOs are asked to present how they plan to introduce a gender perspective in their projects when submitting a grant application. The EYF has reviewed its web page on gender perspectives to encompass a more diverse and inclusive approach; this page contains resources created by the Council of Europe and youth NGOs, as well as links to relevant tools and actors. Since 2016, the EYF has included a gender perspective in the seminars it organises for representatives of youth NGOs.<sup>73</sup>

### Access requirements of participants

The Council of Europe is making continuous efforts in making the premises and the services of the EYCs more accessible. Beside the sessions co-organised by networks and organisations of young people with disabilities, all organisers of study sessions are encouraged to reach out to and involve all young people with different access needs. Working with mixed ability groups needs specific attention and efforts throughout the whole .....

<sup>72</sup> The *Guidelines on integrating gender equality in intercultural youth activities* was adopted by the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) during its March 2017 meeting.

<sup>73</sup> The web page of the European Youth Foundation: [www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/gender-perspectives](http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/gender-perspectives).

project life cycle of a study session implementation, but at the same time should bring an added value to all partners involved.

In *Appendix V*, the following documents can be found that might be of help when preparing such activities:

- Template for additional questions to be added to application forms for Study Session applicants
- Template for “Frequently asked questions” to complement application forms for mixed-ability groups
- Access requirements for participants of study sessions with mixed ability groups.

The manual *Promoting Accessibility of the Training and Education Programme*, which provides essential information and tips for people working in the European Youth Centres, is also available in the web page of the Youth Department.<sup>74</sup>

## In between meetings

In between meetings, it is of utmost importance that the team members keep in touch regularly via channels and tools agreed upon by all team members – usually a combination of exchanging emails, having online video conferences and sharing documents that allow collaborative work. The course director is in charge of informing the team of all developments and changes, and of keeping everyone up to date. The course director is also the main person in charge of all organisational issues, clarifying all logistics with the educational advisor of the youth centre, and so on. While the rest of the team might not know about every single organisational detail, or areas such as finances, or visa procedures, they should receive communications on any major changes regarding the programme or the overall planning of the course. Important emails should be forwarded.

**After the preparatory meeting, the Secretariat assistant should be also informed of technical and administrative needs such as the following:**

- Interpretation needs, including international sign or palantyping
- Number of external lecturers to be invited, name, address and fee; if possible, dates and titles of contribution<sup>75</sup>
- Dinner out: when and how the team wishes it to be organised
- Special needs of participants
- Plenary and working rooms the group would like to use
- Other trips / needs involving costs or prior planning
- Anticipated timeline for selecting participants and handing in visa requests, and first indication of technical needs.

**When designing the programme, the organisers are also encouraged to:**

- Invite the executive director of EYCB / EYCS for the opening or closing speech – including mention of information about the topics of the session that the Director should address.
- Consult the educational advisor on the possibility of inviting other experts or civil servants of the Council of Europe whose work is relevant to the theme of the session.

While it is important to keep each other updated and motivated, a major part of the communication between the preparatory meeting and the study session deals with the actual planning of the programme in details.

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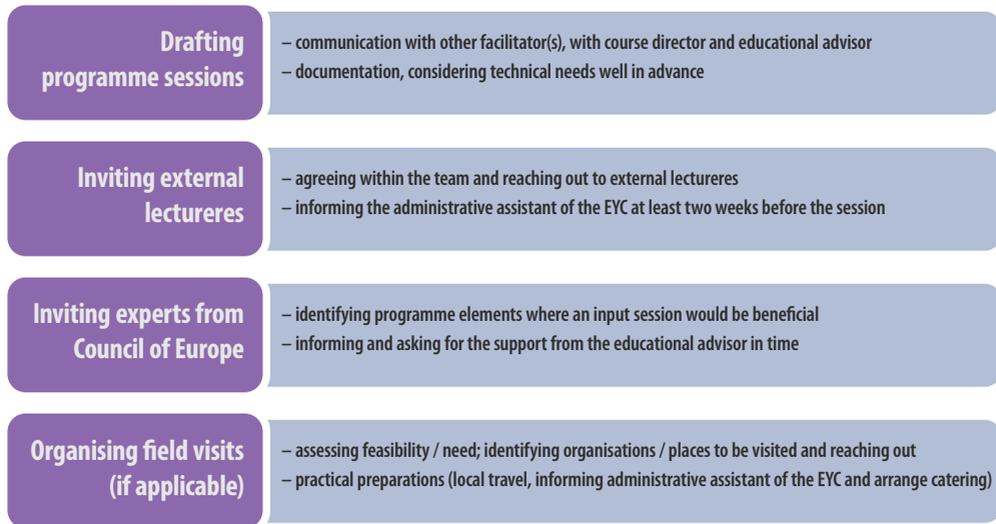
<sup>74</sup> Accessibility of activities: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/accessibility-of-activities](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/accessibility-of-activities).

<sup>75</sup> Normally this may include the invitation of up to two external lecturers who are entitled to have their travel, board and lodging covered by the Youth Department and to receive a one-day indemnity (equal to the senior trainers' fee of the YD).

External lecturers need to be contacted and confirmed, sometimes field visits are arranged, and preparatory team members must prepare and plan the various programme blocks.

Some important to-dos related to programme preparation between the preparatory meeting and the study session:

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Usually when dividing tasks at the first preparatory meeting, and after having developed the draft programme of the week together (an example of such a draft programme can be found in the next chapter), team members agree on developing certain programme parts in detail (deciding on the perfect method, timing, etc.) at home. This is usually done in “modules”. (A concrete example of such a module can be found in Chapter 4.4.2. *Design of individual programme elements*). This means that one team member prepares, for example, half of a programme day or one block dealing with a certain issue, topic or workshop, and agrees to co-operate with a second team member who will give feedback on that part. (Alternatively, it is also possible to develop modules in pairs from the start.) Once these two team members agree on the module, they pass it on to the rest of the team, who similarly are invited to give feedback on the other modules – until everyone agrees with the programme.

Deadlines are set at the preparatory meeting, so that all team members prepare their parts within a certain amount of time, and others then have a set time frame for feedback. The result is that the programme is agreed upon before the study session.

Final modifications in the programme can be made on the preparatory day right before study session. This is usually also the time when team members agree who is going to run which session in practice. Again, it is advisable to always have pairs of preparatory team members in charge of each session, so that, if someone falls ill (or drops out for whatever reason), the second person is still on top of things and can take over easily.

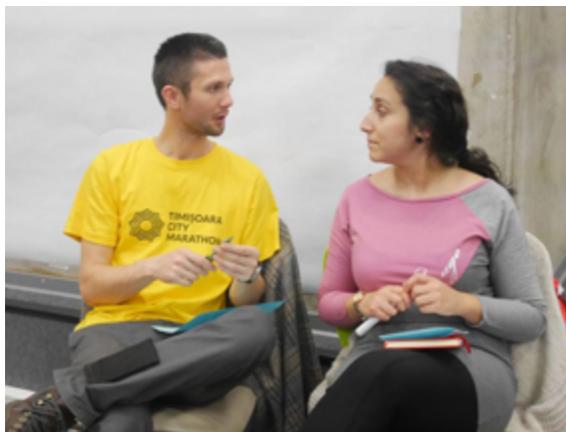
## ⚠ KEEP IN MIND!

### Inviting external lecturers and experts

Travel, board, lodging expenses and a fee for up to two lecturers per activity are borne and paid for by the Council of Europe. If necessary, and financially feasible, a third lecturer may be invited. They may be academics giving an input session on a specific subject, or other experts bringing in a specific method for discovering a topic related to the theme of the study sessions; however, they should not take a leading role in the programme.

Lecturers must be officially invited by the Council of Europe, and, at the latest, 15 days before the session; however, it makes sense that beforehand that your team agrees with the experts informally on their availability and willingness to join.

Youth organisations are required to provide the following details no later than three weeks before the session: full contact information of the lecturer, date and duration of the contribution, title of the contribution, and duration of their stay. Lecturers are usually accommodated at the EYC where the session takes place. For more details, make sure you consult the educational advisor and the EYC Secretariat.



# Programme design of study sessions

## Programme flow and applying suitable educational approaches

If you are a participant at an event, be it a training course, seminar or study session, everything should look smooth. There are exercises, discussions, in bigger groups, in smaller groups, there is input by experts and exchange of experiences, and all of it is packed into an easy flow. Is it always smooth like this? How can one arrive at the “winning formula” for a smoothly flowing study session?

One of the most essential, tangible and pragmatic tasks for facilitators on the preparatory team of a study session is to design the programme for the study session as a whole, as well as to design the different sessions that contribute to the implementation of the programme. It is important that, on the one hand, facilitators learn how to design a programme that works towards the achievement of the study session’s aims and objectives while, on the other hand, rightfully acknowledging and anticipating the different learning styles of the participants, the energy flow and the group process. A key question for any non-formal educational activity is how the group can be used as a source of learning during the activity. How can we make the learning process participant-led and omnidirectional instead of leading only in one direction?

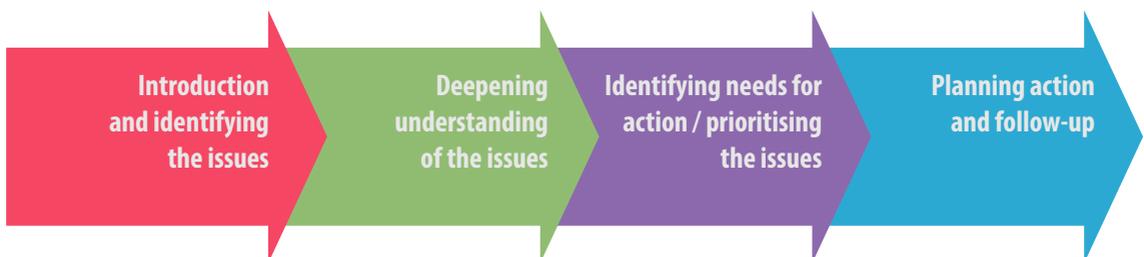
This section aims to help facilitators understand the general flow of a programme for non-formal educational activities, and to develop facilitators’ awareness of different educational approaches, while giving an understanding of the basics of programme and session design. In addition, this chapter should help make facilitators aware of the importance of, and therefore acknowledge participants’ different learning styles and needs when designing the programme elements and the programme as a whole. As a preparatory team member, it is important to be aware of the importance of the rhythm of a study session, topic-wise and energy-wise.

### A possible programme of a study session

The example below presents a structure that can be more or less followed when designing any study session; of course this must be changed depending on the nature, theme and length of the given session. The team may decide to leave less time for action planning, or, if it is a longer session, provide more space for learning by using more time-consuming experiential learning methods, or other workshops in order to deepen the learning.

The main four pillars of the programme flow are:

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## Introduction and identifying the issues to be tackled

This section usually takes at least a full day, and may include the following: Welcome by the CoE / the Director of the EYC; an introduction of the team and participants; an introduction to the aims and objectives; information on the background of the session; the programme for the week.

It is important to spend adequate time for getting to know each other, and to give space for sharing expectations, fears, and motivations. A variety of ice-breakers and team-building activities are also to be included and should be integrated across the first few days of the programme.

### KEEP IN MIND!

#### Agreeing on group rules

At the beginning of any intercultural learning activity, it is essential to provide space for participants to define rules for “living and learning together”, in order to create a safe environment where the dignity and rights of everybody are safeguarded, and learning can be efficient. Even if it is tempting to save time by shortening such an activity on the first day, defining the rules may well help to avoid possible conflicts, and such rules can always serve as a point of reference for everybody in the group throughout the programme. Such a discussion can be linked to the expectations and to the presentation of programme / working methods, as well as also being connected to the debriefing of team building, depending on its nature. Trainers and facilitators often make sure that the rules are noted down, sometimes even “officially” signed by all participants.

#### Some typical points for group rules:

- Timing and punctuality
- Respectful communication and inclusive treatment of all
- Language and providing space for questions and clarifications
- Using mobile phones and other devices
- Taking photos and social media
- Using gender neutral language and pronouns \*
- ...

However, it's best always to provide enough time for participants to agree on their own rules so that a feeling of ownership is ensured. Needless to say, of course facilitators sometimes have to suggest certain rules themselves or remind the group of some important aspects that they might miss. Also, besides the group agreement in study sessions, at the European Youth Centres groups always have to adhere to the general house rules of the venue.

*\*This may entail inviting participants not only to say their name, but also to indicate the pronoun they would prefer to be used when they are referred to. When referring to groups of people whose gender identities are varied or unknown, employ the gender neutral pronouns they/them/themselves instead of gendered versions*



The approach to the once omnipresent “International evenings” has changed considerably: many organisers nowadays prefer to organise other social activities in order to avoid spending an evening with presentations on traditional culture, history, and so on. The team needs to decide on this, depending on the target group and the aim of the evening; however, keeping the group together and providing them with a pleasant space for learning about each other in an informal setting for the first evening is strongly recommended and can significantly improve group dynamics.

### Deepening the understanding of the issues

- This part of the programme is when considerable time is dedicated to discovering the topic, through peer learning, experiential learning activities and possibly input sessions by participants, facilitators, external experts and the trainer. This section may stretch for several days, and should have a logical flow. It may start with creating a common understanding of the main terms, continue with longer simulation exercises from *Compass* and conclude with debating activities and/or be complemented by input from an academic speaker.

### Identifying needs for action / prioritising the issues

- In order to plan possible follow-up, the group has to reflect on individual and organisation needs and interests, and brainstorm issues and possible types of actions for after the study session. This may also require representatives of the organisation, the course director and also potentially the Council of Europe to express willingness to support the follow-up and outline opportunities. Examples of good practices can be also presented here to inspire future action.

- Some organisations often decide to focus on the development of new tools or on the assessment of current practices and/or certain policies: this may lead to creating new publications or compiling recommendations or statements aimed at other stakeholders.

### Planning action and follow-up

- The programme should also leave enough space for participants to develop and share their ideas for follow-up actions. The educational team can have different approaches to support this process, providing mentoring, consultation and feedback. Feedback from other young participants in the group should also be encouraged and valued.
- Different forms of available support can be also presented here, including the introduction of grants from the European Youth Foundation and possibilities offered by the organisation and its members.

A possible flow and structure for a study session's programme

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
MORNING	<b>Introduction</b> Getting to know the setting: aims, organizers and participants. Presentation of the Council of Europe	<b>Learning and exchange</b> Sharing good practices and developing further common understanding of the theme.	<b>Identifying needs for action</b> Needs analysis of the context of participants Assessing and improving current practices (education and other forms of action)	<b>Planning action</b> Sharing ideas for follow-up action Networking and identifying common interests to take action	<b>Follow up plans</b> Action plans finalized and preparation for presentations  Presentation of group work
AFTERNOON	<b>Team building</b> Introduction to the theme, clarifying the basics	<b>Human rights</b> and their relevance in relation to the theme	Free afternoon	Work in action groups Feedback/consultation with team members	Next steps Presentation of EYF Evaluation and recommendations Closing
	Reflection groups			Reflection groups	
EVENING	International Evening	Free evening	Dinner in town	Optional movie night	Farewell party

## ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

Would you have developed a similar programme?

Have you already thought about how to build the programme of your study session? Are there any specific elements you want to include?

## ⚠ KEEP IN MIND!

### Certificates for participants of study sessions

As an acknowledgement of the active participation of participants and team members to learn and to contribute to the learning of others, at the end of each study session a certificate is given to everyone. A template can be provided by the Secretariat of the European Youth Centre for the organisers, to be completed by the course director with the relevant information and organisational logos.

Sometimes participants are asked to fill in pre-session questionnaires in which they will be asked about their skills / competences, so that the activity can be adapted to their needs. They can also be asked to develop and run some of the sessions or contribute to the programme in other ways.



# ***Educational resources and workshop design***

## **Resources for developing programme elements**

The Council of Europe has published various manuals and educational resources to support learning and action by young people on issues of common relevance to their lives and the future of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. Other specific types of resources include recommendations and other policy documents by the Council of Europe, and research papers. These were all developed in line with the values and quality standards of the institutions and its policies; therefore, they are not only methodologically useful but may also be politically relevant for a study session's programme.

The most relevant ones are often quoted in the current publication and include the following:

**Compass, the manual for human rights education with young people:** The manual was fully revised in 2012, and updated again in 2020. It is available online in a user-friendly format, with extensive background information on human rights issues (Chapter 5: 'Background Information on Global Human Rights Themes'). *Compass* has been also translated into several languages.

**Compasito – a manual on human rights education for children!** The manual provides ideas, inspiration and practical help to explore human rights with children. Council of Europe, 2007, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 2009, and 3<sup>rd</sup> edition in 2021.

**Education Pack All Different – All Equal:** Ideas, resources, methods and activities for non-formal intercultural education with young people and adults, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, revised in 2016 and a 3<sup>rd</sup> edition due in 2021.

**DOmino:** A manual to use for peer group education as a means to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and intolerance, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (2005).

**Gender Matters:** A manual on addressing gender-based violence affecting young people. Council of Europe, 2013 and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 2020.

**Mirrors:** Manual on combating antigypsyism through human rights education (2015).

**Bookmarks:** A manual for combating hate speech online through human rights education (2016).

**WE CAN!** Taking action against Hate Speech through Counter and Alternative Narratives (2017).

**Taking it seriously:** Guide to Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights.

**Have your say!** Manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (New edition, 2015).

**Enter Dignityland!** A card game on social rights published in 2012 within the framework of the Enter! Project.

A specific set of other publications include **Barabaripen:** Young Roma speak about multiple discrimination (2014), and **Right to Remember:** A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide (2014), that may be relevant for work with young Roma and Travellers or on related topics and projects.

These publications are all available online<sup>76</sup> and in hard copies at the European Youth Centres. They are primarily produced in English and French, but often available in other languages as well.

.....  
76 At the *Compass* website: at [www.coe.int/compass](http://www.coe.int/compass), and at the Youth Department website: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/manuals-and-handbooks](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/manuals-and-handbooks).



The T-Kits (training kits) are also often referred to in the current manual: these are thematic publications written by experienced youth trainers and published by the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe. They are easy-to-use handbooks for use in training and study sessions, and contain specific and in-depth information and practical exercises in some of the areas that this manual touches upon. T-Kits are produced in English. Some of them are also available in French or German and in other languages.

- T-Kit 3: *Project Management*
- T-Kit 4: *Intercultural Learning (revised)*
- T-Kit 6: *Training Essentials (revised)*
- T-Kit 7: *European Citizenship in Youth work*
- T-Kit 8: *Social Inclusion*
- T-Kit 10: *Educational Evaluation in youth work*
- T-Kit 11: *Mosaic - The training kit for Euro-Mediterranean youth work*
- T-Kit 12: *Youth transforming conflict*
- T-Kit 13: *Sustainability and youth work*

These are just a few suggestions of relevant materials mostly used in non-formal learning contexts, suitable for youth workers and facilitators in study sessions. Of course, there is a wide range of other training materials which can be found at the European Youth Centres, freely available “on the market”, on the Internet, at universities, and so on.

## Design of individual programme elements

As explained in section 4.4.2., individual programme elements are split up between facilitators in team meetings for preparation. The preparation of programme details at home is done in modules, such as the one presented below. These modules are prepared after the preparatory meeting (team members usually agree on a deadline), exchanged by email and looked over and commented on by at least one colleague, or the whole team. This is a good way of giving all team members an idea of what exactly each person has in mind for the programme element that they are responsible for, what the timeframe of your session is, what methods will be used, and so on. Make sure you define clear objectives for each programme element: link it to the aims / objectives defined for the entire course / programme; give a clear timeframe and step-by-step description of the planned activities and methods, so that it is easy to follow and understand for all team members. In this way, you will have a solid basis for discussion in the team meetings, and every other team member will be able to understand and run the programme element or module under preparation.

### Choosing an educational activity / method

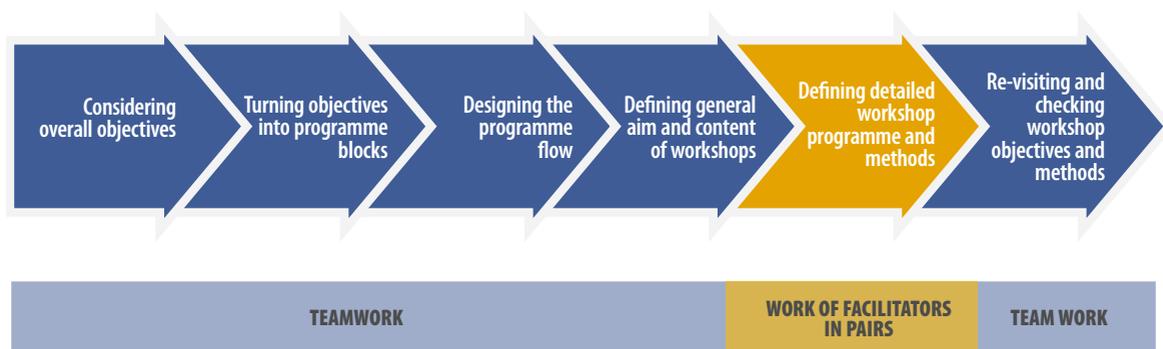
The process of identifying the right methods to be used for the specific workshops for any non-formal educational activity can be difficult and lengthy. However, it is also a crucial one and may have considerable influence on the programme and its outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to dedicate enough time and attention to this step, while also being ready at some point to move forward and trust other members of the team who they are ready to take responsibility for developing their own sessions in detail.

First of all, it is important to follow certain steps and look at this as a collaborative procedure with several stepping stones, sometimes right up to the actual day of the given workshop, as sometimes programme elements need to be changed or adapted during the activity. It is strongly recommended that you avoid rushing immediately into talking about methods and activities, even if it is tempting. As illustrated below, it is crucial to first talk about the “what” and then move towards the “how” – meaning that the team first agrees on how objectives are turned into programme blocks and on the content of each block before distributing the responsibility among team members for developing the session plans and methods in details.

Ideally, the steps of moving from the objectives to the final workshop outlines are as follows; note that in some phases the whole team is required, while in other cases it is better to distribute the work:

Workshop outlines

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When considering the objectives and turning them into programme blocks, a hands-on and participative method is to simply collect content elements on post-its to create a programme:

**Step 1:** All team members write down the content elements they wish to see in the programme, one idea for each post-it. All post-its are then put up on the wall for the whole team to see.

**Step 2:** Clarify elements where necessary, and group similar elements together.

**Step 3:** Make titles for the groups of elements on different coloured post-its. What is it that makes them a group?

**Step 4:** Take off all post-its except those with the titles, and put them aside. The remaining post-its (with the titles) will be your programme content elements.

**Step 5:** Discuss the outcome. Is everyone satisfied with these elements? Is anything missing? If needed, have a look at the original post-its again.

**Step 6:** Arrange the elements into a logical programme flow, and draw up a day-by-day programme based on this programme flow.

The six steps above are adapted from the T-Kit on *Training Essentials* (Chapter 3.5) that gives further useful practical tips on designing a programme and choosing methods. It reflects on important questions such as the following:

- focusing the programme on the participants - their needs, expectations and prior knowledge;
- responsibility for the learning process;
- group size;
- the environment, space and resources of the group;
- the typical programme flow;
- session design.



Following these steps can facilitate the teamwork considerably, and also lead the team to the point where your programme flow is more or less complete as such. However, it often happens that, despite the initial discussions about the content, team members have slightly different ideas about the planned content of some workshops. Therefore, it makes sense to dedicate time – even if time-consuming – to talking this over for each session and taking notes of what has been agreed on. For example, the team may record a discussion and decisions in the following way:

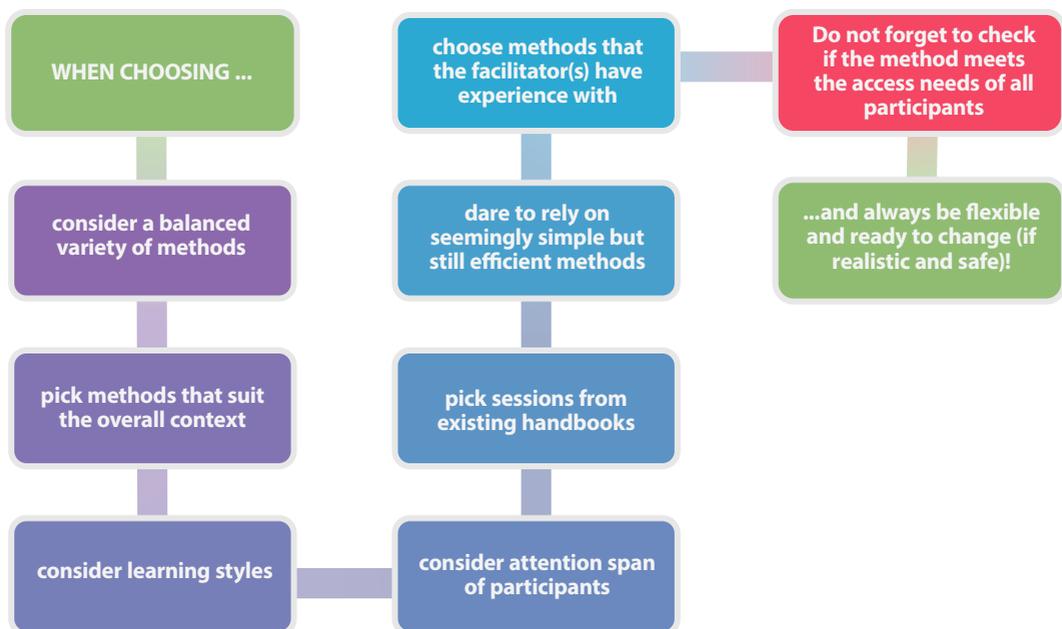
<b>Recording details of sessions and workshops</b>	
<b>Number of session</b>	<i>Giving a number, e.g. 'Day 1. Session 1.' can help to organise and follow documentation.</i>
<b>Title of session</b>	<i>Besides giving a number, a title for the session also helps to keep track of the programme development.</i>
<b>Aim and objectives</b>	<i>At this point of the process, this is the most important – team members should all clarify and agree on what they expect from the given session – this will help the facilitators responsible for the session to develop the details, but also all others to ensure links with other workshops and avoid duplications, or misunderstandings.</i>
<b>Content / method</b>	<i>This is something to be developed by the facilitators responsible for the session; however, agreeing on some basic directions can be useful – or at least double-checking the methods at a later stage with the whole team, so that methodology is not duplicated, or becomes monotonous (e.g. using mainly visual / arts methods or only small group / discussion-based methods for tackling different topics for a full day).</i>
<b>Team member(s) responsible</b>	<i>Agree on which team member(s) are developing each session outline and possibly also running each workshop.</i>
<b>Structuring and following up the collection of session outlines and related technical needs</b>	
<b>Materials</b>	<i>It is useful to collect technical needs (materials, digital tools, equipment) in an organised way. This could take place in a cloud-based shared document where all needs for materials are collected; the course director may find this useful when compiling the technical needs request for the EYC.</i>
<b>Preparatory process</b>	<i>Agreeing with the team on how and where the session details outlined above are collected and stored is strongly recommended; it makes the work in the preparatory phase and collaboration between team members smoother and more efficient. In a case where the team is not using a specific project management tool, this may be a place in a cloud-based shared document where the course director and team members can track the process of preparing session outline, e.g. indicating if it is in the draft or final phase.</i>

**Choosing the right method is often a delicate issue – a few guidelines are definitely to be kept in mind:**

- **Balance of a variety of methods:** Try to use a balanced variety of methods throughout the programme and potentially within single sessions. It will help to get the participants involved and keep their attention.
- **Methods that suit context and learning styles:** Attempt to pick methods that suit the overall context of the session, and keep in mind the learning styles and attention span of participants: sessions which are too long can be tiring and may lead to a decline in the level of attention / engagement.
- **Preference to methods used before:** It is recommended that you choose methods that the facilitator(s) in charge has experienced before at least as a participant, and can master.
- **New methods or using manuals:** Sometimes it is tempting to create a brand new method to achieve your objectives, but developing a new method requires a lot of work and may lead to overcomplicated sessions and consequent failure. Therefore, it is sometimes better to pick sessions from existing handbooks or rely on seemingly simple but still very efficient methods (e.g. using a “fishbowl” exercise for discussion. In the *Compass* manual, Chapter 3.7 ‘Basic methods that underpin *Compass* activities’ may be useful to consult if looking for easy-to-use methods to facilitate group work).
- **Double-check for access needs:** Don’t forget to make sure that the final method fully meets the access needs of all participants.
- **... and always be flexible, and ready to change** the programme if the needs of the group or the process requires; however, remain realistic and only apply significant changes if the team has the energy to plan and deliver the session appropriately.

Choosing the right method

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The T-Kit on *Training Essentials* (Chapter 3.5.7) also gives several practical tips on designing your sessions, including a ‘Checklist for designing a session within a larger training framework’ and other considerations.

## Preparing detailed session outlines

When finalising individual workshops, their content, programme and methods, normally a detailed session outline is prepared by one or two team members; a typical example of such a document is presented below. The document itself is also useful for putting down initial ideas to be discussed later with your co-facilitators, while in the study session itself, you can use one as a guide when running the activity.

Example of a session outline

### STUDY SESSION (TITLE, ORGANISERS)

<b>1. Title+date+time</b>	General introduction to human rights Tuesday, 22/06/2021; 9.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
<b>2. Background</b>	Participants have only started working together; so far, they mainly focused on getting to know each other and group building. This session is the first intense content-related input. Participants are not yet familiar with the main topic of the study session – human rights. Therefore, a basic introduction and building a common understanding of human rights is necessary.
<b>3. Aim(s)</b>	To introduce the concept and get a common understanding of human rights
<b>4. Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to familiarise participants with single human rights</li> <li>• to enable participants to link single human rights to their daily life</li> <li>• to exchange different experiences of human rights and human rights violations in participants' lives</li> <li>• to discuss and raise awareness of the importance of human rights</li> <li>• to clarify the concept of human rights</li> <li>• to introduce main instruments to safeguard human rights</li> <li>• to discuss ideas and exchange best practices on civil actions to raise awareness on human rights issues</li> <li>• to introduce Council of Europe approach to human rights education</li> <li>• to introduce <i>Compass</i> and <i>Compasito</i> as tools for human rights education with young people and children</li> </ul>
<b>5. Methodology and methods (proposed and used)</b>	<p>“Human rights bingo” (<i>Compass</i>), after debriefing summing up / explaining concept (universal, indivisible, inalienable) and generations (civil and political rights / social, economic and cultural rights / collective rights) of human rights and instruments. Discussion in buzz groups, then plenary on possible civil actions to raise awareness on human rights issues, presentation of Youth Department approach to human rights education, presentation of <i>Compass</i> and <i>Compasito</i> as tools for human rights education with young people and children, open questions session.</p> <p>Evaluation: round of “flashlight”: participants say what’s in their head at this moment immediately after the session.</p>

<p><b>6. Programme</b></p>	<p>9:30-9:40 Energiser</p> <p>9:40-9:45 Intro to the day and the session</p> <p>9:45-10:30 Exercise “Human rights bingo”</p> <p>10:30-11:15 Summing up and further explanation on the concept</p> <p>11:15-11:45 Coffee break</p> <p>11:45-11:55 Buzz groups on civil action</p> <p>11:55- 12:10 Exchange on ideas and good practices in plenary</p> <p>12:10-12:25 Introduction to the Youth Department approach to human rights education</p> <p>12:25-12:35 Presentation of <i>Compass</i> and <i>Compassito</i></p> <p>12:35-12:50 Question and Answer session</p> <p>12:50-12:55 “Flashlight” evaluation (see above)</p> <p>12:55-13:00 Technical announcements</p>
<p><b>7. Outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participants understood that human rights are relevant for everyone everywhere and cannot be taken away from anyone</li> <li>• participants have heard of and understood the single human rights</li> <li>• participants understood that no single human right is more important than the others; they are all equally important</li> <li>• participants became aware of the different human rights situations in different countries</li> <li>• participants related human rights to their daily life</li> <li>• participants dealt with instruments to safeguard human rights and civil action to raise awareness on human rights issues</li> <li>• participants were familiarised with the Youth Department approach to human rights education and the available tools</li> <li>• participants were able to ask open questions related to human rights and human rights education and exchange ideas and answers with each other</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Evaluation</b></p>	<p>Participants’ evaluation immediately after the session was quite positive; comments included, e.g. “enlightening, clarifying, food for thought but also confusing and need more time to think about”. The mix of methods was appreciated; more time could have been spent on human rights experiences of individual participants.</p>

<b>9. Materials needed and space required</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adapted Human rights bingo sheet</li> <li>2. Debriefing questions for Human rights bingo</li> <li>3. copy of bingo sheet for each participant</li> <li>4. 40 pens</li> <li>5. Presentation for summing up and further explanation</li> <li>6. Computer and projector</li> <li>7. Flipchart and pens</li> <li>8. Copy of <i>Compass</i> and <i>Composito</i></li> </ol> <p>Space: Plenary room</p>
<b>10. Further reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Compass: Human Rights Bingo</i></li> <li>• <i>Composito</i></li> </ul>
<b>11. Appendices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapted rights bingo</li> <li>• Slides for summing up / further explanation</li> </ul>

### ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

- Have you used any similar documentation of session objectives and session outlines for previous activities that you have been involved in? What are the advantages of preparing such detailed documentation?
- What are the disadvantages?
- What are the best and most easy-to-use and accessible tools for collecting the information and to work collaboratively?



# Debriefing of educational activities

## Debriefing of educational activities:

### **i** CASE STUDY

#### **On the lack of debriefing**

*In a study session, an open space activity was prepared and run by one preparatory team member. When the participants' discussion time was over and the preparatory team member in charge wanted to conduct the debriefing in plenary, one colleague had already set up the presentation for the next programme element, which was of a completely different nature, and the Chair of the day let them take the floor. Therefore, no debriefing was done. Naturally, the participants complained about this later, as they had had problems following the next presentation with still having in their minds lots of issues related to the open space activity and the various processes from the previous session.*

Apart from the need to handle the situation and find a solution (drawing learning points in a team meeting, discussing in reflection groups after the daily programme, finding time get back to issues that were missed without negatively impacting on the programme flow), the main lessons are:

- debriefing an activity is important for consolidating learning
- facilitators need to dedicate enough time for this exercise
- debriefing (or the lack of it) impacts on the overall programme flow and group dynamics.

Debriefing is an essential element of training and it is necessary for facilitators to know its structure and principles. It is worth emphasising its importance, as sometimes in youth activities valuable exercises are run, but they lack proper debriefing (because of a lack of time, preparation, knowledge and experience of preparatory team members). In an experiential learning context, the debriefing is indispensable. Without it, participants might not learn anything (or profit a lot less from the exercise than they actually could).

After every educational exercise a facilitator needs to organise participants for discussing the experience that they have just undergone, addressing each stage of the exercise separately. One could structure the debriefing process in the following parts: stepping out of the experience, reflection and analysis of what happened, concluding and linking to reality. This process of *debriefing of an educational exercise (in training) follows the different steps of the experiential learning cycle* (presented in Chapter 3.1.1.). If there is no debriefing, do not expect the participants to extract much learning from what they have just experienced.

#### **Objectives for debriefing:**

- to share ideas about the experience and to identify consequent feelings
- to let participants share possible emotional tensions in order to decrease the frustration (if relevant)
- to allow time for personal / group reflections
- to share opinions and to air different points of view
- to enable participants to discover themselves
- to conceptualise what happened and connect to reality
- to identify and share learning points
- to find ways to transfer the knowledge to real-life situations and apply the learning

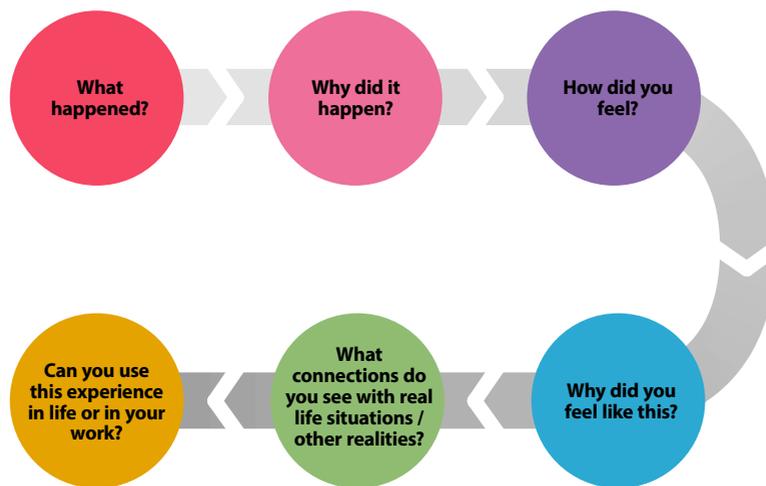
- to make participants aware of the aim objectives of the exercise and its place in the programme flow in order to enhance self-directed learning.

### Questions for debriefing

The following set of questions gives a short overview of the points which any debriefing should cover (following the experiential learning cycle):

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- How did you feel?
- Why did you feel like this?
- What does it remind you of, with regard to “real life”?
- Can you give examples of similar situations?
- How can you use this experience in life or in your work with young people?

Process of debriefing:



These questions can be seen as a rough guideline, referring to the various steps of a debriefing slot. Nevertheless, the questions need adapting to each exercise, and you should prepare a set of questions for each step (feelings, process, patterns, links to reality, learning). For practical examples, consult the activity descriptions in educational manuals such as *Compass* or the *Educational Pack All Different – All Equal* or other publications by the Council of Europe. They always present a detailed possible debriefing plan. Of course, one does not always need to ask all the questions listed there; some of them may be suitable in one situation while others more useful in another context.

To conclude, when planning and preparing for debriefing, the following crucial questions should be kept in mind:

- What can go wrong when debriefing?
- How can the facilitator ensure that the learning aims set are achieved through running a given exercise and by doing a proper debriefing exercise?
- What happens during unexpected crisis situations?

- What should the facilitator do when the participants go off in an unexpected or undesirable direction?
- How much can a facilitator intervene with the process, and suggest or deliver solutions?

**The following points may help in preparing for debriefing:**

**Preparation:** First of all, it is important to leave enough time for the debriefing – sometimes it may take considerable time in your workshop – and choose the exercise in such a way that the aims can be achieved. Prepare a list of questions and try to predict all possible answers to questions and how these answers can lead to conclusions. However, one should not necessarily follow all the questions one by one; during the discussion, choose the most relevant ones and keep a natural flow of the discussion.

**During the exercise itself:** observe carefully: it will be easier to know which feelings and answers to address in the debriefing. However, the facilitator should not intervene during the experience. After the exercise, sometimes it is necessary to let the participants “come out of their roles” – for example, standing in a circle and shout their names can be a way to do this. Still, it also happens that the process can go wrong, in which case it might be useful to step out from the debriefing. The participants might need more time for coming out of their roles. If anything drastic happens (conflict, bad emotions, etc.), this should take priority. One may then also debrief this situation, even if it is outside the scope of the topic or the aims.

**Discussion:** Ask open questions instead of suggesting potential answers to the questions. Do not be afraid of silence; give people time to think. If the group does not reach the points the team expected to hear, the facilitator can also eventually suggest a solution or give an example from their own experience. However, do *not* do anything that the group can do itself; therefore, carefully assess the moment when the facilitator’s input, suggestions or answers are needed.

To conclude, a proper, valid debriefing is a very important process that needs knowledge, experience and intuition to be run well. One needs to think and prepare the debriefing well in order to run it, so that it can turn into a memorable learning experience for participants. Do not be afraid; just practise! Make sure you always have your questions prepared, even though there might not be a need to use all of them. Facilitators have to remain flexible when asking questions, depending on the responses of the participants. Nevertheless, you should have a clear goal in mind about the direction in which you want to lead the group. Once a set of questions is prepared, it is often good to ask the educational advisor’s or other team members’ opinion. Sometimes it may be easier to run the debriefing with another colleague or even better, with the educational advisor.



# 5. EVALUATION AND REPORTING

## ***Evaluation of study sessions***

This chapter deals with the responsibilities of youth organisations in terms of evaluating and reporting on the overall study session. The organisation must assess whether or not they have achieved what was planned prior to the study session.

As the *Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department* points out, adequate evaluation of the activities is an indispensable element of non-formal educational processes. Among other reasons, it is necessary in order to secure stock-taking of the results, the evaluation of the quality of the learning process and the follow-up to be given.

From the more practical perspective, one can say that the organisation conducting the study session has to evaluate the following elements:

- Was it worth running the activity? Did it fit into the long-term planning and development of the organisation?
- How did it contribute to the mission of the Council of Europe?
- What was achieved? Have the objectives of the study session been fulfilled?
- What is the follow-up for the organisation? How can it build on the results achieved?

Furthermore, the organisation is responsible for providing the necessary resources and an environment for the team to be able to evaluate the specific features of the study session.

As mentioned in Chapter 2.2. *The life cycle of a study session*, the organisation has to make sure that the evaluation forms of the study session requested by the Council of Europe have been completed (the first part by the organisers and the educational advisor, the second by the organisers about the co-operation with the educational advisor and the EYC). The standard evaluation forms can be found online among the Financial and administrative documents on the web page of the Youth Department.<sup>77</sup>

### **Evaluation of educational activities – responsibilities of team members**

The following points will give a clear picture about doing “evaluation” in the context of a study session.

#### **Aims of evaluating**

To measure the outcomes, to avoid mistakes for the future, to improve working practices, to gather new ideas to further specify plans for follow-up and consequently have a clear picture about future steps.

#### **Who evaluates?**

First and foremost, the preparatory team partly together with the education advisor and the participants. In broader terms, of course the youth organisations or networks involved, possibly external lecturers and all parties involved in the process can contribute.

<sup>77</sup> Financial and administrative documents:  
[www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents)

## What is there to evaluate?

- Usefulness of the initial needs assessment
- achievement of aims and objectives
- preparatory process
- content and educational approaches
- preparatory team and teamwork
- outreach to participants of the expected profile
- overall correlation with quality standards
- external lecturers
- outcomes
- expected impact and follow-up
- administrative and educational support by the EYC.

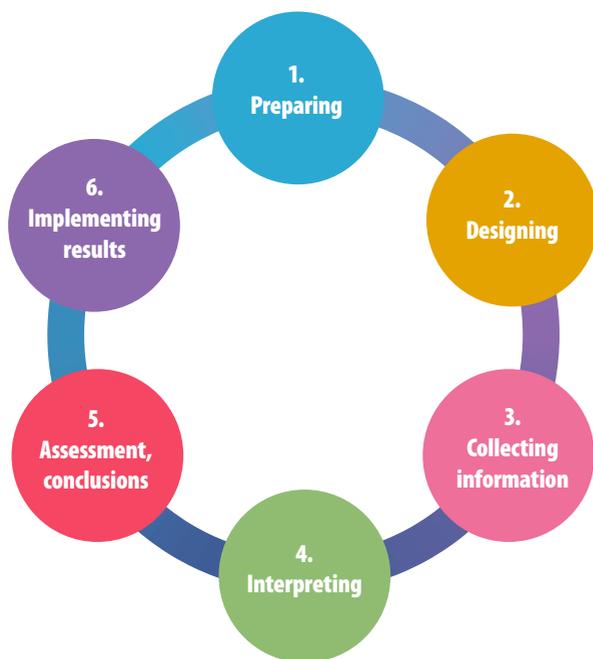
It goes without saying that evaluation will be done differently with different parties involved, most importantly with the preparatory team and with the group of participants. The following section gives some guidelines in this respect.

## Planning the evaluation

Planning the evaluation can be done in a similar way as planning a project, where one determines objectives, working methods, action plans.

The main steps of an evaluation process

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### The main steps of an evaluation process:

**Preparing** – setting aims and objectives: deciding who evaluates and why

**Designing** – deciding what to evaluate

**Collecting information** – deciding on criteria, objectives, and methods

**Interpreting results** – consideration of the context and original aims and objectives

**Assessment and conclusions** – assessing reasons and results compared with the objectives and aims

**Implementing results** – following up: drawing, sharing and using your conclusions

**Interpreting** – trying to maintain objectivity

*(Source: T-Kit 3: Project Management, p. 89)*

Evaluations are not always planned or conducted in this way (and need not be), but implicitly these elements are and should always be present.

## **⚠ KEEP IN MIND!**

### **Evaluation meeting**

In the case of study sessions, a specific evaluation meeting is not foreseen as an obligatory element in the programme. However, if held, it is recommended that it should take place immediately after the end of the activity; sometimes teams decide to stay and have a meeting of a few hours on the day of the departure.

### **Evaluation process**

When planning the evaluation process as a whole, it is worth considering the following points:

- needs and the way of doing the evaluation should be addressed during the first preparatory meeting (also so that team members can plan their departure accordingly)
- evaluation should take into account the perspectives of the participants, trainers and organisers alike
- participants should be given space to express their opinion freely in a safe and secure space (including reflection groups, closing group evaluation and written evaluation)
- the evaluation reports and their main conclusions should be made available to all YD staff and to the activity's participants, while of course respecting and protecting data and privacy
- the evaluation meetings should also consider ways of supporting the participants, and the follow-up of the activity within the Council of Europe and by the partners.

The evaluation process includes the submission of the document 'Evaluation of study session held and the support received from the European Youth Centre', to be filled in by the organisers of the study session with the support of the educational advisor. The second section of the form is to be filled in only by the course director and facilitators as it is meant to provide feedback on the educational and administrative support by the EYC.

**An Evaluation form for participants is also provided by the EYC to be used offline or online for written evaluation.**

Last but not least, it is worth pointing out that when evaluating the results the organisers should take into account that the real impact and outcomes of an educational activity can often only be assessed at some point in the future (e.g. after the implementation of follow up projects).

## **Practical tips and tricks for evaluation at study sessions**

**Before the activity:** To start with, gather and use existing information, for example, consider the report and evaluation of previous study sessions of your organisation. The needs of the participants should be also analysed, for example with a questionnaire, and the programme developed in accordance with this assessment. Even if under time pressure, do not forget to evaluate team dynamics and the process of selecting participants; methods can vary between online meetings, discussions and feedback forms / questionnaires.

**During the activity:** Sometimes there is pressure to provide space for workshops and delivering and discussing content, not to mention that different practical announcements also often take time after session. However, it is exactly why different methods for evaluation have to be planned and consciously integrated into the programme. Methods to consider may include:

- Suggestion box
- Evaluation groups (daily)
- Discussion in plenary at the end of the day
- Preparatory team meetings to close the day and prepare for the next one
- Techniques for “taking the temperature”, for example, participants take a position in the room regarding their opinions
- Personal reflection time and learning diaries.

Do not forget that giving space for feedback by participants contributes significantly to a positive atmosphere and good group dynamics, and lowers the risk that possible tensions remain hidden.

**At the end of the activity:** The closing evaluation has enormous importance, both for gathering feedback from participants and for symbolically closing the experience of living and learning together. Before going into the evaluation itself, it is always useful to review the process of the study session either by recalling the programme or, for example, by showing photos, and recalling special moments from the training course. Methodology can include a variety of exercises, keeping in mind a balance of space for individual and group reflection:

- Creative interactive exercises
- Leaving messages on flipcharts for each other, the organisers, etc.
- Questionnaire – written evaluation by participants<sup>78</sup>
- Quick reflection on the organisation – sharing impressions and feelings
- Individual exercise, for example, “a letter to myself”

For the subsequent team evaluation, it makes sense to consciously document the outcomes of all evaluation exercises – even by taking notes of shared thoughts or taking photos of the interactive exercises.

**After the activity:** Ideally the process does not come to its end with the study session itself, and actually some of the results only become evident after some time has passed. Therefore, it might be useful to ask participants to fill in short questionnaires on their follow-up or remind them of their personal action plans. Beside the follow-up with individuals, the team should also consider collecting feedback from the network and organisations.

For more theoretical and practical information regarding the topic of Evaluation, please refer to T-Kits on *Educational evaluation in youth work*, *Training Essentials* and *Project Management*.



78 A Standard Template Evaluation form for participants of Study Sessions is provided by the Youth Department.

## Reporting on study sessions

Providing a final narrative report of the study session is an important formal and quality criterion for the activities of the Council of Europe, and such reports are important for participants, for the organisation and the Council of Europe alike. The report provides visibility of the activity's results, supports the multiplying role of the participants and informs the Council of Europe and other stakeholders in youth policy of the conclusions / perspectives of young people.

The report may also provide valuable reference material in the future on the issues discussed, communicate recommendations and describe expected follow-up by and for the participants. The report should serve as both a resource for the organisation, for future teams of other study sessions and also as a reference for the Council of Europe and particularly its Youth Department, other youth organisations and institutions interested in the subject of the study session.

The provision of the report is also a formal obligation and requirement, which, if not respected, may lead to sanctions. Therefore, it is necessary to address the issues concerning "what is an acceptable report?", what skills and competences are involved and how organisations can benefit from a good report in terms of using it as a tool for further development and dissemination of the results of a particular study session. How can reports from study sessions be used as a tool to facilitate subsequent processes by institutions, organisation and individuals involved?

Answers to these questions can be found in the following section, while a comprehensive document with guidelines for study session reports is also available.

### Regulations concerning study session reports<sup>79</sup>

The Council of Europe requires the youth organisations and partners running study sessions held in co-operation with the European Youth Centre to produce a report of the study session. This activity report must be submitted to the educational advisor assigned to the session, no later than **two months** after the end of the activity. The submission of study session reports in the previous two years is an eligibility criterion for organisations applying for study sessions.

The **content** of the report should reflect the issues addressed, and results and conclusions reached by participants during the sessions. More than an account of the daily programme, the report should reflect the most relevant proceedings, the innovative elements and the aspects that can inspire or inform future study sessions or youth activities. The report must document fairly on the activity:

- why it was held
- who the participants were
- what issues were discussed in the programme
- what was learnt
- what the conclusions, main findings and contributions to the "knowledge" and the expertise on the theme(s) were
- what the main outcomes and output for the organisers were
- how it will be followed up.

.....  
<sup>79</sup> Detailed official information on the regulations can be found in the *Guidelines for the format of the final reports of Study Sessions held at the European Youth Centres of Strasbourg and Budapest*, including a *Sessions report cover layout mask* (also under the Financial and administrative documents).

The report may also reflect the methods and methodology used if relevant to potential multipliers in the organisation or elsewhere. It may also, where relevant, include evaluation material collected from participants. However, none of these are essential. Youth organisations thus have a large margin of manoeuvre to decide what should and what should not be in the report. An important guideline is that it should still make sense when read three years later.

## Formats

Reports can have different formats. The most usual is a document that will be published online or, in exceptional circumstances, printed. It could also take the form of one of the following:

- A video clip or a podcast
- A blog open to external comments or contributions on the topic
- A web page
- A multimedia report
- A graphic report.

Other formats are possible, or a combination of the above, provided that it remains a complete report and that it is public. When choosing the format, the organisers should make sure they have the capacity and expertise to produce it in that specific format, and that feedback from the Council of Europe will be possible.

### All reports must:

- contain an executive summary no longer than one page
- acknowledge the co-operation with the Council of Europe and carry its logos
- be publicly accessible, also from the Council of Europe websites.

The choice of the report format and how it will be produced must be discussed in the preparatory meetings for the session.

## Length

Written reports should be between six and 20 pages in length, without appendices (exceptions are possible if agreed with the educational advisor). The final report should be provided in both MS Word or another editable text format. It should use type font Times New Roman (size 11 or 12) or Arial (size 10 or 11) for the main text and formatted for A4 paper size. The cover pages should respect the elements provided in *Appendix 1* to this document. The organiser(s) may find it useful to consult the Council of Europe visual identity guidelines.

If the report is in video or audio format, it should be between 7 and 15 minutes for video, and 10 to 45 minutes for audio. The video or audio reports should also follow the suggested structure described below.

## Process

1. The reports are produced by the organiser(s) and sent to the educational advisor assigned by the Council of Europe no later than two months after the study session.
2. The educational advisor controls the quality of the report and provides comments and feedback on form and content to the organiser(s), including a reference number.
3. The organiser(s) finalises the report by integrating comments provided by the educational advisor. This should be done within two weeks.
4. The Council of Europe Youth Department publishes the report in its website(s) and sends the final approved PDF version of the report to the organisation.

## Printing and translation

Organisations can request printed copies of the report (black and white, A4 size). The Council of Europe reserves the right to decide on the printing. If justified, an organisation can request a translation of the report into the second language used in the study session; this provision depends on availability of financial resources and the quality of the text.

## Quality of the texts

The written reports are to be delivered in English (United Kingdom) or French (France). The texts are expected to be of good quality in terms of grammar, spelling and style. Report writers are strongly advised to make use of the Council of Europe Style Guide for common questions about English language and terminology commonly used in the Council of Europe.<sup>80</sup>

Logos and information about the visual identity of the organisation are also available at the following web page: [www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/visual-identity](http://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/visual-identity).

## Who is involved in compiling the report?

It is often the preference of teams to involve participants in the collection of the material for and even the drafting of the report. However, it will be up to one or more members of the team to ensure that the report is coherent, well-presented and clear, and that it reflects the actual nature of the activity that took place, and also to ensure that it reaches the EYC within the given deadline. Hence, it is important that the question of the report be addressed explicitly at the planning meeting. If the team involves participants in writing daily reports, it is convenient to use a specific structure that they all follow, in order to facilitate the collation.

## What does the team need the report for?

The report of a study session is not just an administrative instrument. It can also be a tool for the expression of the opinions of young people who are active in non-governmental organisations and their participation in political and social debate at national and international levels. Reports of study sessions, if well-presented and representative of the actual activity, can provide valuable reference material on training methods (especially in the field of intercultural learning), on techniques for the development and management of group dynamics and the stimulation of personal development. The report can be a valuable resource for the organisation in question, for other activities it may undertake, and for the teams of future study sessions. On the other hand, the report is an equally valuable resource for the Youth Department, which necessarily relies on documentary evidence of its activities (study sessions being an important aspect of the programme) in the promotion of its aims and programmes. The reports are also made available online on the Council of Europe's youth portal and can be consulted by other youth organisations who may be preparing sessions on similar topics. Hence, the following guidelines for the content and form of study session reports have been identified.

Reports should try to focus on a number of areas, including in particular:

- overall content of the discussions that have taken place during the study session
- the input of experts or lecturers
- learning processes, individual and group experiences, and educational methods used
- new ideas, conclusions and projects emerging from the discussions
- concrete outcomes

<sup>80</sup> It is advisable to consult the educational advisor about the latest available version of the Council of Europe Style Guide.

- recommendations or statements on issues that require particular attention, and which could be addressed in the context of the Council of Europe youth field
- summary of evaluations by participants.

At the same time, this list of areas to focus on is by no means exhaustive. Also, the content of the report should not be limited to descriptions of the above but should attempt to be analytical and evaluative wherever possible. In addition, the “mandate” of such a report is not to be a policy document. It is to report fairly on the activity: what happened, how it happened, why it happened and which methods were used. It should, wherever possible, include evaluation material collected from participants. This can give a better picture of the nature of the session and the quality of the discussions.

### **What kind of message should the report communicate to its audience?**

Should the report intend to have political significance, it is essential that special attention is paid to the ideas and proposals which have been accepted by the participants in the activity as a group. Although these ideas could not claim to be representative of the opinion of all young people (and even of the official standpoint of the organisation, unless the session has been specifically mandated in this respect), it is still significant that a number of socially aware and politically active young people, coming from different cultures and backgrounds, have reached a consensus on issues which usually divide opinions in our societies.

#### **REFLECTION POINTS**

##### **Summarising outcomes to be used in political work**

If the views expressed by a group of study session participants are intended to be put forward to the political sphere in their authentic form, it will be necessary to present them in a way that does not require much rewriting, or, therefore, interpretation (which could in fact be misinterpretation).

- *Is the summary of the outcome of the activity precise and selective enough?*
- *Is the way the main points are phrased convincing and valid?*
- *Is there any chance that it could be misinterpreted?*

### **Who is the report’s target audience?**

It is useful to imagine who will read the report; this will help to choose the right style (and the right length). In general, the report’s style should be such that it is useful for people who have not been at the event, for example member organisations, grant donors, and so on. Make sure that it is logical and easy to follow for everyone, not just for people who have attended the event and for other organisations working on the same topic.

The envisaged readers and users of the report are:

- the participants of the study session
- other young people interested in the topic
- the youth organisation(s) running the study session and other youth organisations co-operating with the Council of Europe or interested in the same issues
- Staff members and experts of the Council of Europe and members of the statutory bodies of the Youth Department.

The team may also consider producing different versions of the report if it is anticipated that it will have different readerships. For instance, parliamentarians or government officials and other decision makers may

appreciate short analytical reports (3-5 pages) outlining the essential ideas, problems and recommendations. Researchers and other experts would prefer comprehensive and informative reports, which they could analyse using various methodologies. The leadership and the members of the organisation would probably like to find out what has happened during the session, what was planned as a follow-up, as well as about a detailed evaluation of the activity.

### **Notes for presenting a well-edited report:**

#### ***Experts' input and reference material***

The report (or parts of it) may be published at some point in the future. As a result, but also out of respect for the law, the source and the authors of all reference materials that have been used must be indicated: copies of articles, extracts from books, pictures and photos copied from printed sources. Be sure that the references for material quoted are correct; written permission from the copyright holder might be needed in the case of publication.

If experts' lectures are included, indicate the name and contact details of the lecturer(s) and clearly separate the text of the expert input from the body of the report.

It is the organisation's responsibility that copyrighted material is not reproduced without written agreement of the copyright holder. The Council of Europe reserves the right not to publish reports (fully or partly) wherever this rule is not respected.

*Appendix VIII* of this manual presents the 'Suggested structure for reports of study sessions'.

### **▶ REFLECTION POINTS**

How are you going to organise the reporting of your study session? Are you planning to have a rapporteur at your study session, or will it be the responsibility of the team members?

Are participants going to contribute to the report? How are you going to organise their work? Who will co-ordinate them?

Do you have an agreement about who is going to finalise and edit the study session report? The team? The course director? Office staff of your organisation? A team member? A rapporteur?



## 6. FOLLOW-UP AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

This is a crucial element of the implementation of study sessions, which some organisations and teams tend to forget or fail to plan carefully right from the beginning. In such cases, little might happen to follow up the study session and disseminate the results. It is a pity when organisations do not achieve much impact and do not take full advantage of the unique chance, presented by holding a study session at one of the EYCs, of developing their movement further.

Possible follow-up actions for study sessions:

- Web page / newsletter / mailing list
- Smaller regional activities dealing with the theme / multiplying
- Social media group
- Blogging, vlogging or making a podcast (episode)
- Awareness-raising campaign
- Report / documentation (pictures, online collection of materials, etc.)
- Media (articles in various European, national, regional, local magazines)
- Meeting with politicians, decision makers
- Projects (international youth exchanges, training courses, seminars, application to EYF)

### ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

- *Can you think of any other forms of follow-up?*
- *What have you planned for your own (up-coming) study session?*
- *How would you implement your follow-up? Are there any potential challenges or opportunities?*

Of course the follow-up, as well as the dissemination of results, depends very much on the nature of the study session and also the results achieved. Was a political paper drafted or recommendations made? Who has to channel and promote the outcomes towards certain institutions or decision makers? Does the organisation primarily want to pass on new educational methods to partner organisations and make them known among other multipliers? Have new links and partnerships been created during the study session which need to be fostered and strengthened?

There is no special recipe for the most effective follow-up actions and dissemination of results. It very much depends on the needs of the organisation and the needs of the participants. Have they developed action plans and do they need specific support? Has the organisation made on-the-spot commitments or promises regarding the follow-up? Is the study session only one integral part of a specific development plan of the NGO? Is the study session part of a larger campaign (for example, the past campaigns All Different – All Equal, or the recent No Hate Speech Movement campaign)?

## Taking action for human rights

Chapter 3 of *Compass* specifically deals with taking action, considering it an intrinsic part of human rights education. In the case where organisers of a study session plan to encourage participants of a study session to actively work on the multiplication of their learning, consulting this chapter may prove to be extremely useful. Its three sections explain the nature and main characteristics of activism, and offer a series of simple methods and ideas for action, as well as planning tools for groups to engage deeply in an issue important for them by developing strategies.

Simple actions for human rights according to *Compass* can be:

- Public actions
- Young people educating peers and their communities
- Doing it yourself – bringing about a change directly
- Changing the policy or behaviour of state representatives
- Link-ups with other groups or movements
- Evidence gathering

(Source: *Compass*, Chapter 3: 'Taking action for Human Rights')

Please see chapter 2.2.2 *Writing a proposal for a study session* (F: Following up the study session) above for more information on this area.

For further in-depth information and planning regarding the above subjects, please refer to the T-Kits on *Training Essentials* and on *Project Management*.



# 7. CONCLUSION



## IN CONCLUDING THIS MANUAL ...

The attempt of the authors of the manual has been to provide a concise handbook to be consulted both by organisations when preparing their proposals for study session and by the teams when designing, implementing and evaluating their sessions. Needless to say, running such an intercultural activity with young people based on non-formal education requires a very wide range of competences from the team members – a combination of attitudes, knowledge and skills that cannot be all included in such a manual in detail.

Therefore, it is recommended that this manual be used as a basis, and that users rely on certain sections or follow the links provided for further reading, depending on the capacities and competences of their team. Some teams may need to improve their competences more than others so that they can successfully run their study sessions; however, it is sure that everyone will find at least some chapters of the current booklet useful.

Study sessions are to remain a key tool for co-operation with youth organisations for developing their own thematic foci and to multiply their organisational culture. Co-operation also means that teams do not have to rely only on written information: the Secretariat of the European Youth Centres, with special regard to educational advisors, are available to help teams to work with the specific institutional setting of the Council of Europe, to provide administrative and educational guidance.

“Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world.”

—*Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani education activist*

## ... AND SOME WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The contents of the present manual may seem to be overwhelming at first glance – and indeed, being involved a study session as a facilitator entails several tasks and responsibilities. Nevertheless, as readers of the manual and future facilitators, feel encouraged and brace yourself for the task. Being in charge of a study session is a responsibility, a privilege and a pleasure, all at the same time. A study session is a unique learning process for all team members, who can fully benefit as individuals and as members of their organisations and networks.

For many young people, being a preparatory team member in a study session is a first step towards training young people at a European level; therefore, it is crucial that they receive proper support that empowers them as educators and active members of their organisations. At the same time, youth organisations / networks and the Youth Department benefit from the follow-up by individuals, which are often linked by unforgettable memories and international friendships. Besides friendships, the European Youth Centres are also considered to be a “laboratory” of new ideas, and creativity and innovation in methodological as well as thematic terms are therefore important aspects of study sessions.

With the hope that this manual will help the work of preparatory teams in the next study session easier and richer, leading to empowerment and innovation in promoting and protecting human rights, we wish (future) facilitators every success in making the most of the manual for the development of their organisation and of themselves as individuals.

“Be yourself the change you would like to see in the world.” —*Gandhi*

# 8. APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I – *Case studies: Ethics and values*

The first three days of a study session on gender issues have passed and some of the objectives of your training have been reached but only with difficulty: you have the feeling that you really have to push your participants. There is good potential for higher levels of commitment, but they are not responding to it.

*Look at the case study above from the viewpoint of a trainer (but thinking at a group level) and try to find answers to the following questions:*

- *How can you solve it? Give reasons for your choice of solution.*
- *How could you prevent this kind of situation happening again in the future?*
- *What ethics and values are important in this case? (DOs and DON'Ts)*

You are a member of a preparatory team of five people and you notice that your colleague and co-trainer is not taking her/his duties and tasks (for which she/he has taken responsibility) seriously. You see that the quality of the session is suffering because of this.

*Look at the case study above from the viewpoint of a trainer and try to find answers to the following questions:*

- *How can you solve it? Give reasons for your choice of solution.*
- *How could you prevent this kind of situation happening again in the future?*
- *What ethics and values are important in this case? (DOs and DON'Ts)*

While socialising in the evening, the preparatory team suggests a game that might be very challenging for some participants: it involves a lot of physical contact, which for some people might be very intimate or offensive. One of the participants participates, but obviously does not feel comfortable and the next morning wants to leave the session.

*Look at the case study above from the viewpoint of a trainer (but thinking at a participant level) and try to find answers to the following questions:*

- *How can you solve it? Give reasons for your choice of solution.*
- *How could you prevent this kind of situation happening again in the future?*
- *What ethics and values are important in this case? (DOs and DON'Ts)*

As a trainer of a study session you have been put in a difficult situation by one of the participants and you realise that there might be a conflict between your personal values and your values as a trainer.

*Look at the case study above from the viewpoint of a trainer (but thinking at a personal level) and try to find answers to the following questions:*

- *How can you solve it? Give reasons for your choice of solution.*
- *How could you prevent this kind of situation happening again in the future?*
- *What ethics and values are important in this case? (DOs and DON'Ts)*

Some participants of your study session don't drink alcohol and don't feel comfortable to be in a room where others do. The other members of the group like to have a drink in the evening and somehow the whole group seems to have split in two.

Look at the case study above from the viewpoint of a trainer and try to find answers to the following questions:

- How can you solve it? Give reasons for your choice of solution.
- How could you prevent this kind of situation happening again in the future?
- What ethics and values are important in this case? (DOs and DON'Ts)



# APPENDIX II – *Ethical conduct in youth work*

## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR YOUTH WORK

### 1. Ethical principles. Youth workers have a commitment to:

#### 1.1. Treat young people with respect

Principles of practice would include:

- valuing each young person and acting in a way that does not exploit or negatively discriminate against certain young people on irrelevant grounds such as race, religion, gender, ability or sexual orientation
- explaining the nature and limits of confidentiality and recognising that confidential information clearly entrusted for one purpose should not be used for another purpose without the agreement of the young person — except where there is clear evidence of danger to the young person, worker, or other persons or the community.

#### 1.2. Respect and promote young people's rights to make their own decisions and choices

Practice principles would include:

- raising young people's awareness of the range of decisions and choices open to them and offering opportunities for discussion and debate on the implications of particular choices; offering learning opportunities for young people to develop their capacities and confidence in making decisions and choices through participation in decision-making bodies and working in partnership with youth workers in planning activities
- respecting young people's own choices and views, unless the welfare or legitimate interests of themselves or other people are seriously threatened.

#### 1.3. Promote and ensure the welfare and safety of young people

Practice principles would include:

- taking responsibility for assessing risk and managing the safety of work and activities involving young people
- ensuring their own competence, and that of employees and volunteers for whom they are responsible, for undertaking areas of work and activities
- warning the appropriate authority, and taking action if there are thought to be risks or dangers attached to the work
- drawing to the attention of their employer ways in which activities or policies of employers may be seriously harmful to the interests and safety of young people; and, if this proves ineffective, bringing them to the attention of those in power or, ultimately, the general public
- being aware of the need to strike a balance between avoiding unnecessary risk and permitting and encouraging young people to take part in challenging educational activities.

#### 1.4. Contribute towards the promotion of social justice for young people and in society generally

Practice principles would include:

- promoting just and fair behaviour, and challenging discriminatory actions and attitudes on the part of young people, colleagues and others
- encouraging young people to respect and value difference and diversity, particularly in the context of a multicultural society
- drawing attention to unjust policies and practices and actively seeking to change them

- promoting the participation of all young people, and particularly those who have traditionally been discriminated against, in youth work, in public structures and in society in general
- encouraging young people and others to work together collectively on issues of common concern.

## 2. Professional principles

Youth workers have a commitment to:

### 2.1. Recognise the boundaries between personal and professional life

Principles of practice would include:

- recognising the tensions between developing supportive and caring relationships with young people and the need to maintain an appropriate professional distance
- taking care not to develop close personal, particularly sexual, relationships with the young people they are working with as this may be against the law, exploitative or may result in preferential treatment. If such a relationship does develop, the youth worker concerned should report this to the line manager to decide on appropriate action
- not engaging in work-related activities for personal gain, or accepting gifts or favours from young people or local people that may compromise the professional integrity of the work
- taking care that behaviour outside work does not undermine the confidence of young people and the public in youth work.

### 2.2. Recognise the need to be accountable to young people, their parents or guardians, employers, funders, wider society and other people with a relevant interest in the work

Practice principles would include:

- recognising that accountabilities to different groups may conflict, and taking responsibility for seeking appropriate advice and making decisions in cases of conflict
- being open and honest in all dealings with young people, enabling them to access information to make choices and decisions in their lives in general, and in relation to participation in youth work activities
- ensuring that their actions as a youth worker are in accordance with the law
- ensuring that resources under youth workers' control are distributed fairly, according to criteria for which youth workers are accountable, and that work undertaken is as effectively as possible
- reporting to the appropriate authority any suspicions relating to a young person at risk of serious harm or danger, particularly of sexual or physical abuse
- actively seeking opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and professionals from other agencies.

### 2.3. Develop and maintain the skills and competence required to do the job

Practice principles would include:

- only undertaking work or taking on responsibilities for which workers have the necessary skills, knowledge and support
- seeking feedback from service users and colleagues on the quality of their work and constantly updating skills and knowledge
- recognising when new skills and knowledge are required and seeking relevant education and training.

### 2.4. Foster and engage in ethical debate in youth work

Practice principles would include:

- developing their awareness of youth workers' own personal values and how these relate to the ethical principles of youth work as stated in section 5.1

- re-examining these principles, engaging in reflection and discussion with colleagues and contributing to the learning of the organisation where they work
- developing awareness of the potential for conflict between personal and professional values, as well as between the interests and rights of different individuals and between the ethical principles in this statement
- recognising the importance of continuing reflection and debate and seeing this statement of ethical principles as a working document which should be constantly under discussion.

2.5. Work for conditions in employing agencies where these principles are discussed, evaluated and upheld

Practice principles would include:

- ensuring that colleagues, employers and young people are aware of the statement of principles
- being prepared to discuss difficult ethical issues in the light of these principles and contribute towards interpreting and elaborating on the practice principles
- being prepared to challenge colleagues or employing agencies whose actions or policies are contrary to the principles in this statement.

Adapted by Y. Domuschieva from *Ethical Conduct in Youth Work*, prepared by the National Youth Agency, UK and published at [www.nya.org](http://www.nya.org).



## APPENDIX III – Assertiveness training

### WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO ...

... be an assertive facilitator?	... be an assertive co-facilitator?	... design assertive facilitation?
<p>1. Listen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allow session time for discussion</li> <li>• encourage expressions of different views</li> <li>• don't pass judgement on different views</li> <li>• be attentive to everything that is said</li> <li>• be sensitive to the feelings expressed</li> <li>• take other people's opinions seriously</li> <li>• remain open to different opinions</li> </ul> <p>2. Demonstrate that I understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• don't dismiss or denigrate anyone or anything</li> <li>• reveal some of my own experience</li> <li>• ask relevant and direct questions</li> <li>• say if I don't understand</li> <li>• don't make assumptions</li> <li>• be prepared to become vulnerable</li> <li>• treat people equally</li> <li>• be flexible enough to adjust session content or process to make it more relevant</li> </ul> <p>3. Say what I think and feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• know what I think and feel</li> <li>• express my thoughts and feelings openly</li> <li>• include thoughts and feelings of a personal nature</li> <li>• don't feel embarrassed about revealing feelings</li> <li>• be prepared to be seen as a human being, not an impersonal automaton</li> </ul>	<p>1. Agree beforehand on some ground rules for the working relationship</p> <p>2. Raise beforehand any issues which I feel uncomfortable with</p> <p>3. Agree beforehand how to deal with any disagreements during the session</p> <p>4. Discover how my co-facilitator prefers to receive feedback, if any at all</p> <p>5. Explain how I want to receive feedback</p> <p>6. Listen to and respect my co-facilitator's experience</p> <p>7. Stand up for the sessions that I believe in and that I do well</p> <p>8. Motivate my co-facilitator</p> <p>9. Give credit to my co-facilitator for her/his contribution, both in private and in public</p> <p>10. Sort out disagreements in private</p> <p>11. Be interested in what my co-facilitator is doing or saying</p> <p>12. Build on my co-facilitator's material</p> <p>13. Listen to uncomfortable feedback</p> <p>14. Don't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• let my co-facilitator take my best sessions from me</li> <li>• belittle my own experience</li> <li>• ignore my co-facilitator or her/his session</li> <li>• overrun the agreed time</li> <li>• contradict my co-facilitator in public</li> <li>• interrupt my co-facilitator</li> <li>• stand in front of my co-facilitator or "upstage" her/him in any way</li> </ul>	<p>1. Clarify the objectives and make them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specific</li> <li>• achievable</li> <li>• measurable</li> <li>• encouraging of positive outcomes</li> <li>• developmental and able to stretch knowledge and skills</li> <li>• action orientated</li> </ul> <p>2. Relate the objectives to the content</p> <p>3. Create an achievable, stimulating and healthy rhythm for the session</p> <p>4. Programme activities to suit all learning styles</p> <p>5. Give out handouts which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include examples from different genders, ethnic groups, ages and experiences</li> <li>• avoid jokes or cartoons which are at the expense of any particular group or individual</li> <li>• respect different views</li> <li>• do not put a person or people down</li> <li>• have practical relevance to each group of participants</li> </ul> <p>6. Plan exercises which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• don't humiliate anyone</li> <li>• don't require anyone to become a victim</li> <li>• don't encourage passive or aggressive behaviour</li> <li>• don't cast people in roles</li> <li>• enable people to build on their existing level of skills</li> <li>• build people up</li> <li>• challenge stereotypes</li> <li>• are as realistic as possible</li> </ul>

... be an assertive facilitator?	... be an assertive co-facilitator?	... design assertive facilitation?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be able to express negative feelings</li> </ul> <p>7. Say specifically what I want to happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• don't impose my wishes on participants be clear about what I want</li> <li>• be flexible in achieving what I want</li> </ul> <p>5. Consider the consequences of joint solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take the time to discuss joint solutions</li> <li>• remain open to alternatives</li> <li>• have alternatives to offer</li> <li>• don't regard it as a failure if participants don't exactly do what I wish</li> </ul> <p>6. Use a steady, firm, warm, clear, sincere, neither loud nor soft, audible and varied voice</p> <p>7. Have the following body language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct eye contact without staring</li> <li>• open hand and arm movements</li> <li>• facial expressions that fit expressed feelings</li> <li>• take up appropriate amount of space</li> <li>• sit and stand upright and relaxed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• let my feelings or discomfort go unexpressed</li> <li>• distract participants</li> <li>• give negative feedback just as she/he is starting a session or at times when she/he is not able to discuss it</li> </ul>	<p>7. Use the physical setting of the session (tables, chairs and general layout of the room) to create a friendly atmosphere, express respect for myself and for the participants and the will to work together</p>

## APPENDIX IV – *Feedback within teams*

Some ideas of how to give feedback to your team members:

### **Exercise on team work and roles in the team: “The vehicle method”**

- Step 1. In pairs or individually, imagine this team as a vehicle. It can be anything you wish: a car, tractor, steamboat or plane. The vehicle should express what you feel is the essence of the team. Make a drawing of this vehicle.
- Step 2. Try to place the different team members in the vehicle. Which parts of the vehicle do you see them corresponding to? Who is the sail, motor, compass, seat, brake, global positioning system, and so forth? Why?
- Step 3. Explain your drawings to each other.
- Step 4. Debriefing – What did we get out of this? Time: at least 1 hour for a team of 4 people.

### **Exercise on giving personal feedback: “The hot chair”**

- Find a comfortable space for your team. Sit in a circle and place one chair in the middle. One by one, team members sit on this “hot chair”.
- From the hot seat, tell your team colleagues what you would like to get feedback on: your performance as a trainer, your role in the team, and so on. The other team members will then answer you, bearing in mind the guidelines you have agreed on.
- Set a time limit for each person’s visit to the hot chair.
- While sitting on the hot chair, you cannot react to individual comments, but you have some time for reactions and questions once the feedback round is over and before the next team member takes the chair.
- Time needed: at least 20 minutes per team member.

Attention: *this can be a very sensitive exercise. Remember to agree some basic rules for giving feedback beforehand!*

The *Compass* manual emphasises the importance of respecting the other person when giving feedback, and encourages a supportive and constructive attitude. For giving feedback in a supportive way, it is essential to:

- Ensure that people start giving feedback with a positive statement
- Respect the other person and not make any derogatory remarks
- Focus on the behaviour and not on the person
- Give a reason for what is being said
- Take responsibility for what is being said by using “I-messages”.

*(Source: Compass, Chapter 1. 3.4. General tips on running activities)*

# APPENDIX V – Access needs of participants

## TEMPLATE FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO BE ADDED TO APPLICATION FORMS FOR STUDY SESSION APPLICANTS

*Please note the following questions will not be marked and will not affect your application*

### **What do you need to be included in the meeting:**

- Wheelchair Access
- A sign-language interpreter
- Real-time captioning
- Documents in Braille (please specify if you require Grade One or Grade Two)
- Easy-to-read documents
- Other forms of disability-related adaptations (please specify):

### **Will you need to bring a personal assistant / support?**

## TEMPLATE FOR “FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS” TO COMPLEMENT APPLICATION FORMS FOR MIXED-ABILITY GROUPS

In case you are about to organise an activity for a mixed-ability group, you may find it useful – after consulting the Secretariat of the Youth Department – to create a document with *Frequently asked questions and answers* about the technical details for attendance to the study session and attach it to the Application form for participants. It can include, for example:

- Can I bring my Personal Assistant?
- Are the costs also covered for Personal Assistant?
- Is there a participation fee?
- Will you provide any information at the study session in alternative formats?
- Will someone help with planning my travel to and from the Study Session?
- Will the study session be completely accessible?
- Can you provide personal assistants?
- I need a hoist, etc. Can you provide this?
- I need a sign-language interpreter. Can you provide this?
- I am a wheelchair user. Can I attend?
- I have a learning disability, etc. Can I apply?
- I’m not very good at English. Can I bring someone to interpret for me?
- Can I have the application form in Braille, large print, easy read, my own language, etc.?
- Will you arrange travel insurance? / Do I need to take out travel insurance?
- Is there somewhere I can chat to other potential applicants?

## ACCESS REQUIREMENTS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS OF STUDY SESSIONS WITH MIXED-ABILITY GROUPS<sup>81</sup>

- Please answer all the questions.
- We kindly ask everyone to complete this Access Requirements form with your own needs.
- This form will give us information about your specific requirements for catering for your needs.
- You can complete the digital form here. If you need a plain WORD format, please ask for one by emailing us. (email address)

*Thank you*

### Your Access Requirements

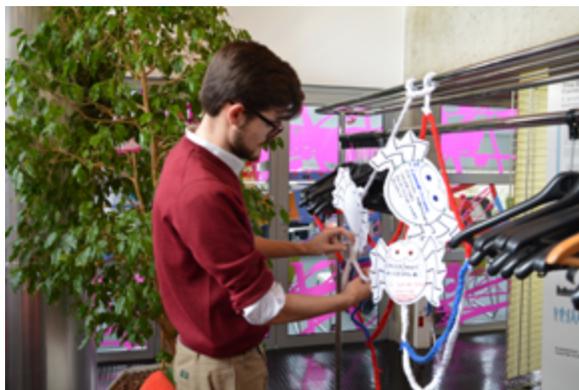
1. Contact information
  - First Name / Given Name (as written in your passport)
  - Family Name / Surname (as written in your passport)
  - Nationality (as in your passport)
  - Country of Residence (where you live permanently)
2. Which format would you prefer Study Session information in?
  - electronic document
  - standard print
  - Braille
  - large print

Do you require information in any other formats?

3. Do you require a Palantypist (speech to text) at the Study Session?
4. Do you need a sign-language Interpreter?
  - If yes, please indicate what language:
5. Would you like a guided orientation tour of the European Youth Centre (EYCS) upon arrival?
6. Do you need a quiet breakout room?
7. Do you need a prayer room during the day activities?
8. Do you need a car parking space?
  - If yes, do you have any specific requirements regarding the car parking space?
9. Do you have any medical conditions that may require urgent attention during the Study Session, such as epilepsy, diabetes or allergies?
10. Do you have any specific dietary requirements?
11. In the event of fire, if you are above the ground floor, are you able to exit the building without help?
  - If not, what assistance do you need during fire emergency?
12. Do you require step-free access?
13. Are you a wheelchair user?
14. If you are bringing a personal assistant, are you able to share a room with them?
15. Do you require a room with an accessible bathroom?
  - If yes, does your bathroom need a: bath OR a roll-in shower.
  - If yes, do you need to use a hoist in the bathroom?

.....  
<sup>81</sup> This template was developed and used by the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) Youth and its partner organisations for study sessions.

16. Bedrooms:<sup>82</sup> What type of bed do you prefer? Do you need to use a hoist in the bedroom?
17. Emergency information
  - First Name / Given Name of the contact person:
  - Family Name / Surname of the contact person:
  - Relationship of the contact person to you:
  - Phone number of the contact person (including country code):
18. Is there anything we need to know in the event you are unconscious, for example, drug allergy, pregnancy, etc.?
19. Is there anything else we can do to help you feel included (for example, regular breaks, somebody to talk you through meetings in advance, etc.)?
20. Is there anything else we should know?



.....  
 82 There might be limited wheelchair accessible accommodation at the training venue; this means we may need to accommodate you somewhere else. If we place you outside the youth centre then we will arrange travel to and from the centre.

# **APPENDIX VI – Guidelines on integrating gender equality and mainstreaming in intercultural youth activities of the Council of Europe and its partners**

The purpose of these guidelines is to support organisers and educational teams of intercultural youth activities of the Council of Europe and its partners in ensuring gender equality in all the phases of an activity / project.

These guidelines are the result of the seminar Gender Equality Matters (2016, EYCS) and of further consultation and work with stakeholders of the youth sector. They are an expression of the commitment of the Council of Europe and its youth sector to advance gender equality.

The guidelines are to be used by staff and educational teams involved in intercultural youth activities held in the European Youth Centres and in the member states, and promoted with beneficiaries of the European Youth Foundation. They are to be used in conjunction with other documents (e.g. *Quality standards for educational activities held in the European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe*) and should be regularly reviewed.

The guidelines cover the following aspects:

1. A human rights-based approach to youth work and non-formal learning
2. Gender-balanced participation in youth activities and measures to ensure participation of young parents
3. Language and representation in materials related to educational activities
4. Gender-sensitive educational approaches
5. Creating safe environments and practical concerns: accommodation, working facilities, access to toilets, etc.

## **1. A human rights based-approach to youth work and non-formal learning**

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 in bridging the gaps.

Universal human rights also provide the ethical and normative frameworks to prevent, combat and overcome any form of discrimination grounded on sex, sexual orientation or gender identity. Achieving gender equality is not about “special rights” but about promoting everyone’s right to freedom and equality in dignity.

## **2. Gender-balanced participation in youth activities and measures to ensure participation of young parents**

Gender balance in intercultural youth activities should be considered at all stages and should concern:

- a. An inclusive approach to organisational and educational team selection (where a balance in the participation of all genders should be encouraged)
- b. An inclusive approach to participants’ recruitment where equal participation of men and women should be ensured together with inclusion measures towards under-represented genders.
- c. Overcoming a binary system of reference (female / male) in application forms. The application form could either include information about:

Sex, with the inclusion of the 'other' option for those who do not fit categories of male / female  
or

Gender, with an empty field allowing participants to complete it freely depending on how they identify,  
rather than giving pre-filled options.

Reflection should be made within the organisation / team on what purpose this information serves in  
the process of selection and composition of the group.

- d. Same-sex activities may still serve an important function in limiting the gender equality gap. Same-sex activities should be clearly advertised as such.
- e. All calls for applications for activities carried out by the Youth Department should carry the following phrase with the aim:

"The Council of Europe (and partners) welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the above-mentioned profile, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation."

This is recommended for partners of the Youth Department whenever they are in charge of the participants' recruitment on their own (i.e. study sessions).

- f. Invitation letters and other formal documents for participants should not bear the gender normative appellatives Ms/Mr.

### **3. Language and representation in materials related to educational activities**

Language has an immense power in replicating gender inequality from general masculine forms. This includes all forms of visual representation online and offline used in youth work activities, such as social media announcements, flyers, reports, or presentations during activities. It is important to reflect on the language and visual representations used at all stages of a youth activity:

- a. When referring to groups of people whose gender identities are varied or unknown, to employ gender neutral pronouns *they/them/themselves* instead of gendered versions. This should be valid for all communication, from announcements of the activity, to reports, welcome speeches, and so on.

While this might be easier in English, it might not be as easy for other languages used in youth work activities. However, languages are alive and constantly developing and it is important that teams involved with multi-lingual activities research solutions for gender neutral language.

- b. It is recommended that you consult and apply the Council of Europe instructions on the use of non-sexist language.
- c. In intercultural youth work, people come from different language backgrounds and these practices might not make sense to everyone (e.g. some languages have no gendered pronouns); therefore, it is important to take time to explain the reasoning behind the use of gender neutral and sensitive language.
- d. There should be consistent reflection and endeavour to ensure a balanced and non-stereotypical representation of all genders, regardless of the topic of the activity. This should also be reflected in communication and contractual agreements with third parties responsible for production of certain deliverables (i.e. video-makers).
- e. All of the above applies to verbal and written communication as well as pictures, illustrations, infographics, videos or any other medium that may convey or reinforce stereotypical or discriminatory views on gender.

### **4. Gender-sensitive educational approaches**

As stated in the quality standards for educational activities of the Youth Department, an integrated approach to intercultural learning, participation and human rights education should be taken in each activity, and articulated according to its specificity. Educational teams should be ready to observe human rights at all times, and discriminatory attitudes should be dealt with even though the topic of the activity might not be gender-related.

- a. Trainers and organisers should be aware of the existence and functioning of discrimination and its possible expression among the participants, as well as how to deal with it. They should consistently value and take into account perspectives and points of view of minority or under-represented groups and participants' access needs, and show commitment to gender equality.
- b. When preparing, running and evaluating an intercultural youth activity, teams should view their approaches with "gender glasses". For example, this should include not making assumptions about the gender identity of participants. This practice should include informal times, and the choice of activities should allow everyone the space to express themselves, while being aware that some young people may need longer to prepare and may require more support.

## **5. Creating safe environments and facilities**

The creation of safe environments should infuse all elements of a youth activity, including the venue, the attitude and behaviour of all staff, and all practical considerations. Human rights education also entails learning through human rights.

- a. It is good practice to train all staff involved in youth activities in gender equality, from restaurant personnel to administrative staff and educational teams. However, while this might be possible for the European Youth Centres, it might not be the case for activities held outside the EYCs. This should not prevent organisers from briefing and explaining to all those involved in what gender equality standards require.
- b. Concerns related to the comfort of participants should be reflected in choices of accommodation and the ways participants share rooms (where necessary), toilet facilities (generally gendered), safety and security around venues where activities are taking place.
- c. Codes of conduct should be developed and discussed with participants in youth activities.
- d. Discriminatory attitudes by participants, trainers or organisers should be dealt with in due time with a human rights approach and with regards to the specifics of the activity. It is important to bear in mind that such attitudes may manifest themselves during informal time, so it is important for participants to have a clear procedure to be able to address this with the organisers.
- e. A "Trust" team member of the educational team should be appointed from whom participants can seek advice. The "Trust" person should protect the anonymity of the person complaining of discriminatory behaviour and make sure that appropriate measures are taken while considering the safety of the group and the specificity of the situation. Particular attention should be paid to situations that may require legal or judiciary action.
- f. A specific policy regarding sexual harassment should be in place in the European Youth Centres and information about it should be made available to everyone involved in youth activities.

## APPENDIX VII – *The sunglasses story*

### ▶ REFLECTION POINTS

#### **The sunglasses story**

*Imagine that all people in your home country, from the beginning of time, today and forever, were born with two legs, two arms, two eyes, two ears, a nose, a mouth and a pair of sunglasses with yellow lenses. No-one has ever thought that it is strange that people wear sunglasses all the time. It has always been like that and they are like a part of the human body. Everyone wears them.*

*Take off your sunglasses and look at them.*

*It is the values, attitudes, ideas that people in your country share which gives the glasses their yellow colour. Everything everyone has seen, been taught and experienced has entered the brain through the yellow lenses. Everything has been filtered through those values and those ideas which colour the glasses yellow. The yellow lenses are your attitudes, your faith, your values and your cultural background.*

*Thousands of miles away, in another country, there are people who, from the beginning of time, today and forever, were born with two legs, two arms, two eyes, two ears, a nose, a mouth and a pair of sunglasses with blue lenses. No one has ever thought that it is strange that people wear sunglasses all the time. It has always been like that and they are like a part of the human body. Everyone wears them. Everything the people in this country have seen, been taught and experienced has been filtered through the blue lenses.*

*Once, there was a person travelling from your country to the other country. She was smart and understood that if she wanted to learn about the other country and the other people she had to get a pair of blue glasses to be able to “see”. When she arrived in the other country she made sure she got a pair of blue glasses. She stayed for three months and felt that she had really learned a lot about the other people’s values, faith and ideas. She could really “see” with the help of the new blue glasses. When she arrived home in her own country she became an expert on the other country and proudly told a lot of interested listeners that the other culture was green.*

Being part of the study session can have a similar effect on participants. Isn’t experiential learning and ICL all about going home after a study session and seeing the “world” with different eyes? Reflecting on other cultures and personalities? And seeing more “colours” in everyday life? It is also about being able to share this new vision with others or to give them glasses (acting as a multiplier!).

Furthermore, one could also link this story to everyday life. In our globalised world and society, diversity is not somewhere far away but just around the corner. Often there are people walking next to us wearing different glasses. Do we always see it? Do we value and appreciate it? What are the advantages and the difficulties for young people when living in diverse societies?

# APPENDIX VIII – *Suggested structure for reports of study sessions*<sup>83</sup>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 1. Executive summary

The executive summary highlights the most important facts, issues, conclusions and recommendations of the study session. It should be possible to get from the executive summary a complete overview of the information in the report about the study session. The executive summary is often easy to prepare after having finalised the rest of report. The summary should not exceed one page.

### 2. Introduction

The introduction presents the report and the activity in a synoptic but complete manner. It should normally include:

- an introduction to the report (what the reader can find there)
- the background to the session (why was the session needed for the organisation[s])
- the aims and objectives
- a description of the profile of participants, how many took part, and anything else about the group that may be relevant to understand the report
- a presentation of the organisation(s)
- a presentation of the topic and a list of the main contents / issues discussed
- the link between the session's theme and the Council of Europe.

The introduction should fit on three pages.

### 3. Results and conclusions

This section presents the outcomes and main results of the study session that are relevant for the organisation and participants and the Council of Europe, including, where applicable:

- recommendations or statements on issues that require particular attention and which could be addressed within the context of European youth policy
- suggestions or proposals for the Council of Europe (including for the work of the Youth Department)
- learning points for participants
- follow-up foreseen by the organisation
- overall evaluation (if relevant)
- contribution of the session to the programme / mission of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

This section should not exceed two pages.

### 4. Programme – input and discussions

This is the main body of the report in relation to the themes of the study session. It presents a summary of the main issues / thematic blocks, findings and presentations in relation to the theme(s). Please consider the following:

- There is no need for a detailed description of the daily programme. It is more useful to give a description of the flow of the session in two or three paragraphs. This can be followed by a more detailed account of the most important sessions and their outcomes grouped by focus, theme or otherwise.

83 From the *Guidelines for the format of the final reports of Study Sessions held at the European Youth Centres of Strasbourg and Budapest*

- Outline the content of the discussions that took place during the study session, including where possible the main conclusions, definitions and concepts developed and the inputs of team members, Council of Europe staff or lecturers.
- Highlight new ideas, conclusions and projects emerging from the discussions or working groups.
- Present, even if briefly, connections between the study session and the Council of Europe's programme or instruments.
- Point to remaining questions.
- Explain proposals for action.
- Avoid long lists of bullet points.

This section can include from three to 10 pages

## 5. Follow-up activities

Give an overview of follow-up activities developed or to be developed by participants and/or organisers.

This section should fit on two pages.

## Appendices

- Final Programme, as executed
- List of participants: names, organisations and countries (no personal contact details!)
- List of references used (books, websites, handouts, articles, pictures)
- List of links where information about the study session was posted online to ensure visibility.

Note: The focus on the areas outlined above is by no means exhaustive. The content of the report should be analytical, informative and useful to the future readers. It is, therefore, useful to define the target group first. Everything that seems unnecessary and makes the report too long should go in the Appendices, or be left out.



## **APPENDIX IX – List of document templates for study session implementation**

The limits of the present publication do not allow space for appending all documents related to the project life cycle of study sessions in their full length, but they are all made available online at the Youth Department web page under *Programme/Education and Training/Study sessions* on the page *Financial and administrative documents*.<sup>84</sup>

Below, a full list of them is presented:

1. Criteria for activities to be held in co-operation with the European Youth Centres
2. Financial arrangements for participants in study sessions
3. Roles, rules and practical conditions applying to trainers in study sessions
4. Guidelines for the format of the final reports of Study Sessions held at the European Youth Centres of Strasbourg and Budapest
5. Technical information for the partners of the Youth Department holding study sessions at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest
6. Evaluation of the study sessions at the EYCs by the preparatory team of the study sessions and the educational advisor
7. Evaluation of the support provided by the EYC by the course director, if possible in co-operation with the preparatory team of the study session
8. Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, prepared by the Education and Training Unit

Organisers of study session are meant to receive all relevant documents on email from the Secretariat of the Youth Department as soon as the acceptance of their study session proposal is confirmed. The documents are also made available on the e-learning site of the Youth Department, or can be provided by the educational advisor in charge of the activity.



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84 Financial and administrative documents: [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/financial-and-administrative-documents).

# APPENDIX X – *Bibliography*

## **Publications from the Council of Europe:**

*Compass*, Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People (2002, 2012)

*Compassito*, Manual for Human Rights Education with Children (2008)

*Education Pack All Different – All Equal* (2004, 2017)

*Bookmarks* – a manual for combating hate speech through human rights education (Revised in 2016)

*We CAN!* Taking action against hate speech through counter and alternative narratives (2017)

Guide to Study Sessions (2000)

Participants' Report from Training for Facilitators, EYCS (April 2004)

Participants' Report from Training for Facilitators, EYCB (November 2005)

*Gender Matters* – a manual on addressing gender-based violence with young people (original and revised versions)

*Have your say!* Manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (2008)

Otten H. (2007), 'The Role of Intercultural Learning in European Youth Work. Ten theses – Yesterday and Today', *Intercultural Learning in European Youth Work: Which Ways Forward?*, Seminar Report by Ramberg I., European Youth Centre Budapest.

## **Publications from the youth partnership of the Council of Europe and the European Commission**

T-Kit on *Project Management* (2000)

T-Kit on *Intercultural Learning* (2000) and revised version (2018)

T-Kit on *Training Essentials* (2002) and revised version

T-Kit on *Educational Evaluation* in Youth Work (2007)

T-Kit *Mosaic*: The training kit for Euro-Mediterranean youth work (2010)

Please also consult any other Training Kits relevant to the theme of your study session.

## **Other publications:**

Dickson A. (1982), *A Woman in Your Own Right: Assertiveness and You*, Quartet Books.

Domuschieva Y., 'Ethical Conduct in Youth Work', National Youth Agency, UK.

Katzenbach J. and Smith D. (2003), *The Wisdom of Teams*, Harper Business.

Willis L. and Daisley J. (1995), *The Assertive Trainer*, McGraw-Hill.



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The Council of Europe youth sector aims at enabling young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, notably by strengthening young people's access to rights, deepening youth knowledge and broadening youth participation.

The activities of the European Youth Centres of Budapest and Strasbourg play a central role in the education and training of young 'multipliers' of Council of Europe values.

The core of these activities is the programme of study sessions, week-long intercultural non-formal learning activities that are held in cooperation with European youth organisations and networks. These activities bring to the Youth for Democracy programme of the Council of Europe the unique experiences, expectations and concerns of young people regarding contemporary issues and challenges that affect their access to rights and of participating in all spheres of society.

The study sessions of the European Youth Centres have been trendsetters in European youth work and remain a benchmark for intercultural youth activities. This manual is published to support the quality of study sessions and other educational activities in the Youth for Democracy programme. Preparing facilitators and developing their competences is one of the essential prerequisites for enabling exchanges of views and dialogical learning, preparing the participants to act as multipliers in their day-to-day lives, and ultimately contributing to the values and priorities of the Council of Europe and its youth sector.

This Manual for Facilitators provides essential information, insights and practical tips in the planning and delivering non-formal education intercultural activities while taking into account essential approaches of intercultural learning, human rights education and youth participation.

This manual is a contribution to the quality of intercultural non-formal education activities of youth organisations and at making those activities a truly learning experience for young people in the Council of Europe.

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