

extending the old maxim “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” to “When in Rome, think, feel, believe and do as a Roman”.

- to assist the children of minority cultural groups to fit into mainstream society whilst maintaining parts of their own cultural identity - this is sometimes known as a policy of integration. “When in Roman society, do as the Romans do; but you can cook what you want at home if you close the windows”.

Various educational forms and approaches resulted, sometimes in combination with each other. But there were grave problems associated with such aims and practices. They were based on a belief in the implicit superiority of mainstream culture which was supposed to remain unaffected by contact with other cultures. It was very much a one-way street: change was only expected from “them”. Add to this the fact that the vast majority of immigrants have not “returned” to their countries of origin and we can see that such aims do not correspond with current reality. And they have little in common with the aims of intercultural education.

“The discovery of others is the discovery of a relationship, not of a barrier” (Claude Lévi-Strauss)

Gradually, perceptions of multicultural society have evolved. It is neither a mosaic where cultures are placed side-by-side without any effect on each other, nor is it a melting pot where everything is reduced to the lowest common denominator. Intercultural education proposes processes to enable the discovery of mutual relationships and the dismantling of barriers. There are close links to other educational philosophies, such as education for human rights, anti-racist education and development education. It is therefore a normal reaction if you find elements here which correspond to your experience in other fields. We have learned much from the experiences gained in the pioneering work of multicultural educationalists.

But we choose to use the term “intercultural”. Because, as Micheline Rey points out, if the prefix “inter” is given its full meaning, this necessarily implies:

- interaction
- exchange
- breaking down barriers
- reciprocity
- objective solidarity.

Intercultural Education: A Social Education Process

For a society to become really intercultural, every social group must be able to live in conditions of equality regardless of their culture, lifestyle or origin. This means reconsidering not only how we interact with cultures which seem strange to our own, but also how we interact with minorities such as homosexuals or people with disabilities

who face many forms of intolerance and discrimination. Numerous forces - social, economic, political - have to be combined to bring about such a society. Intercultural education is one of the main tools we have nowadays to help us take advantage of the opportunities offered by multicultural societies.

The general target of intercultural education has to be favouring and reinforcing the basis of mutual relationships, between different societies and different majority or minority cultural groups.

This target means:

- to see that diversity is rooted in equality and does not become a justification for marginalisation
- to make an effort to recognise different cultural identities and to promote respect for minorities
- to resolve conflicting interests peacefully.

This general target supposes that intercultural education must take place within society as a whole. It is impossible to dream of an intercultural society working only with one of the involved parts, that is, only with minority groups or only with majority groups.

The needs of majorities and minorities are different but interlinked.

In the case of most minority groups, especially when they are the result of immigration processes, their first need is to develop a series of abilities and knowledge. Without the ability to communicate in a commonly understood language, for example, it is difficult if not impossible to survive in society. In the case of majority groups, their first needs are to start looking beyond accepted norms, to question customary ways of thought - especially negative stereotypes and prejudices - in relation to minority groups. It is necessary for us all to gain an understanding of the role played by power relations in society and, here, their effect on intercultural relationships.

These different needs, logically, have different objectives. In the case of social majority groups, the targets of intercultural education are:

- to further an understanding of the reality of an interdependent world and encourage action coherent with that reality
- to go beyond negative prejudices and ethnic stereotypes
- to favour a positive evaluation of difference and diversity
- to search for and highlight similarities
- to generate positive attitudes and habits of behaviour towards people from other societies and cultures
- to translate the principles of solidarity and civil courage into action

In the case of minority groups, the targets of intercultural education include all of the above plus learning to live within mainstream society without losing their own cultural identity.

Young people: an essential resource for intercultural education.

all different
all equal

Although intercultural education must take place within society as a whole, there is little doubt that intercultural education is centered on the system of relations of children and young people. We justify this priority because they will be, to a great extent, the future citizens of intercultural societies. They are also an important channel of communication to adults and can help their elder relations, for example, to see the necessity for change. Having said that it is clear that there are also important messages here for adult education.

Intercultural education with children and young people works in two major ways:

- to help them gain the capacity to recognise inequality, injustice, racism, stereotypes and prejudices
- to give them the knowledge and the abilities which will help them to challenge and to try to change these mechanisms whenever they have to face them in society

Educational approaches both within and outside schools are tremendously important. How we refer to these approaches depends a lot on context. And it is also “true” that one can find more formal methods in out-of-school education, (a lecture, an input, written exercises...) just as more informal methods can also be found in schools, (working in project groups, using the local environment...). When we wrote this Education Pack in 1994-95, we were used to differentiate between formal and informal education – it was relatively rare to talk of “non-formal education/learning”. The debate has moved on, to the extent that the European Youth Forum recently issued a policy paper called “Youth organisations as non-formal educators – recognising our role” (November 2003). Informal education is now more often referred to when talking about non-planned learning situations: in the family, on a bus, talking with friends. Still, for this edition we have chosen to leave the terminology as it was. You might find it refreshing!

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Challenges facing educational systems today and the need for complementarity between formal and non-formal education are outlined in the **Compass** chapter on **Education**.

Two Ways of Travelling:

1. Formal intercultural education

Formal intercultural education includes academic programmes and initiatives that are developed within and from the school.

School is, after the family, a principal agent of socialisation through which children get not only an academic education, but they also learn much of their own cultural code. This cultural code needs to be the one that is open to other cultures, religions and lifestyles. Therefore, without the active support of the school, efforts to introduce intercultural education are bound to see diminished results, if not outright failure. It