

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS THROUGH VISUAL MEDIA



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The first edition of the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media* (AIEVM) was developed by the Education Department of the Council of Europe. It was a concrete response to the recommendations of the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue "Living together as equals in dignity", which recommended that new educational tools should be developed to encourage learners to reflect critically on their own responses and attitudes to experiences of other cultures.

The reference for the first edition is:

Barrett M., Byram M., Ipgrave J. and Seurrat A. (2013), *Images of others: an autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

The AIEVM is complemented by two further tools, the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters* (AIE) and the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters through the internet* (AIETI).

The current volume contains updated and revised versions of the two original versions of the AIEVM: the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media – Standard version* and the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media – Version for younger learners*. In this revision, both versions have been aligned with the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (www.coe.int/competences) which was published in 2018.

The AIEVM was developed for the Council of Europe by:

Martyn Barrett, Michael Byram,
Julia Ipgrave and Aude Seurrat,

with contributions from:

Leah Davcheva, Robert Jackson, Jean-Michel Leclercq,
Rachel Lindner, María del Carmen Méndez García and Călin Rus.

This revised second edition of the AIEVM was prepared by:

Martyn Barrett and Michael Byram.

Piloting

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Azerbaijan	Tarana Boyukzade
Bulgaria	Leah Davcheva, Elisaveta Statelova
Denmark	Mélanie Ravaud
France	Aude Seurrat
Georgia	Giorgi Kipiani
Germany	Rachel Lindner
Greece	Fokion Georgiadis, Sofia Karamatsouki, Nikos Metaxidis, Nektaria Palaiologou, Maria Papanikolaou, Mania Peraxhorith, Apostolos Zisimos
Hungary	Stefka Barócsi
Italy	Rita Bertone, Gisella Langé
Jordan	Mary Sakkab-Dabbah
Lithuania	Dalia Uržaitė
Luxembourg	Trevor King
Macau	Isabel Morais
Romania	Călin Rus
Spain	Marta Garcia Alaman, María del Carmen Méndez García
Switzerland	Lukas Bleichenbacher
Ukraine	Tetiana Svyrydiyk
United Kingdom	Kate Gater, Kate Lloyd, Régine Schneider

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Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media

Introduction

It has become commonplace to say that the world has changed, that globalisation and internationalisation make everything different, that intercultural experience is the experience of everyone. This is indeed true for many people who encounter people from other countries in their daily lives, for these are obviously “intercultural” experiences. The freedom of movement in Europe has been a particular case in recent decades and the need for intercultural dialogue is well recognised.

On the other hand, there are many parts of Europe and beyond where such experiences are, in fact, not so common, where people may feel that change has not affected their immediate surroundings, even if they see the effects of globalisation and internationalisation in the daily news on television.

These two views are based on the idea that “culture” is what is found in distant places, what might be experienced on a holiday in another country, for example, and that “intercultural” applies only to experiences with people from distant places. “Culture” is, however, a complex concept which is used – and sometimes over-used – to refer to many dimensions of our experience with other people. Indeed, “other people” is also a deceptively simple term used to refer to those who are “not like us”.

People who are “not like us” and who have a different “culture” may in fact be far more varied than just those from other countries, people we may or may not meet as a result of globalisation and internationalisation. Boys may say girls are “not like us” and have their own “culture”, and vice versa. People who live in the city may say the same of those who live in the countryside, and vice versa. People of one religion/age group/ethnicity/nationality, or similar, may say it of those of another religion/age group/ethnicity/nationality, or similar, and vice versa.

One of the effects of globalisation and the development of technologies of various kinds is to bring people “not like us” into our lives through visual media, through “24-hour news” on television and the internet, through globally-orientated advertising, through the more traditional media of newspapers and magazines in their traditional and their internet formats, and also through the materials offered for all kinds of learning throughout life in formal and informal settings.

It soon becomes clear that intercultural encounters are part of our everyday lives with or without globalisation and internationalisation, sometimes on a face-to-face basis and often mediated in visual form. Some encounters go unnoticed because they are so common and seem natural. Others stick out as special and sometimes demanding and difficult experiences because they are unusual and are the cause of joy or fear or both. Even the ordinary becomes unusual as a particular event or image which strikes us among the many in our environment suddenly causes us to stop and wonder.

Joy and fear – and other emotions in between – are often best understood through a little reflection and analysis, and can then be a better basis for future intercultural encounters. Before this *Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media* (AIEVM) was produced, the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters* (AIE) was developed as a means of helping us to think about our face-to-face experiences of “other people” with other “cultures”. This present AIEVM is based on the AIE but is substantially different because the ways in which our experience of others is affected by the visual media has to be taken into account. Like the AIE, however, it is a means of helping us to decide how we can and should learn from an intercultural encounter, what we should do, what action we might take, how we can find out more about and benefit from the event which has been important to us, and how we can make it part of our understanding of “others” and their “cultures”.

The AIEVM is essentially a series of questions about a particular image, often one which has been especially striking and left an impression. The questions help us to reflect on the image, how we responded, how we

thought and felt about it then and now, and what conclusions we can draw from it for the future. The questions follow a careful sequence which is based on scientific research but are written in a way which makes it easy for anyone to follow. In the "Standard version", those who use the AIEVM can do it alone or with others – with the help of a friend or teacher, for example – whereas the "Version for younger learners" is intended for children who need help from an adult in reading and writing and in thinking about the image.

The AIEVM is accompanied by "Notes for facilitators" in both versions, where a more detailed explanation of its purpose and origins is given.

There is also a text – "Context, concepts and theories" – which deals in some depth with the concepts which underlie the AIEVM, such as what we mean by "culture" and many other concepts which help to clarify a complex area for facilitators. Finally, there is a shorter and simplified version of this explanatory text, entitled "Concepts for discussion", which can be used with people who complete the "Standard version" of the AIEVM and who themselves might want to understand more about how disciplines such as psychology and sociology help us to analyse intercultural encounters in a scientific way. These two texts may be found in a separate volume which accompanies the present one.

It is hoped that the AIEVM will be a means of helping anyone who has had a significant intercultural experience of any kind to benefit from it, make it part of their way of seeing the world around them and decide how to take a full part in the intercultural world to which they belong.

Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media

Standard version

What is the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media* (AIEVM)?

The AIEVM has been designed to help you analyse a specific image which you have encountered in the media (for example, on television, in a book, on the internet) which shows someone (or several people) from another culture. You do this by answering a sequence of questions about various aspects of that image.

Choose an image which has made a positive or negative impact on you – it made you think, it surprised you, you enjoyed it, you found it difficult to believe, or similar.

The image should have at least one person in it. If that person is an actor, focus on the character the actor is playing. The person or people shown in the image could be from a different country or they could be from another cultural background in your own country. For example, they might be from another region in your country, from a different religion, from a different language group or from a different ethnic group.

The focus is just on one image which you have encountered in the media which shows someone from a different cultural background from yourself.

Here are some examples which other people have chosen:

- ▶ A news broadcast showing strikers marching through the streets of a city in another country carrying placards.
- ▶ A photograph on a charity website about a homeless person in your city or region.
- ▶ A music video showing a hip-hop artist.
- ▶ A drawing showing an individual from another religious group praying.
- ▶ A feature film about an Asian doctor working in a European hospital.
- ▶ A photograph in a foreign language textbook showing someone from the country where that language is spoken.
- ▶ A video on YouTube showing young people from another region of the same country performing a folk dance.
- ▶ A poster of an athlete in the Paralympics.
- ▶ A holiday brochure showing local people welcoming tourists.

The AIEVM helps you to think about the image by asking you questions about it. You may find that some questions do not apply to the image you have chosen. You will benefit most by working your way through to the end.

1. The image

Give the image a title which says something about it.

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What sort of image have you chosen? For example, is it a photograph or poster, or in a music video, a television programme or a film that you have watched, or is it in a history, geography, religious studies or language textbook that you use at school?

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Why have you chosen this image?

Is it because ... (please tick one or more of the following reasons, or add your own reason if it is different from the ones listed below):

- ▶ it made me think about something I had not thought about before?
- ▶ it was the first time I had seen this kind of image?
- ▶ it was the most recent image of this kind that I have seen?

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Add any other reactions in your own words and say what you think caused your reaction:

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3. Your feelings

How did you feel when you first saw the image?

What do you think caused these feelings?

If you were the person in this image, would you like people to feel this way about you? Please give your reasons.

Would you like to have an image made of you which looked like this? Please give your reasons.

Would you like to meet the person/people shown in the image in real life? Please give your reasons.

4. The feelings of other people

Do you think the person/people shown in the image would be pleased with this image of themselves? Please give your reasons.

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Do you think they would have preferred to be shown differently? Please explain your answer.

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How do you think other people from the same group or culture as them would feel about the image?

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5. Thinking about communication

In the image, do the person/people shown use language or gestures to communicate with people in the image or viewers? If so, what language or gestures do they use?

If you were to actually meet the person/people shown in the image, what would you do or say?

Do you have any knowledge of their language and/or culture which could help you to understand and communicate with them? If so, what sort of things do you know?

What do you think you could do to make it easier for you to understand each other?

6. Same and different

Thinking about the person/people in the image and yourself, what do you think are the main similarities between them and yourself?

What do you think are the main differences between them and yourself?

Are they like anyone that you know in your own life? If so, in what ways do they resemble them (for example, in the way they look, the way they behave, the way they think)?

When looking at an image, people often compare things in other groups or cultures with similar things in their own groups or cultures. Did you do this?

Similarities I noticed ...

Differences I noticed ...

Now you have answered the questions in this section, you could go back to the answers which you gave in the "Who I am" section of this AIEVM and see if you want to make any changes.

7. Thinking further about the image

Is there anything about the person/people shown in the image that is exaggerated or emphasised? If so, what?

Is there anything about the person/people that could have been shown but that is missing from the image? If so, what?

Does the image present the person/people in a positive, negative or neutral way? Give reasons for your answer.

Do you think that the image is a stereotype of the person/people shown in the image? If so, why do you think it is a stereotype?

Do you think this image is fair or unfair as a way of showing this person's/these people's group or culture? Give reasons for your answer.

8. Thinking about the person or people who made the image

Who do you think made the image?

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What do you think was their reason for making it (for example, to inform, to entertain, to advertise)?

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If they used stereotypes, do you think they used them deliberately or not? Give reasons for your answer.

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Who do you think was the main audience the image was intended for?

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Why do you think this audience watches or looks at this kind of image (for example, for entertainment, for factual information, to learn how to do something)?

What attitude do you think this audience usually adopts towards this kind of image? For example, do you think that they always believe in this kind of image/are sceptical about it/enjoy it/learn from it/allow their behaviour to be affected by it?

Do you think this image will make viewers think differently about the people from the group or culture shown? Give reasons for your answer.

9. Finding out more

Did you try to find out more about the image and how or why it was made? If so, how did you do it and what information sources did you use?

10. Thinking back and looking forward

Having answered the previous questions and thought about the image:

There were some things which I approve of and these are my reasons ...

There were some things which I disapprove of and these are my reasons ...

Try to imagine that you are telling someone you know well about the image. Do you think they would have the same opinions as you? Would they approve and disapprove of the same things for the same reasons?

Why might people you know well and who belong to the same group/culture as you have the same reactions as you?

Has seeing the image changed your thinking in any way? How?

Did you or will you do something as a result of seeing this image? If so, what?

For example, did you or will you:

- ▶ talk about the effects of images in the media with someone?
- ▶ talk to people like those in the image about how they feel when they see such images?
- ▶ contact the people who made the image to tell them about your own thoughts and feelings about the image?

Has doing this AIEVM changed you in any way? How?

For example:

- ▶ Do you think differently about images you see all around you in daily life?
- ▶ Do/will you behave differently towards people like those in the image?

Will you do something as a result of completing this AIEVM? If so, what will you do?

For example, will you:

- ▶ show this image and others like it to someone?
- ▶ write to complain about the image or write to congratulate the people responsible for the image?
- ▶ produce other images on the same theme?

Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media

Standard version

Notes for facilitators

What is the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media* (AIEVM)?

The AIEVM is a companion tool to the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters* (AIE).

Whereas the original AIE was designed to assist learners to think critically about a specific intercultural encounter which they have had with a person from another cultural background, the AIEVM has instead been designed to assist learners to analyse and think critically about a specific image which they have encountered in the media (for example, on television, in a book, on the internet).

The image that is analysed using the AIEVM should show someone (or several people) from another culture (rather than, for example, an exotic landscape). The person shown in the image could be from a different country or they could be from another cultural background in the learner's own country. For example, they might be from another region in the same country, from a different religion, from a different language group, from a different ethnic group, or from another level, class or stratum of the same society.

The image can be one that has had either a positive or a negative impact on the learner. Positive images can be very powerful in providing role models and shaping behaviour. The analysis of negative images may assist the development of intercultural understanding.

In addition, the image may be either a fixed static image, such as a photograph or a drawing, or it could be a moving image that has been seen in a television programme, a film or on the internet. The image could be an unusual image or it could be a mundane one which is frequently encountered in everyday life (such as a picture of a person on a cereal box or a photograph on an advertising billboard). The crucial feature is that the image needs to be a visual image of someone from another culture (rather than, for example, an image described through written text or spoken language).

Because the image about which the learner is questioned is a media image, the encounter is a unidirectional encounter – the person or people shown in the image do not themselves encounter the viewer. There is also the involvement of a third party whose assumptions and intentions will affect the encounter – the producer (or maker) of that image. These differences require the AIEVM to be used for reflecting on media images (rather than the original AIE which was designed to support reflection on bidirectional interpersonal encounters in which no third party is necessarily involved). The AIEVM is to be completed in connection with just one specific image (each image needs a new copy of the AIEVM).

The AIEVM consists of a series of questions which learners answer about the specific image. The aim of the questions is to develop learners' skills in analysing images of people from other cultures. The ordering of these questions gives structure to the process of analysis so that it might become a context for the promotion of intercultural awareness and competence.

The image which some learners choose to discuss might be a relatively complex one which may lead to an awakening of their awareness of cultural difference. Some of the more complex questions in the AIEVM have been designed with this possibility in mind. However, other learners may choose a much more mundane image (such as a photograph of a person from another country taken by someone in their family). With this latter type of image in particular, some questions in the AIEVM may be redundant and may therefore be left unanswered. It is important to emphasise that learners only have to answer those questions which

are useful or relevant to the image which is being analysed. There is no obligation to answer them all. Therefore, if facilitators are acting as mentors helping learners to complete the AIEVM, they should not treat it as a questionnaire. Facilitators may also paraphrase/interpret/explain the questions to learners.

There are two related purposes for the AIEVM:

- ▶ self-evaluation: the AIEVM guides learners to evaluate their own responses to a specific image; if used repeatedly over time, they can look back and compare how they have evaluated a range of images and thus learn about themselves;
- ▶ teaching and learning: teachers can use the AIEVM as a means of stimulating reflection and analysis, and can thus facilitate learning in deliberate ways.

The two purposes are related but differ in emphasis and also in the ways the AIEVM is used.

The rationale behind the AIEVM

There are three main ideas behind the AIEVM:

- ▶ that the images which people see in visual media can influence their thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards people from other cultures, often without them being aware of the influence;
- ▶ that a tool for helping people to reflect upon the images which they have seen can enable them to become more aware of and sensitive to stereotyping and to the implicit messages about people from other cultures which are transmitted through visual media;
- ▶ that this tool can also help people to become more aware of the “hidden” media production processes which are responsible for the contents of the images which are encountered through visual media.

The construction of the AIEVM (the particular questions and the order in which they are asked) is derived from a model of intercultural competence. This model presents intercultural competence as consisting of a number of identifiable elements. The model also specifies some of the key media literacy competences which are required to understand and interpret media images. Users of the AIEVM are encouraged to think about their own intercultural and media literacy competences in relation to the elements specified by this model, but without any reference to the technical terms.

Teachers will be able to help learners if they know what lies behind the questions and what these theoretical elements are. These elements are summarised in the following section and, at the end of these notes, there is a copy of the AIEVM which shows how the various questions within it are linked to the theoretical elements.

The model of intercultural competence¹

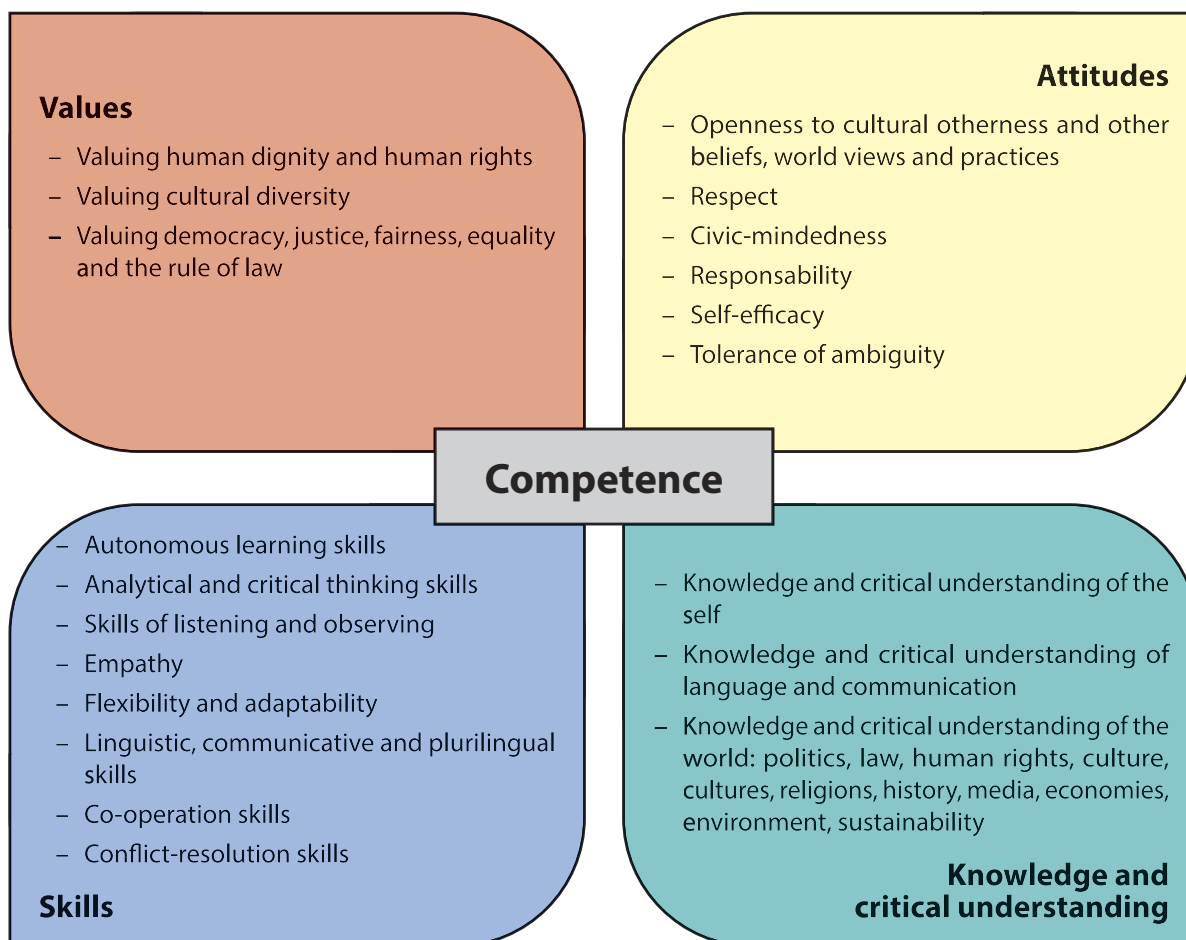
The Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) provides a comprehensive description of the competences that an individual needs in order to:

- ▶ promote and protect human rights;
- ▶ act as a responsible democratic citizen;
- ▶ comprehend and appreciate the perspectives and world views of those who have different cultural affiliations from themselves;
- ▶ engage in respectful intercultural dialogue.

The third and fourth purposes are, of course, directly relevant to participating successfully in intercultural encounters. The full set of competences required for all four purposes are shown in Figure 1.

1. Facilitators who are familiar with the first edition of the AIEVM should note that the terminology in this section has been amended.

Figure 1 – The full set of competences specified by the RFCDC



Fifteen of the 20 competences in Figure 1 are required to respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully to images of cultural others encountered in visual media. These are as follows.

Values

Valuing human dignity and human rights

This value is based on the belief that every human being is of equal worth, has equal dignity, is entitled to equal respect and is entitled to the same set of human rights.

Valuing cultural diversity

This value is based on the belief that other cultural affiliations and cultural diversity, as well as pluralism of perspectives and practices, ought to be positively regarded, appreciated and cherished.

Attitudes

Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices

This attitude involves sensitivity towards, curiosity about and willingness to engage with people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself or with beliefs, world views and practices which differ from one's own.

Respect

Respect means positive regard and esteem for someone or something based on the judgment that they have intrinsic importance, worth or value.

Civic-mindedness

This is an attitude towards a community to which one belongs that is larger than one's immediate circle of family and friends, involving a sense of belonging and solidarity, and a willingness to undertake action with the aim of making a contribution to the common good.

Tolerance of ambiguity

This is an attitude towards situations that are uncertain and subject to multiple conflicting interpretations, which involves evaluating such situations positively and dealing with them constructively.

Skills

Autonomous learning skills

These are the skills required to pursue, organise and evaluate one's own learning in accordance with one's own needs in a self-directed manner.

Analytical and critical thinking skills

These are the skills required to analyse and evaluate materials of any kind (e.g. texts, arguments, interpretations, issues, events, experiences) in a systematic and logical manner.

Skills of listening and observing

These are the skills required to notice and understand what is being said and how it is being said, and to notice and understand other people's non-verbal behaviour.

Empathy

These are the skills required to understand and relate to other people's thoughts, beliefs and feelings, and to see the world from other people's perspectives.

Flexibility and adaptability

These are the skills required to adjust one's thoughts, feelings or behaviours so that one can respond effectively and appropriately to new contexts and situations.

Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills

These are the skills required to communicate effectively and appropriately with people who speak the same or another language.

Knowledge and critical understanding

Knowledge and critical understanding of the self

This refers to knowledge and critical understanding of one's own thoughts, beliefs, feelings and motivations, and of one's own cultural affiliations and perspective on the world.

Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication

This is knowledge and critical understanding of the socially appropriate verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions that operate in the language(s) which one speaks, and of the effects that different communication styles can have on other people.

Knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture, cultures and media)

This is knowledge and critical understanding of how people's cultural affiliations shape their world views, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours, of how all cultural groups are internally heterogeneous and contain individuals who dispute traditional cultural beliefs and practices, and of the specific beliefs, practices and products that may be used by people who have particular cultural affiliations. It also includes knowledge and critical understanding of how visual images appearing in the mass media and digital media are selected and edited before they are presented for viewing, of how these visual images often transmit social, cultural and political messages about cultural groups, of the possible motives, intentions and purposes that the producers

of visual images may have, of the audiences to which visual images are addressed, of the expectations which audiences bring to visual images and of how narrative context can influence the interpretation of visual images by audiences.

Who can use the AIEVM?

The AIEVM can be used by a wide variety of learners in a number of different ways, with or without the help of a teacher. Here are some possibilities:

- ▶ A school as a whole decides to offer the AIEVM to all learners, and all teachers help and encourage the learners to use it, for example after excursions to museums or after the school holidays, in order to encourage their learners to become more aware and reflective about the images of people from other cultures which they are encountering in their everyday lives.
- ▶ All teachers use it with special attention to citizenship education, history, languages (L1, L2, L3, etc.) and literature, ethics, media and communication.
- ▶ One particular teacher – the learners' class teacher or tutor – helps and encourages a class to use the AIEVM.
- ▶ A university language centre decides to introduce the AIEVM as part of a dossier that learners keep of their language learning – using the present AIEVM as a companion tool to the original AIE – perhaps linked to the European Language Portfolio.
- ▶ Learners are left to use the AIEVM whenever they wish, perhaps with help and encouragement from their parents (who will need some explanation such as these "Notes for facilitators").
- ▶ A group of teachers (for example foreign language teachers, teachers of citizenship education, or history, geography and media education specialists) co-ordinate to use the AIEVM for the exploitation of cross-curricular themes.
- ▶ Teacher educators make use of the AIEVM in teacher training seminars or courses both for in-service teachers and for prospective teachers (for instance, in Masters courses) of citizenship education, history, languages and literature, ethics or mass and media communication.
- ▶ Youth workers and youth trainers make the AIEVM available to young people attending youth and leisure centres and to the young people participating in the non-formal educational activities which they are running.
- ▶ Trainers of social workers and youth workers use the AIEVM in their training courses and seminars to raise intercultural awareness and to enhance intercultural competence among their trainees.

How and when to use the AIEVM

There are two versions of the AIEVM:

- ▶ the "Version for younger learners" for learners who are aged up to approximately 10-12 years old, where the language has been simplified and some complex issues have been omitted;
- ▶ the "Standard version" for all other learners, but here too the learners are encouraged to make their own choice of which questions they should answer.

The decision about which version to offer to learners in the 10-12 age range is a matter for facilitators' judgment of their learners.

The AIEVM can be used not only formally in the classroom but also informally at a time and place of learners' own choice. It can be used as a teaching instrument working with groups or individuals, led by a teacher – the teaching and learning option.

Alternatively, it can be used privately by learners – the self-evaluation option – as a kind of diary, which may remain confidential or be shown only to people the learner chooses.

The use will depend on one or more factors:

- ▶ the intention of the teacher to introduce the AIEVM into a course of study;
- ▶ the wishes of the learner about confidentiality;
- ▶ the age of the learners and whether they need help with the AIEVM.

Here are some possible scenarios where the AIEVM might be used:

After a weekend

After a weekend, when learners may have been to the cinema or been watching a lot of television programmes, the AIEVM can be used with learners to encourage them to reflect upon a specific image which they have seen in a film or a television programme over the weekend. In the case of younger learners, they may be helped individually either by their teacher or by a classroom assistant, while in the case of older learners, they may fill in a copy of the AIEVM by themselves.

After a school lesson (e.g. in history, geography, religious studies or a foreign language) in which either pictures or a film about people from other cultures has been viewed

Teaching materials, such as textbooks and films which are used in history, geography, religious studies or foreign language classes, often contain images of people who live in other countries and/or images of people from other cultural backgrounds. Teachers can use the AIEVM to encourage learners to reflect on the nature of these images, in particular to identify and interpret any stereotypes which may have been present in these images, and to think about why the people in these images have been depicted in the way that they have. After each individual has completed the AIEVM, they may be willing to share their reflections with others in the group and, with the help of a teacher, think about the variety of images rather than over-generalise on the basis of the particular image which they have been thinking about.

At the time of a major news event

When a major news event takes place in another country, such as a national festival, a sporting competition, an earthquake or a riot, the AIEVM can be used as a tool for the analysis of learners' reactions to the way in which the people involved in the event have been depicted in television news broadcasts. This may be in a classroom and led by a teacher, or it may be a private use encouraged by a teacher, perhaps for homework, with the options of keeping learners' analyses confidential or showing them to others.

After a school visit to a museum or art gallery in which images of people from other cultures have been seen

If a school organises trips to museums or art galleries to see exhibitions in which there are images of people from other cultures, then the AIEVM can be used after the trip to encourage learners to reflect on the images which they have seen and to consider whether any stereotypes were present in these images, as well as why the painter, photographer or video artist chose to depict the people in the way that they did.

In the course of a class in media studies/education

The AIEVM can also be used in a school lesson in media studies/education. By reflecting on specific images of people from other cultures which learners themselves have encountered in the media, they can be encouraged to think further about stereotypes in the mass media and about the media production processes which are responsible for the contents of the images which they have seen.

But it can also be used in any other scenarios in which learners may have seen images of people from other cultures.

Adapting the AIEVM

The AIEVM can be used and adapted flexibly to the circumstances. As noted already, users do not need to answer all the questions – it is not a questionnaire. They may find that some questions do not apply to the image they have chosen. However, learners will benefit most if they work their way through to the end of the AIEVM as the final questions are important.

Teachers may wish to change the formulation of the questions under a heading, to make them more appropriate to an age group, to the previous experience of learners or to the particular type of image which is being considered.

The only things which should not be changed are: (i) the headings and introductions for each section; and (ii) the order in which the sections are presented. This is because these aspects of the AIEVM have been designed in a carefully structured sequence which progressively scaffolds learners' thinking about the image as they work their way through the AIEVM.

Training learners to use the AIEVM

Some learners may have difficulty in using the AIEVM for the first time because they have not paid sufficient attention to the media images which they have encountered in their everyday lives. For this reason, they may not remember enough details of any of these images to be able to answer the questions in the AIEVM. If this is the case, then facilitators could provide some initial training for learners.

Such training might consist, for example, in providing learners with a set of visual images of people from other cultures (photographs, drawings, etc.) and pointing out to them the types of features in these images to which they should be paying attention. The learners could then be asked to look out for and to attend to details of images over the next few days, after which they will then be given the AIEVM to complete.

Alternatively, learners could initially be given a set of visual images of people from other cultures and asked to select one image out of the set, and then invited to complete the AIEVM in relationship to that chosen image. Using the AIEVM in relationship to an image which is currently being viewed will require the facilitator to amend the tenses in the questions in the AIEVM (e.g. "Who was shown in the image? What was the first thing you noticed about them?" would need to be changed to "Who is shown in the image? What is the first thing you notice about them?"). This training exercise could be used for the first two or three times that an individual completes the AIEVM. This activity will train them to attend to and remember the relevant features of images in their everyday lives, so that they can subsequently use the AIEVM in relationship to these images.

Using the AIEVM across more than a single class session

Filling in the AIEVM may take longer than just one class session. It is possible to split the work and either complete the AIEVM during a second session or assign its later sections for homework. To ensure continuity and the progressive accumulation of responses, the second session or homework assignment should begin by reading through the answers already given.

It is important to do all the sections of the AIEVM and not to drop the later ones for lack of time because these later sections are significant for fostering the development of intercultural competence in learners.

How to record the responses to the AIEVM

There are two main approaches (but others can also be used):

- ▶ Learners write – by hand or computer – in their own words what they want to say (either completely privately or during/after discussion with a teacher or other mentor).
- ▶ Learners and mentors (a facilitator/teacher or another learner – who may be of the same age or older) discuss the image and make an audio-recording of the conversation, or make an audio-recording at home (perhaps with the help of parents).

Using the "Who I am" task

The AIEVM materials contain an additional task which may be given to learners for them to complete before they start to work on the AIEVM itself. This is the "Who I am" task, in which the learner is asked to reflect on how they define themselves in terms of their own identity. The footnote at the bottom of this initial page makes it clear that learners may use either large-scale social categories (such as age, gender, nationality, ethnic group, country, region, community, religion or language), interpersonal relationships (son/daughter, brother/sister, best friend) or membership of local groups (school student, member of a sports team, member of any other type of club) to define themselves.

The intention behind this initial use of the "Who I am" task is to encourage learners to focus their gaze on themselves and their own cultural positioning as a preliminary to completing the AIEVM.

However, this initial use of this task is optional and facilitators may decide not to use it at all. Alternatively, they may ask learners to complete it after the AIEVM has been completed. Or they could ask learners to complete

it at the outset but to return to it and possibly revise their answers after they have responded to the AIEVM. Another possibility is to use the “Who I am” task independently of the AIEVM itself. The decision is entirely for facilitators to make in the light of their own goals, the capacities and needs of their learners and the time that is available.

Ethics and responsibilities

The AIEVM encourages learners to think about their attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviour. In some circumstances (see possible scenarios in “How and when to use the AIEVM”), teachers may wish to use the questions to stimulate learners to think more deeply and critically about the media images which they have encountered. They may, in particular, wish to stimulate learners to become involved with others in making changes in their environment or the society in which they are living and, as a consequence, in learners making changes in themselves. For example, they may wish to encourage their learners to use either formal or informal channels to challenge the assumptions and viewpoints of producers of media images which contain stereotypes and distorted representations of other cultures. The questions towards the end of the AIEVM, which ask learners explicitly about the actions they might take as a consequence of completing the AIEVM, are particularly important in this regard. Teachers and other facilitators need to consider whether and how they should actively encourage learners to engage in some activity.

There are ethical issues here, about whether teachers should take this responsibility or not and, if they do, how much help and direction they should give.

The decision will be for each teacher/facilitator, or group of these, to make. Alternatively, a policy for the institution as a whole could be made. The decision will vary from teacher to teacher, from institution to institution and from one education system to another, depending on the traditions, and the responsibilities, which teachers and others usually take.

It is also important to recognise that the AIEVM is the property of the learner and can be a very private document. This creates some special conditions for teachers who use it in the following ways:

- ▶ when teachers act as “mentors”, reading and discussing the AIEVM with individual learners;
- ▶ when teachers encourage pairs of learners to act as “mentors” for each other;
- ▶ when the AIEVM is completed by a whole class of learners in connection with a specific event (such as a class excursion to a museum or after a film has been shown to the class).

The ethical point here is that in all of these, and many other, circumstances, it is important to assure confidentiality if learners wish. If teachers intend that learners should share their experiences and what they write in their AIEVM, then learners need to be told this in advance. Furthermore, if teachers or facilitators do act as “mentors”, they should be careful not to pry into private aspects of the learner’s family life.

Ethical issues may also arise when the AIEVM is used, if a learner expresses negativity or hostility towards the person or people who are depicted in the image. Extreme negativity will need to be followed up at a later time. However, milder negative reactions may eventually assist the student to learn, through the use of the AIEVM, to welcome intercultural differences (or at least to accept them).

There are also ethical issues entailed in the selection of images for analysis. Teachers and facilitators should be aware of the power of images to make a deep impression on learners’ minds. A very negative image of another culture might produce negative feelings about that culture in learners’ perceptions even after the issues of bias and falsification have been discussed. For this reason, if teachers and facilitators are providing the images for analysis by learners, they should avoid selecting images that shock, disgust or terrify. Exceptions to this rule are instances where learners have already been exposed to such extreme images. In such cases the AIEVM could be a useful tool for countering some of the damage that they might already have done to the learners’ perceptions.

Teachers and facilitators should also be careful about selecting images of minority groups represented in the class. They should avoid this if it is possible or, where it is unavoidable, they should make sure that positive images are used to counteract the impact of any difficult images. An example would be the case of a teacher who wants use the AIEVM to address a problem of Islamophobia in a school where there are also some Muslim students. Discussion with the parents and children from the minority group beforehand is strongly recommended.

Finally, it is possible that, on rare occasions, discussion of an image might prompt a learner to share a disturbing experience of their own. The teacher or facilitator should act according to the child protection procedures of their organisation should the learner reveal something that requires action.

A more detailed treatment of the ethical issues which could arise is beyond the scope of these notes. However, it may be useful for facilitators to be aware of the following resources for dealing with racism and intolerance towards others:

- ▶ Byram M., Porto M. and Wagner M. (2021), "Ethical issues in teaching for intercultural citizenship in world/foreign language education", *TESOL Quarterly* 55 (1), 308-321, doi: 10.1002/tesq.3008.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2004), *DOMINO: A manual to use peer group education as a means to fight racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance* (3rd edn), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/16807023ce>.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2008), *Living in democracy: EDC/HRE lesson plans for lower secondary level* (EDC/HRE Volume III), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016802f7304>.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2009), *COMPASITO – Manual on human rights education for children* (2nd edn), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: <http://www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/pdf/Compasito%20EN.pdf>.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2016), *All different, all equal – Education pack: Ideas, resources, methods and activities for informal intercultural education with young people and adults* (3rd edn), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680700aac>.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2020), *COMPASS – Manual for human rights education with young people* (2nd edn), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/compass-eng-rev-2020-web/1680a08e40>.

Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media (including theoretical indicators but excluding the “Who I am” task)

The theoretical indicators are the competences which may be required for answering the questions and which may be promoted by answering them.

1. The image

Give the image a title which says something about it.

What sort of image have you chosen? For example, is it a photograph or poster, or in a music video, a television programme or a film that you watched, or is it in a history, geography, religious studies or language textbook that you use at school?

Competences: analytical and critical thinking skills; knowledge and critical understanding of the self; openness

Why have you chosen this image?

Is it because ... (please tick one or more of the following reasons, or add your own reason if it is different from the ones listed below):

- ▶ it made me think about something I had not thought about before?
- ▶ it was the first time I had seen this kind of image?
- ▶ it was the most recent image of this kind that I have seen?

Add any other reactions in your own words and say what you think caused your reaction.

2. The contents of the image

Competences: skills of listening and observing; respect; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture and cultures)

Who is shown in the image and what are they doing?

What was the first thing you noticed about them?

Are they male/female, older/younger than you or do they belong to a different country, language group, religion or region from yourself? Is there any other thing which you think is important about them?

3. Your feelings

Competences: knowledge and critical understanding of the self; analytical and critical thinking skills; empathy; respect; openness

How did it make you feel when you saw the image?

What do you think caused these feelings?

If you were the person in this image, would you like people to feel this way about you?

Please give your reasons.

Would you like to have an image made of you which looked like this? Please give your reasons.

Would you like to meet the person/people shown in the image in real life? Please give your reasons.

4. The feelings of other people

Competences: empathy; respect

Do you think the person/people shown in the image would be pleased with this image of themselves? Please give your reasons.

Do you think they would have preferred to be shown differently? Please explain your answer.

How do you think other people from the same group or culture as them would feel about the image?

5. Thinking about communication

Competences: knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication; linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture and cultures)

In the image, do the person/people shown use language or gestures to communicate with people in the image or viewers? If so, what language or gestures do they use?

If you were to actually meet this person/these people shown in the image, what would you do or say?

Do you have any knowledge of their language and/or culture which could help you to understand and communicate with them? If so, what sort of things do you know?

What do you think you could do to make it easier for you to understand each other?

6. Same and different

Competences: analytical and critical thinking skills; empathy; tolerance of ambiguity

Thinking about the person/people in the image and yourself, what do you think are the main similarities between them and yourself?

What do you think are the main differences between them and yourself?

Are they like anyone that you know in your own life? If so, in what ways do they resemble them (for example, in the way they look, the way they behave, the way they think)?

When looking at an image, people often compare things in other groups or cultures with similar things in their own groups or cultures. Did you do this?

Similarities I noticed ...

Differences I noticed ...

Now you have answered the questions in this section, you could go back to the answers which you gave in the "Who I am" section of this AIEVM and see if you want to make any changes.

7. Thinking further about the image

Competences: skills of listening and observing; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture and cultures); analytical and critical thinking skills; respect; valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing cultural diversity

Is there anything about the person/people shown in the image that is exaggerated or emphasised? If so, what?

Is there anything about the person/people that could have been shown but that is missing from the image? If so, what?

Does the image present the person/people in a positive, negative or neutral way? Give reasons for your answer.

Do you think that the image is a stereotype of the person/people shown in the image? If so, why do you think it is a stereotype?

Do you think this image is fair or unfair as a way of showing this person's/these people's group or culture? Give reasons for your answer.

8. Thinking about the person or people who made the image

Competences: knowledge and critical understanding of the world (media); empathy

Who do you think made the image?

What do you think was their reason for making it (for example, to inform, to entertain, to advertise)?

If they used stereotypes, do you think they used them deliberately or not? Give reasons for your answer.

Who do you think was the main audience the image was intended for?

Why do you think this audience watches or looks at this kind of image (for example, for entertainment, for factual information, to learn how to do something)?

What attitude do you think this audience usually adopts towards this kind of image? For example, do you think that they always believe in this kind of image/are sceptical about it/enjoy it/learn from it/allow their behaviour to be affected by it?

Do you think this image will make viewers think differently about the people from the group or culture shown? Give reasons for your answer.

9. Finding out more

Competences: autonomous learning skills

Did you try to find out more about the image and how or why it was made? If so, how did you do it and what information sources did you use?

10. Thinking back and looking forward

Competences: valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing cultural diversity; analytical and critical thinking skills

Having answered the previous questions and thought about the image:

There were some things which I approve of and these are my reasons ...

There were some things which I disapprove of and these are my reasons ...

Competences: empathy; tolerance of ambiguity

Try to imagine that you are telling someone you know well about the image. Do you think they would have the same opinions as you? Would they approve and disapprove of the same things for the same reasons?

Why might people you know well and who belong to the same group/culture as you have the same reactions as you?

Competences: knowledge and critical understanding of the self; flexibility and adaptability

Has seeing the image changed your thinking in any way? How?

Competences: flexibility and adaptability; civic-mindedness

Did you or will you do something as a result of seeing this image? If so, what?

For example, did/will you:

- ▶ talk about the effects of images in the media with someone?
- ▶ talk to people like those in the image about how they feel when they see such images?
- ▶ contact the people who made the image to tell them about your own thoughts and feelings about the image?

Has doing this AIEVM changed you in any way? How?

For example:

- ▶ Do you think differently about images you see all around you in daily life?
- ▶ Do/will you behave differently towards people like those in the image?

Will you do something as a result of completing this AIEVM? If so, what will you do?

For example, will you:

- ▶ show this image and others like it to someone?
- ▶ write to complain about the image or write to congratulate the people responsible for the image?
- ▶ produce other images on the same theme?

Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media

Version for younger learners

Part 1

1. What I notice

Competences: skills of listening and observing; respect

Who do you see (or who is the main person you see) in this image?

What's the first thing you notice about him/her?

What else do you notice about him/her?

What is he/she doing?

Competences: skills of listening and observing; empathy

Are there any other clues in the picture that tell you something about that person and who he/she is?

Is there anything in the picture that tells you what that person is feeling?

If yes: Why do you think he/she is feeling like that?

What do you think has happened just before this picture was taken?

What do you think might happen just after this picture was taken?

2. How I feel

Competences: openness; respect; knowledge and critical understanding of the self; analytical and critical thinking skills

Why did you choose this image?

Do you like looking at this image? Why? Why not?

How does it make you feel when you look at it?

Prompt if necessary: Does it make you feel happy, angry, excited, sad, scared, amused?

Why do you think this image makes you feel like that?

Would you like to meet this person in real life? Why? Why not?

3. What if we met?

Competences: empathy; knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication; linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills

If you met this person what do you think you would do?

What do you think the person might say to you?

What might you say to him/her?

Do you think it would be easy for you to understand each other? Why? Why not?

What could you do to make it easier for the person to understand you?

4. What's the same and what's different?

Competences: analytical and critical thinking skills; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture and cultures); knowledge and critical understanding of self; tolerance of ambiguity

Do you think this person is like you in any way?

If yes: In what ways is this person like you?

Do you think the person is different from you in any way?

If yes: In what ways is this person different from you?

Does this person seem like anyone else you have seen in real life?

If yes: Who? In what ways are they like them?

Prompt if necessary: Is it the way they dress, the way they behave, the way they look?

Does this person seem like anyone else you have seen, in other pictures?

Prompt if necessary: Was it in a book, on television?

Part 2

5. What the image-maker wants to tell us

Competences: knowledge and critical understanding of the world (media)

Someone else has made the image that you are looking at (took the photograph or did the art work) and they have a reason for making the image – they want it to be used in some way. Perhaps they want the image to tell us something about that person or about people like him/her. Perhaps they want us to do something as a result of looking at the image.

What do you think the image is meant to be used for?

Prompt if necessary: Is it telling people what is happening, advertising a holiday, asking people to give money, making people laugh, making people think?

What does the maker of this image (the photographer, the artist, the performer) want to tell us about the person in the picture? Why do you think this?

Does the image-maker want to tell us something about people who are like the person in the image or who belong to the same group?

If yes: Which group?

Prompt if necessary: Are the people from the same country/same place/same religion?

What does the image-maker want to tell us about this group of people?

Does the image-maker want us to do anything as result of seeing the image?

If yes: What does the image-maker want us to do?

Do you think this picture will make people think differently in any way?

If yes: In what way?

Does the picture make you think differently?

If yes: In what way?

6. Is it real?

Competences: analytical and critical thinking skills; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture and cultures); respect; valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing cultural diversity

[For an image of a real person] Do you think the picture shows the person as he/she really is?

If not: How is the picture different from real life?

Do you think the picture exaggerates anything about this person or about the situation?
Prompt if necessary: Is it about the way the person looks, or the way the person behaves?

Do you think it is OK to exaggerate these things about this person? Why do you think this? Can you give me your reasons?

[For an image of an imaginary person] Does the person in the image seem like a real-life person?
If not: How does the person seem different from a real-life person?

Do you think the picture exaggerates anything about this person?

Do you think it is OK to exaggerate these things about this person? Why do you think this? Can you give me your reasons?

Do you think other people who belong to the same country/place/group/religion as the person in the picture look and behave in the same way as the person in the image?

What might be the same?

What might be the differences?

7. How others might feel about the image

Competences: empathy; respect; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture and cultures); analytical and critical thinking skills; tolerance of ambiguity

Would you like to have a picture of you looking like this? Why? Why not?

Do you think the person in the picture would be pleased with this picture of himself/herself? Why? Why not?
If not: What kind of picture do you think he/she would prefer to see of himself/herself?

Do you think other people from the same country/same place/same group/same religion, etc. as the person in the picture would like the picture? Why? Why not?

If not: What kind of picture might they prefer to see of someone from their group?

8. Thinking a bit more

Competences: autonomous learning skills

Is there anything else you would like to know about the person in this picture or about any group the person belongs to?

If yes: How might you find out those things?

Competences: knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture, cultures and media); knowledge and critical understanding of the self

If you had to tell a friend about this picture and what you thought about it, what would you say?

What do you think you have learnt or discovered from the picture and talking about it?

Competences: flexibility and adaptability; civic-mindedness

Do you think that doing this exercise has changed the way you look at pictures of other people?

If yes: In what way?

After doing this exercise will you look for different things in pictures you see? If so, what things?

Will it make you ask yourself different questions about what you see? If so, what questions?

Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media

Version for younger learners Notes for facilitators

What is the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media* (AIEVM)?

The AIEVM is a companion tool to the *Autobiography of intercultural encounters* (AIE). Whereas the original AIE was designed to assist learners to think critically about a specific intercultural encounter which they have had with a person from another cultural background, the AIEVM has instead been designed to assist learners to analyse and think critically about a specific image which they have encountered in the media (for example, on television, in a book, on the internet).

The image that is analysed using the AIEVM should show someone (or several people) from another culture (rather than, for example, an exotic landscape). The person shown in the image could be from a different country or they could be from another cultural background in the learner's own country. For example, they might be from another region in the same country, from a different religion, from a different language group, from a different ethnic group, or from another level, class or stratum of the same society.

The image can be one that has had either a positive or a negative impact on the learner. Positive images can be very powerful in providing role models and shaping behaviour. The analysis of negative images may assist the development of intercultural understanding.

In addition, the image may be either a fixed static image, such as a photograph or a drawing, or it could be a moving image that has been seen in a television programme, a film or on the internet. The image could be an unusual image or it could be a mundane one which is frequently encountered in everyday life (such as a picture of a person on a cereal box or a photograph on an advertising billboard). The crucial feature is that the image needs to be a visual image of someone from another culture (rather than, for example, an image described through written text or spoken language).

Because the image about which the learner is questioned is a media image, the encounter is a unidirectional encounter – the person or people shown in the image do not themselves encounter the viewer. There is also the involvement of a third party whose assumptions and intentions will affect the encounter: the producer (or maker) of that image. These differences require the AIEVM to be used for reflecting on media images (rather than the original AIE which was designed to support reflection on bidirectional interpersonal encounters in which no third party is necessarily involved).

The AIEVM is to be completed in connection with just one specific image (each image needs a new copy of the AIEVM). The AIEVM consists of a series of questions which learners answer about the specific image. The aim of the questions is to develop learners' skills in analysing images of people from other cultures. The ordering of these questions gives structure to the process of analysis so that it might become a context for the promotion of intercultural awareness and competence.

The image which some learners choose to discuss might be a relatively complex one which may lead to an awakening of their awareness of cultural difference. Some of the more complex questions in the AIEVM have been designed with this possibility in mind. However, other learners may choose a much more mundane image (such as a photograph of a person from another country taken by someone in their family). With this latter type of image in particular, some questions in the AIEVM may be redundant and may therefore be left unanswered.

It is important to emphasise that learners only have to answer those questions which are useful or relevant to the image which is being analysed. There is no obligation to answer them all. Therefore, if facilitators are acting as mentors helping learners to respond to the AIEVM, they should not treat it as a questionnaire. Facilitators may also paraphrase/interpret/explain the questions to learners.

There are two related purposes for the AIEVM:

- ▶ self-evaluation: the AIEVM guides learners to evaluate their own responses to a specific image; if used repeatedly over time, they can look back and compare how they have evaluated a range of images and thus learn about themselves;
- ▶ teaching and learning: teachers can use the AIEVM as a means of stimulating reflection and analysis, and can thus facilitate learning in deliberate ways.

The two purposes are related but differ in emphasis and also in the ways the AIEVM is used.

The rationale behind the AIEVM

There are three main ideas behind the AIEVM:

- ▶ that the images which people see in visual media can influence their thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards people from other cultures, often without them being aware of the influence;
- ▶ that a tool for helping people to reflect upon the images which they have seen can enable them to become more aware of and sensitive to stereotyping and to the implicit messages about people from other cultures which are transmitted through visual media;
- ▶ that this tool can also help people to become more aware of the “hidden” media production processes which are responsible for the contents of the images which are encountered through visual media.

The construction of the AIEVM (the particular questions and the order in which they are asked) is derived from a model of intercultural competence. This model presents intercultural competence as consisting of a number of identifiable elements. The model also specifies some of the key media literacy competences which are required to understand and interpret media images. Users of the AIEVM are encouraged to think about their own intercultural and media literacy competences in relation to the elements specified by this model, but without any reference to the technical terms.

Teachers will be able to help learners if they know what lies behind the questions and what these theoretical elements are. These elements are summarised in the following section and, at the end of these notes, there is a copy of the AIEVM which shows how the various questions within it are linked to the theoretical elements.

The model of intercultural competence²

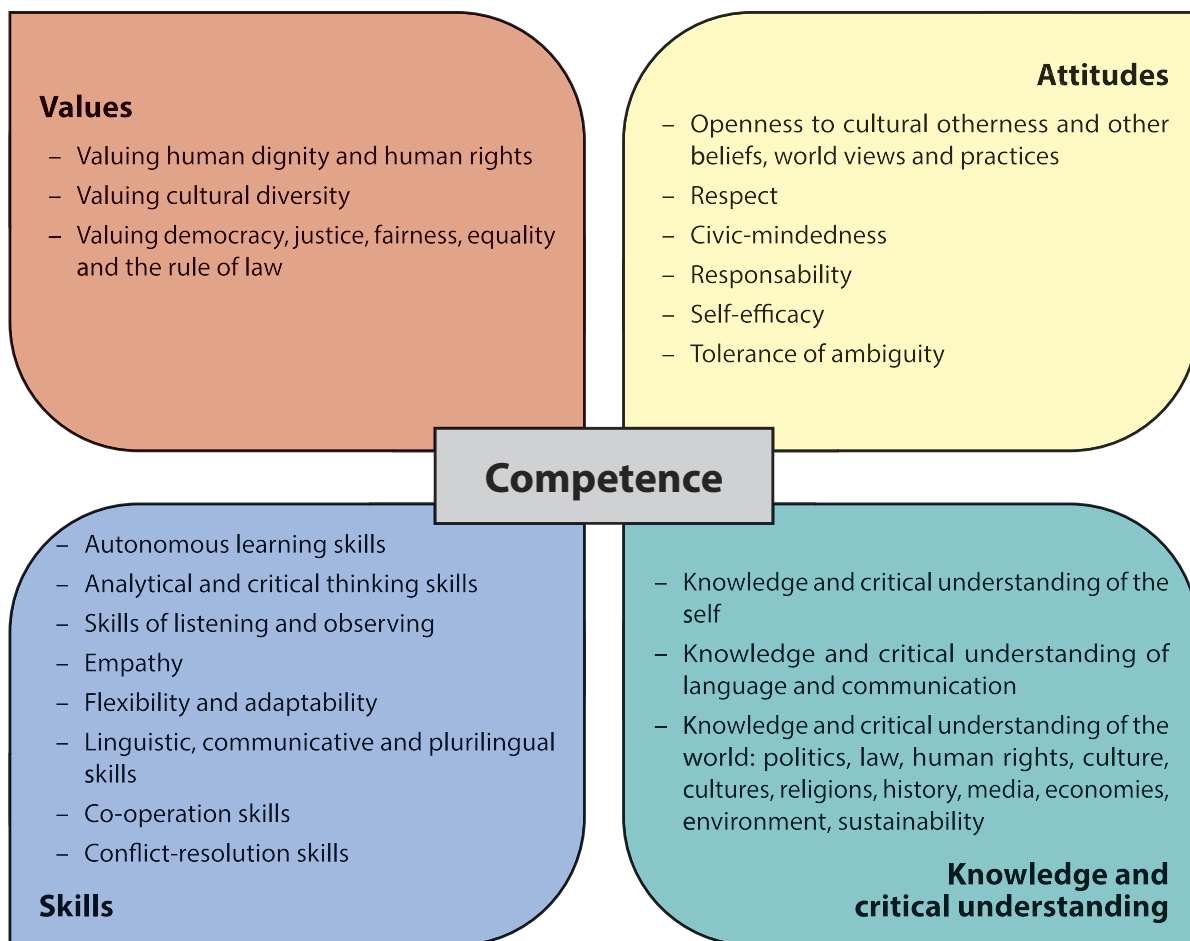
The Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) provides a comprehensive description of the competences that an individual needs in order to:

- ▶ promote and protect human rights;
- ▶ act as a responsible democratic citizen;
- ▶ comprehend and appreciate the perspectives and world views of those who have different cultural affiliations from themselves;
- ▶ engage in respectful intercultural dialogue.

The third and fourth purposes are, of course, directly relevant to participating successfully in intercultural encounters. The full set of competences required for all four purposes are shown in Figure 1.

2. Facilitators who are familiar with the first edition of the AIEVM should note that the terminology in this section has been amended.

Figure 1 – The full set of competences specified by the RFCDC



Fifteen of the 20 competences in Figure 1 are required to respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully to images of cultural others encountered in visual media. These are as follows.

Values

Valuing human dignity and human rights

This value is based on the belief that every human being is of equal worth, has equal dignity, is entitled to equal respect and is entitled to the same set of human rights.

Valuing cultural diversity

This value is based on the belief that other cultural affiliations and cultural diversity, as well as pluralism of perspectives and practices, ought to be positively regarded, appreciated and cherished.

Attitudes

Openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices

This attitude involves sensitivity towards, curiosity about and willingness to engage with people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself or with beliefs, world views and practices which differ from one's own.

Respect

Respect means positive regard and esteem for someone or something based on the judgment that they have intrinsic importance, worth or value.

Civic-mindedness

This is an attitude towards a community to which one belongs that is larger than one's immediate circle of family and friends, involving a sense of belonging and solidarity, and a willingness to undertake action with the aim of making a contribution to the common good.

Tolerance of ambiguity

This is an attitude towards situations that are uncertain and subject to multiple conflicting interpretations, which involves evaluating such situations positively and dealing with them constructively.

Skills

Autonomous learning skills

These are the skills required to pursue, organise and evaluate one's own learning in accordance with one's own needs in a self-directed manner.

Analytical and critical thinking skills

These are the skills required to analyse and evaluate materials of any kind (e.g. texts, arguments, interpretations, issues, events, experiences) in a systematic and logical manner.

Skills of listening and observing

These are the skills required to notice and understand what is being said and how it is being said, and to notice and understand other people's non-verbal behaviour.

Empathy

These are the skills required to understand and relate to other people's thoughts, beliefs and feelings, and to see the world from other people's perspectives.

Flexibility and adaptability

These are the skills required to adjust one's thoughts, feelings or behaviours so that one can respond effectively and appropriately to new contexts and situations.

Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills

These are the skills required to communicate effectively and appropriately with people who speak the same or another language.

Knowledge and critical understanding

Knowledge and critical understanding of the self

This refers to knowledge and critical understanding of one's own thoughts, beliefs, feelings and motivations, and of one's own cultural affiliations and perspective on the world.

Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication

This is knowledge and critical understanding of the socially appropriate verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions that operate in the language(s) which one speaks, and of the effects that different communication styles can have on other people.

Knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture, cultures and media)

This is knowledge and critical understanding of how people's cultural affiliations shape their world views, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours, of how all cultural groups are internally heterogeneous and contain individuals who dispute traditional cultural beliefs and practices, and of the specific beliefs, practices and products that may be used by people who have particular cultural affiliations. It also includes knowledge and critical understanding of how visual images appearing in the mass media and digital media are selected and edited before they are presented for viewing, of how these visual images often transmit social, cultural and political messages about cultural groups, of the possible motives, intentions and purposes that the producers of visual images may have, of

the audiences to which visual images are addressed, of the expectations which audiences bring to visual images and of how narrative context can influence the interpretation of visual images by audiences.

Who can use the AIEVM?

The AIEVM can be used by a wide variety of learners in a number of different ways. Here are some possibilities:

- ▶ A school as a whole decides to offer the AIEVM to all learners and all teachers help and encourage the learners to use it, for example after excursions to museums or after the school holidays, in order to encourage their learners to become more aware and reflective about the images of people from other cultures which they are encountering in their everyday lives.
- ▶ One particular teacher – the learners’ class teacher or tutor – helps and encourages a class to use the AIEVM.
- ▶ Learners are left to use the AIEVM whenever they wish, perhaps with help and encouragement from their parents (who will need some explanation such as these “Notes for facilitators”).

How and when to use the AIEVM

There are two versions of the AIEVM:

- ▶ the “Version for younger learners” for learners who are aged up to approximately 10-12 years old, where the language has been simplified and some complex issues have been omitted;
- ▶ the “Standard version” for all others but, here too, the learners are encouraged to make their own choice of which questions they should answer.

Whether or not the “Version for younger learners” is used will depend on:

- ▶ the age of the learners and whether they need an adult’s help to understand the phrasing and concepts of the AIEVM;
- ▶ the literacy level of the learners and whether they are able to write their answers for themselves or whether it is more appropriate for them to give their answers in an interview with an adult, either one-to-one or in groups.

The decision about which version to offer to learners in the 10-12 age range is a matter for facilitators’ judgment of their learners.

The “Version for younger learners” is designed so that it can be completed orally by individual children in conversation with the teacher or other classroom facilitator. It is a tool that can also be used by parents with their children at home. The tool includes questions and prompts to guide young learners in their analysis of the image, in their reflections on its message and their response. Teachers or facilitators may wish to introduce young learners to some of the relevant concepts and skills before they embark on the AIEVM itself. Knowledge of different forms of media, including news media, advertising and entertainment, would be a valuable foundation for the AIEVM. Some suggestions for preparatory activities are set out below. Teachers may wish to use one or more of these or to devise their own introductory exercises.

Possible preparatory activities for younger learners

Exploring differences between “image” and reality

The teacher may wish to explore the concept of “image” with learners before they use the AIEVM itself. One way of doing this would be to use a photograph or picture of the teacher or of someone well known to children in the class. The children may then discuss the difference between the actual person they know and the image of that person, to consider what message the image conveys about that person (paying attention to dress, surroundings, facial expression, etc.). For example, a wedding photograph might suggest romance or happiness; a graduation photograph might give the impression that someone is clever; a holiday photograph might show someone who is relaxed and fun-loving.

Awareness of images around us

The teacher could present photographs of several images showing people who are culturally different from the children in the class. The photographs could show images of roadside posters, pictures on packaging of

products in the food cupboards at home, photographs of the front pages of a newspaper or magazine, or photographs of images on the television or computer screen. The photographs need to show not just the images themselves but where the images have been found, in order to emphasise the learning point that there are images of other people all around us that express different ideas about them.

Familiarisation with different forms of media

In preparation for the AIEVM, teachers may wish to familiarise their pupils with a variety of media (e.g. news media, advertising, entertainment) and their purposes. They could use a categorisation exercise to place examples of different media in the correct groupings and discuss their choices.

Awareness of the use of images by different forms of media

Young learners could be introduced to images of people across different forms of media. If possible, the images should show people from similar cultural groups but groups that are different in some way from the young learners themselves. For example, within Europe, images from India could be used to contrast the exoticism in tourist brochures, the modern glitz of Bollywood on a fan website, material from a charity combating poverty in India and a picture from a school textbook showing everyday life in India. The young learners would be encouraged to note the differences between the images and the varying impressions they give of people from a particular cultural grouping. The teacher could then relate the differences among these images to the different purposes of the different media involved. The young learners could then view a similar variety of images of their own region and community and discuss how they feel about them.

Scaffolding the skills

The teacher could introduce the class (or group) of young learners to an image of someone who is culturally different from them in some way and use a selection of the AIEVM questions to scaffold the young learners' analysis of the image and reflection on their personal response to it.

After such preparatory activities the young learners can then be introduced to the full AIEVM.

The selection of images

To support young learners in the early stages of the development of intercultural skills and competences, the teacher or facilitator could offer a selection of three to six suitable images from which each child selects one as the focus of the questions. These images could include photographs or artists' representations, all of which the child will need to have available to them for repeated viewing and reference during the course of the discussion. The images may be linked to particular curriculum areas or school activities, for example a selection of pictures related to a geography or religious education topic, or paintings viewed during a class visit to an art gallery.

The images will need to be representations of a real person or a representative of a real group of people (e.g. an ethnic, national, religious, age, gender or social class group) and to be presented to the children within a context, for example in a newspaper or magazine, in a geography or religious education textbook, in a travel brochure, an advert, or a charity fund-raising appeal. The image of a character in a story may be used provided they are offered as the representative of a cultural group.

The questions

The "Version for younger learners" is structured in two parts:

- ▶ Questions in the first part encourage younger learners to explore in more detail the image before them and to relate to the person they encounter in that image.
- ▶ Questions in the second part encourage them to consider the significance and implications of the mediated nature of that image.

Adapting the AIEVM

The AIEVM can be used and adapted flexibly to the circumstances. Some of the questions in the AIEVM may be difficult for young children to answer. The challenge presented by these questions is intended to encourage the development of the child's thinking. Teachers may use their own professional judgment to change the formulation of the questions under a heading to make them more appropriate to an age group, to the previous experience of learners or to the particular type of image which is being considered. As noted already, users do not need to answer all the questions; it is not a questionnaire. Some questions may not apply to the image which has been chosen.

The only things which should not be changed are: (i) the headings and introductions for each section; and (ii) the order in which the sections are presented. This is because these aspects of the AIEVM have been designed in a carefully structured sequence which progressively scaffolds learners' thinking about the image as they work their way through the AIEVM.

Learners will benefit most if they work their way through to the end of the AIEVM. Later sections should not be dropped for lack of time, because these sections are significant for fostering the development of intercultural competence in learners.

Interviewing

In the case of younger learners, an adult (either a teacher or a classroom assistant) can use the younger learners' version of the AIEVM to converse with the child individually on a one-to-one basis. The person talking with the child could take notes on what the child says during the conversation or could audio-record the conversation for transcription later.

When the AIEVM is used in this way, it is recommended that:

- ▶ the conversation should not be hurried;
- ▶ long pauses in the child's reporting should be tolerated to give the child time to think about the encounter which is being described;
- ▶ questions should be omitted if the information has already been given or if the question is irrelevant to the encounter;
- ▶ questions may be paraphrased as appropriate for the encounter;
- ▶ the facilitator should follow up anything of interest which the child reports.

Other ways of using the "Version for younger learners"

In addition to a one-to-one conversation, the "Version for younger learners" can be used in a variety of other ways. For example:

- ▶ children could discuss their answers to the various questions with each other in pairs;
- ▶ the AIEVM could be used collectively with the whole class in a group discussion;
- ▶ older children who are able to read the questions themselves and are able to write down their answers could complete the AIEVM in a written format.

Teachers should feel free to use the AIEVM in whichever way they feel works best.

Situations in which the AIEVM might be used

The AIEVM can be used not only formally in the classroom but also informally at a time and place of learners' own choice. It can be used as a teaching instrument working with groups or individuals, led by a teacher – the teaching and learning option. Alternatively, it can be used privately by learners – the self-evaluation option – as a kind of diary, which may remain confidential or shown only to people the learner chooses.

The use will depend on one or more factors:

- ▶ the intention of the teacher to introduce the AIEVM into a course of study;
- ▶ the wishes of the learner about confidentiality;
- ▶ the age of the learner and whether they need help with the AIEVM.

Here are some possible scenarios where the AIEVM might be used:

After a weekend

After a weekend, when learners may have been to the cinema or been watching a lot of television programmes, the AIEVM can be used with learners to encourage them to reflect upon a specific image which they have seen in a film or a television programme over the weekend.

After a school lesson in which either pictures or a film about people from other cultures has been viewed

Teaching materials such as textbooks and films often contain images of people who live in other countries and/or images of people from other cultural backgrounds. Teachers can use the AIEVM to encourage learners to reflect on the nature of these images, in particular to identify and interpret any stereotypes which may have been present in these images, and to think about why the people in these images have been depicted in the way that they have. After each individual has responded to the AIEVM, they may be willing to share their reflections with others in the group and, with the help of a teacher, think about the variety of images rather than over-generalise on the basis of the particular image which they have been thinking about.

At the time of a major news event

When a major news event takes place in another country, such as a national festival, a sporting competition, an earthquake or a riot, the AIEVM can be used as a tool for the analysis of learners' reactions to the way in which the people involved in the event have been depicted in television news broadcasts. This may be in a classroom and led by a teacher or it may be a private use encouraged by a teacher, perhaps for homework, with the options of keeping learners' analyses confidential or discussing them with others.

After a school visit to a museum or art gallery in which images of people from other cultures have been seen

If a school organises trips to museums or art galleries to see exhibitions in which there are images of people from other cultures, then the AIEVM can be used after the trip, to encourage learners to reflect on the images which they have seen, to consider whether any stereotypes were present in these images, and why the painter, photographer or video artist chose to depict the people in the way that they did.

But it can also be used in any other scenarios in which learners may have seen images of people from other cultures.

Ethics and responsibilities

The AIEVM encourages learners to think about their attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviour. In some circumstances (see possible scenarios in the preceding section), teachers may wish to use the questions to stimulate learners to think more deeply and critically about the media images which they have encountered. They may, in particular, wish to stimulate learners to become involved with others in making changes in their environment or the society in which they are living – and, as a consequence, in learners making changes in themselves. For example, they may wish to encourage their learners to use either formal or informal channels to challenge the assumptions and viewpoints of producers of media images which contain stereotypes and distorted representations of other cultures. Teachers and other facilitators need to consider whether and how they should actively encourage learners to engage in some activity.

There are ethical issues here, about whether teachers should take this responsibility or not and, if they do, how much help and direction they should give.

The decision will be for each teacher/facilitator, or group of these, to make. Alternatively, a policy for the institution as a whole could be made. The decision will vary from teacher to teacher, from institution to institution and from one education system to another, depending on the traditions, and the responsibilities, which teachers and others usually take.

It is also important to recognise that the AIEVM is the property of the learner and can be a very private document. This creates some special conditions for teachers who use it in the following ways:

- ▶ when teachers act as “mentors”, reading and discussing the AIEVM with individual learners;
- ▶ when teachers encourage pairs of learners to act as “mentors” for each other;
- ▶ when the AIEVM is completed by a whole class of learners in connection with a specific event (such as a class excursion to a museum or after a film has been shown to the class).

The ethical point here is that in all of these, and many other, circumstances, it is important to assure confidentiality if learners wish. If teachers intend that learners should share their experiences and how they have responded to the AIEVM, then learners need to be told this in advance. Furthermore, if teachers or facilitators do act as “mentors”, they should be careful not to pry into private aspects of the learner’s family life.

Ethical issues may also arise when the AIEVM is used if a learner expresses negativity or hostility towards the person or people who are depicted in the image. Extreme negativity will need to be followed up at a later time. However, milder negative reactions may eventually assist the student to learn through the use of the AIEVM to welcome intercultural differences (or at least to accept them).

There are also ethical issues entailed in the selection of images for analysis. Teachers and facilitators should be aware of the power of images to make a deep impression on learners’ minds. A very negative image of another culture might produce negative feelings about that culture in learners’ perceptions even after the issues of bias and falsification have been discussed. For this reason, if teachers and facilitators are providing the images for analysis by learners, they should avoid selecting images that shock, disgust or terrify. Exceptions to this rule are instances where learners have already been exposed to such extreme images. In such cases the AIEVM could be a useful tool for countering some of the damage that they might already have done to the learners’ perceptions.

Teachers and facilitators should also be careful about selecting images of minority groups represented in the class. They should avoid this if it is possible or, where it is unavoidable, they should make sure that positive images are used to counteract the impact of any difficult images. An example would be the case of a teacher who wants to use the AIEVM to address a problem of Islamophobia in a school where there are also some Muslim students. Discussion with the parents and children from the minority group beforehand is strongly recommended.

Finally, it is possible that, on rare occasions, discussion of an image might prompt a learner to share a disturbing experience of their own. The teacher or facilitator should act according to the child protection procedures of their organisation should the learner reveal something that requires action.

A more detailed treatment of the ethical issues which could arise is beyond the scope of these notes. However, it may be useful for facilitators to be aware of the following resources for dealing with racism and intolerance towards others:

- ▶ Byram M., Porto M. and Wagner M. (2021), “Ethical issues in teaching for intercultural citizenship in world/foreign language education”, *TESOL Quarterly* 55 (1), 308-321, doi: 10.1002/tesq.3008.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2004), *DOMINO – A manual to use peer group education as a means to fight racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance* (3rd edn), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/16807023ce>.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2009), *COMPASITO – Manual on human rights education for children* (2nd edn), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: <http://www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/pdf/Compasito%20EN.pdf>.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2010), *Growing up in democracy – Lesson plans for primary level on democratic citizenship and human rights* (EDC/HRE Volume II), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2016), *All different, all equal – Education pack: Ideas, resources, methods and activities for informal intercultural education with young people and adults* (3rd edn), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680700aac>.
- ▶ Council of Europe (2020), *COMPASS – Manual for human rights education with young people* (2nd edn), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/compass-eng-rev-2020-web/1680a08e40>.

Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media

Version for younger learners (including theoretical indicators)

The theoretical indicators are the competences which may be required for answering the questions and which may be promoted by answering them.

Part 1

1. What I notice

Competences: skills of listening and observing; respect

Who do you see (or who is the main person you see) in this image?

What's the first thing you notice about him/her?

What else do you notice about him/her?

What is he/she doing?

Competences: skills of listening and observing; empathy

Are there any other clues in the picture that tell you something about that person and who he/she is?

Is there anything in the picture that tells you what that person is feeling?

If yes: Why do you think he/she is feeling like that?

What do you think has happened just before this picture was taken?

What do you think might happen just after this picture was taken?

2. How I feel

Competences: openness; respect; knowledge and critical understanding of the self; analytical and critical thinking skills

Why did you choose this image?

Do you like looking at this image? Why? Why not?

How does it make you feel when you look at it?

Prompt if necessary: Does it make you feel happy, angry, excited, sad, scared, amused?

Why do you think this image makes you feel like that?

Would you like to meet this person in real life? Why? Why not?

3. What if we met?

Competences: empathy; knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication; linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills

If you met this person what do you think you would do?

What do you think the person might say to you?

What might you say to him/her?

Do you think it would be easy for you to understand each other? Why? Why not?

What could you do to make it easier for the person to understand you?

4. What's the same and what's different?

Competences: analytical and critical thinking skills; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture and cultures); knowledge and critical understanding of self; tolerance of ambiguity

Do you think this person is like you in any way?

If yes: In what ways is this person like you?

Do you think the person is different from you in any way?

If yes: In what ways is this person different from you?

Does this person seem like anyone else you have seen in real life?

If yes: Who? In what ways are they like them?

Prompt if necessary: Is it the way they dress, the way they behave, the way they look?

Does this person seem like anyone else you have seen, in other pictures?

Prompt if necessary: Was it in a book, on television?

Part 2

5. What the image-maker wants to tell us

Competences: knowledge and critical understanding of the world (media)

Someone else has made the image that you are looking at (took the photograph or did the art work) and they have a reason for making the image – they want it to be used in some way. Perhaps they want the image to tell us something about that person or about people like him/her. Perhaps they want us to do something as a result of looking at the image.

What do you think the image is meant to be used for?

Prompt if necessary: Is it telling people what is happening, advertising a holiday, asking people to give money, making people laugh, making people think?

What does the maker of this image (the photographer, the artist, the performer) want to tell us about the person in the picture? Why do you think this?

Does the image-maker want to tell us something about people who are like the person in the image or who belong to the same group?

If yes: Which group?

Prompt if necessary: Are the people from the same country/same place/same religion?

What does the image-maker want to tell us about this group of people?

Does the image-maker want us to do anything as result of seeing the image?

If yes: What does the image-maker want us to do?

Do you think this picture will make people think differently in any way?

If yes: In what way?

Does the picture make you think differently?

If yes: In what way?

6. Is it real?

Competences: analytical and critical thinking skills; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture and cultures); respect; valuing human dignity and human rights; valuing cultural diversity

[For an image of a real person] Do you think the picture shows the person as he/she really is?

If not: How is the picture different from real life?

Do you think the picture exaggerates anything about this person or about the situation?

Prompt if necessary: Is it about the way the person looks, or the way the person behaves?)

Do you think it is OK to exaggerate these things about this person? Why do you think this? Can you give me your reasons?

[For an image of an imaginary person] Does the person in the image seem like a real-life person?

If not: How does the person seem different from a real-life person?

Do you think the picture exaggerates anything about this person?

Do you think it is OK to exaggerate these things about this person? Why do you think this? Can you give me your reasons?

Do you think other people who belong to the same country/place/group/religion as the person in the picture look and behave in the same way as the person in the image?

What might be the same?

What might be the differences?

7. How others might feel about the image

Competences: empathy; respect; knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture and cultures); analytical and critical thinking skills; tolerance of ambiguity

Would you like to have a picture of you looking like this? Why? Why not?

Do you think the person in the picture would be pleased with this picture of himself/herself? Why? Why not?

If not: What kind of picture do you think he/she would prefer to see of himself/herself?

Do you think other people from the same country/same place/same group/same religion, etc. as the person in the picture would like the picture? Why? Why not?

If not: What kind of picture might they prefer to see of someone from their group?

8. Thinking a bit more

Competences: autonomous learning skills

Is there anything else you would like to know about the person in this picture or about any group the person belongs to?

If yes: How might you find out those things?

Competences: knowledge and critical understanding of the world (culture, cultures and media); knowledge and critical understanding of the self

If you had to tell a friend about this picture and what you thought about it, what would you say?

What do you think you have learnt or discovered from the picture and talking about it?

Competences: flexibility and adaptability; civic-mindedness

Do you think that doing this exercise has changed the way you look at pictures of other people?

If yes: In what way?

After doing this exercise will you look for different things in pictures you see? If so, what things?

Will it make you ask yourself different questions about what you see? If so what questions?

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FINLAND/FINLANDE

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Manhattan Publishing Co
670 White Plains Road
USA-10583 SCARSDALE, NY
Tel: + 1 914 472 4650
Fax: + 1 914 472 4316
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Tel.: + 33 (0)3 88 41 25 81 – Fax: + 33 (0)3 88 41 39 10 – E-mail: publishing@coe.int – Website: <http://book.coe.int>

In the contemporary world, encounters with people from other cultural backgrounds have become part of our everyday lives. These intercultural encounters may be used as an opportunity to learn about other cultures, to develop our capacities for effective and respectful communication, to think about our own cultural affiliations and to reflect on ways in which we might take action for the common good.

The *Autobiography of intercultural encounters* (AIE) is an educational resource that can be used by learners to achieve all of these outcomes. It supports learners in thinking about and learning from intercultural encounters that they have experienced either face to face, through visual media (such as television, films, magazines), or through the internet.

The present volume contains an updated and revised edition of the original *Autobiography of intercultural encounters through visual media* (AIEVM), which supports learners' reflections on intercultural encounters that take place through visual media. There are two versions of the AIEVM: a standard version for those who can complete it on their own, and a younger learners' version for use by children who need support from an adult in thinking about intercultural encounters. Both versions are accompanied by notes for facilitators which explain in detail how the AIEVM may be used. These new editions have been fully updated and aligned with the Council of Europe's *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* and may be used by educators and learners in primary, secondary and higher education and in non-formal and informal education.

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