RFCDC – LEARNING ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Covid-19 Social Distance

Target group:
Learners in primary and secondary schools

ADDRESSING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

FREE TO SPEAK
SAFE TO LEARN

Edu**d**an
EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

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ADDRESSING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

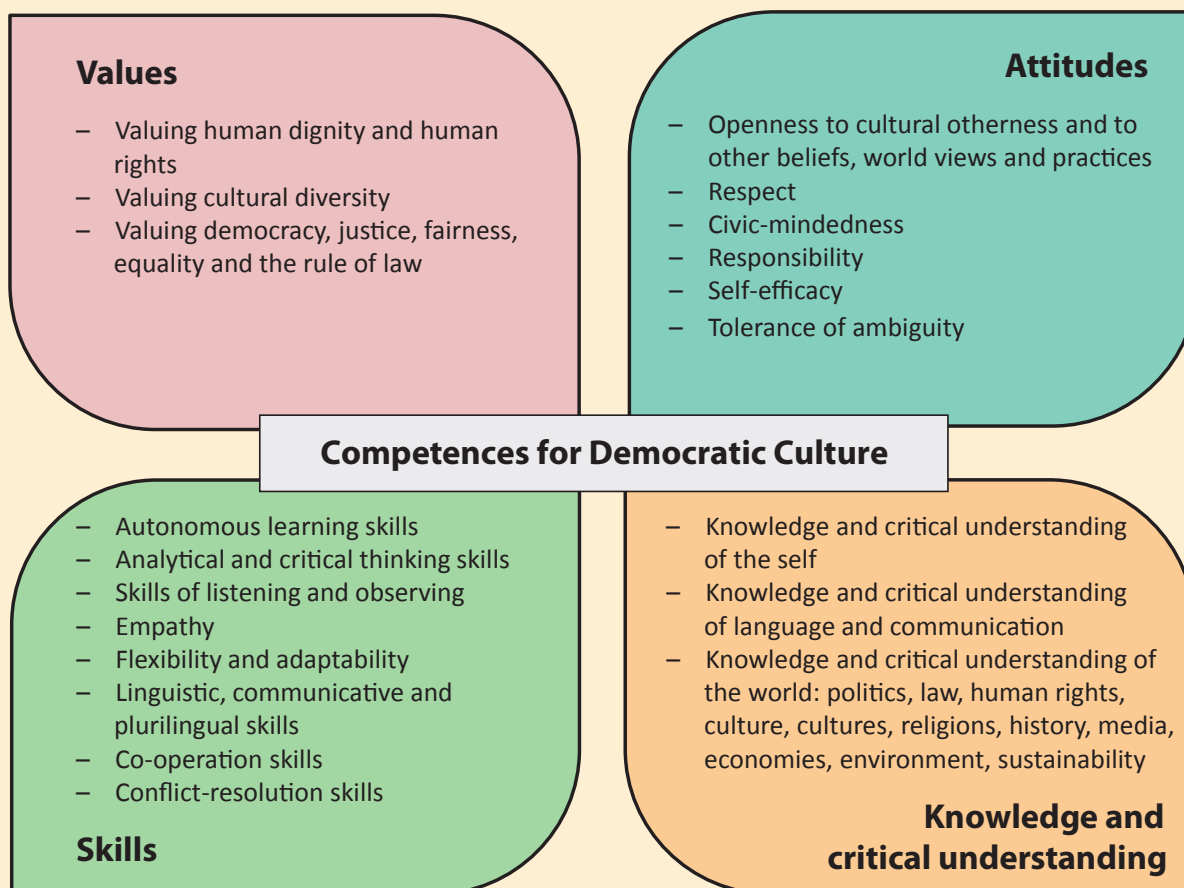## Covid-19 Social Distance

RATIONALE

Many people have changed their social habits in order to protect their health in the Covid-19 pandemic. International organisations and governments have issued new rules that apply in open and indoor spaces. Some of the restrictions are controversial and difficult for young people to accept. Learners should be encouraged to reflect on the way their personal beliefs affect their behavior. This activity helps learners to understand better the new social distancing and to adapt their habits to the new rules.

THE RFCDC COMPETENCES

Values

- Valuing human dignity and human rights
- Valuing cultural diversity
- Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law

Attitudes

- Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices
- Respect
- Civic-mindedness
- Responsibility
- Self-efficacy
- Tolerance of ambiguity

Competences for Democratic Culture

Skills

- Autonomous learning skills
- Analytical and critical thinking skills
- Skills of listening and observing
- Empathy
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
- Co-operation skills
- Conflict-resolution skills

Knowledge and critical understanding

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
- Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
- Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability

COMPETENCES PROMOTED BY THE ACTIVITY

▬ Valuing human dignity and human rights; Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law; Responsibility; Flexibility and adaptability; Knowledge and critical understanding of the self.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

▬ Completing this activity will help learners to:

▶ Appreciate that all public institutions should respect, protect and implement human rights;

▶ Appreciate that all citizens should be treated equally and impartially under the law;

▶ Accept responsibility for their actions;

▶ Adapt to new situations by applying their knowledge in a different way;

▶ Reflect critically on their own values and beliefs, as well as the values and beliefs of other people.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

1. Show a short video about Handshake Alternatives. The video should explain that social distancing includes eliminating the physical contact that occurs with the typical handshake, hug or kisses.

2. Ask the learners to discuss their methods of greetings and whether they are familiar with the new forms of greetings behaviour from the video. The following question may be used to stimulate their reflections:

   ▶ How do you greet your friends and classmates?

   ▶ How do you greet your relatives?

   ▶ Are these new greeting methods appropriate for adults?

   ▶ Is it easy to change your lifelong habits for a week?

3. Learners give their own answers to these questions. For an online class, they can use the chat box section for their responses; for a classroom activity, they can use group discussion.

4. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many institutions have issued videos, flyers and posters devoted to the crisis. Wearing masks, keeping social distance and avoiding travel are controversial issues which arouse strong feelings and divide opinion in communities and society. Show learners an image of a Social Distancing flyer.

5. Ask learners to give their definition of social distancing. If the lesson is in online mode, use the tool AnswerGarden, which allows the participants to see the entries immediately.

6. Organize a simple group survey with the learners about their opinions of some of the restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic. For example:

   ▶ Are they maintaining a distance of 2 metres (two arms' length) between them and others?

   ▶ Are they using a protection mask all the time when they are outside their homes?

   ▶ Are they shopping in small local shops or big supermarkets?

   ▶ Are they visiting cinemas/theatres/malls?

   ▶ Are they making non-essential trips?

   ▶ Are they visiting their elderly relatives?

MATERIALS OR RESOURCES REQUIRED

▶ Resources for teaching controversial issues:
   – The Council of Europe fact sheet on "Teaching controversial issues":
     https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806cc3f5
   – The Council of Europe publication:
     https://theewc.org/resources/living-with-controversy-teaching-controversial-issues-through-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-edc-hre/

▶ Videos about Handshake Alternatives and Covid-19 Etiquette, for example:
   – **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umEskepeRwc**
   – **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_mBoOVZQ2I**

▶ Social Distancing flyer:
   – **https://www.covidoumedicine.com/documents/content/practice-social-distancing.pdf**

▶ Tools for on-line surveys, for example:
   – Google Forms **https://www.google.com/forms/about/**
   – Survey Monkey **https://www.surveymonkey.com/**

► Do they celebrate birthdays with friends?

► Is friendship more important than social distance?

► Do they think that the rules on wearing masks, keeping social distance and avoiding travel (consider each of these three actions individually) are helpful for preventing the spread of Covid-19?

► Do they think that the rules on wearing masks, keeping social distance and avoiding travel (consider each of these three actions individually) can have a negative effect on people's well-being?

There are different tools for an on-line survey. Convert the data into an on-line graph.

7. After the survey, explore with the learners the results and discuss the outcomes. Ask them to identify the main differences that were found in people's opinions about wearing masks, keeping social distance and avoiding travel. Encourage them to reflect on why different people might hold different opinions (e.g., might this be because of their different values, because they differ in their concern for the well-being of other people, because they differ in their concern for their own well-being, etc.?).

8. Divide the learners into groups of 5 for acting out a role play:

► Each group has to have one reporter (who will ask questions to the others), medical worker, police officer, shop cashier, and prime minister (all front-line jobs in the fight against Covid-19).

► The reporter asks each member of the group the questions from step 6. In addition, they can add more questions, for example:
   – How do the people from the front-line of the fight against Covid-19 feel about the behavior of the population?
   – Are they worried about the health of their families?
   – What advice would they like to give to young people and adults?

9. Each group presents their work to the whole class, briefly explaining their feelings about changing perspectives. They should also summarise the ideas that emerge.

REFLECTION ON THE ACTIVITY AND THE LEARNING OUTCOMES THAT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED

Ask the learners to comment on and discuss the process of the activity. They should also be asked to reflect critically on what they have learnt from the activity, using the following questions:

► Have you learned any new methods for Covid-19 Etiquette and Social Distance?

► Did you find it difficult to change your habits just for a short period of time?

► Did you learn something new about Covid-19? If so, what did you learn?

► Have your own opinions about wearing masks, keeping social distance and avoiding travel changed as a result of the activity, and if so, why have they changed?

► What have you learned about the professionals from the front-line as a result of doing this activity?

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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