

You may wish to plan to start with some activities working with images, then move on to others working on the mechanism of exclusion and then go on to explore ways of taking action. However, once you get started, and participants begin asking questions it might be more appropriate to think of the activities as part of a web which you can use in any order.

The aim has been to give a clear description of each activity and ideas for what you might do next. It must be emphasised that these are only guidelines and anyone using the pack should feel free to adapt and use the material to suit their own needs.

Whatever group you are working with it's most likely that your starting point will be something that is happening in your area or something that one of your group members is interested in. You should use ideas in the pack to help your members gain a better knowledge about the issues and empathy towards the people involved. However, understanding alone is not enough, it is important that we work towards building an intercultural society where diversity and difference are respected and the dignity of the individual is celebrated and promoted. This element of taking action is an important outcome of the activities in the pack. Knowing about the issues is not enough; we must try to be consistent also in our attitudes and actions. In this respect intercultural education should be seen as part of a wider education process around 'Education for Citizenship' with emphasis on values such as solidarity, tolerance, responsibility, courage and respect. It builds on, and contributes to, experiences in Human Rights, Peace and Global Education.

II. The educational approach

The activities in this pack have been designed to enable you to work on intercultural education issues from two perspectives: participation and group work.

Taking a participatory approach implies that young people are not the target of our work, but that they are the resources we count on. Using this pack implies working with people rather than working for them. Our main task and challenge is to encourage people to take control of their own actions and thereby to empower them.

Group work is an appropriate way for people to gain a deeper understanding and ownership of their experience, knowledge, skills and attitudes. In this way the group work process is the vehicle, which ensures that what each individual learns will have a social impact beyond the personal.

Intercultural education (more fully described in Part A) is a social education process through which people may become more aware of their own culture and of the interdependence between cultures, including a respect for the difference, whether this difference is due to culture, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, nationality, social status, ability or disability. Thus people appreciate their culture in the context of the wider world in a way that will enable them to understand, to empathize with and value people who are different, and to work together to build a better and more equal world.

Intercultural education involves working with aspects of human nature such as at-

titudes, feelings, perceptions, values and experiences. These aspects can not be reached solely from an intellectual approach, they require also an experimental dimension. For example, if we want to promote young people's solidarity towards immigrants it is not enough just to give information about their situation or present statistics and figures. It is necessary that young people have a far deeper feeling and understanding that immigration does not happen by accident, but that their own way of living may force people to immigrate and that the countries of origin of the immigrants are not poor, but have been impoverished. Similarly in order to deal with homophobia or with discrimination towards Roma People (Gypsies and travellers) rather than giving simple lectures it may be necessary to give people the opportunity to feel what it is like being subjected to daily discrimination and prejudice. This is not to diminish the importance of basic information which is necessary to counter deeply rooted stereotypes and prejudice e.g. that most Roma people do not live in tents and caravans but have a perfectly 'informal' way of life or that homosexuals have existed in all societies and cultures throughout history.

It will only be possible for people to understand the situation if we start working from their own knowledge, feelings and experience. From this starting point they will be able to learn to adapt to different cultural and personal realities and from there go on to acquire new perceptions and knowledge. Thus we work, not only on the cognitive or intellectual level, but especially from life experiences and on the effective or emotional level. At the same time we should not forget that gaining the values promoted by intercultural education, solidarity, respect and empathy is only possible if, at the same time, we help people develop skills such as cooperation, communication and critical analysis.

We can think of our educational task as being in three steps: Think, Feel and Act, we are going to work with our Heads, Hearts and Hands.

Working with young people

Working on intercultural education with participative group dynamics presupposes that we base our work on some fundamental principles:

1. That we start from what people already know, their opinions and experiences and from this base enable them to search for, and discover together, new ideas and experiences.

We all have ideas and opinions about the issues and questions that relate to our daily lives which we gain from our families and social environment, from our own direct experience; from what we read; from the information we receive in school, on TV, radio etc.; from discussions and exchanges of points of view with other people; and from our own personal reflections. All these form a kind of filter through which we see 'reality'. That is why you, as the facilitator of the group, instead of ignoring it, must start from this reality and use it as the basis upon which to build new experiences.

2. That we encourage the participation of young people to contribute to discussions and to learn from each other as much as possible.

Each of us always has something to learn and something to teach. Group

work reinforces our capacity to learn; it allows us to explore new ideas and to analyse new information together and thereby promotes personal development. In addition, when people actively participate in something, as in this case, in intercultural education, they have a much stronger sense of ownership and consequently they commit themselves much more.

3. That we think all the time about how people can translate their concrete experiences of intercultural education, into simple but effective actions that demonstrate their refusal of the processes of marginalisation, discrimination and exclusion.

Intercultural education does not operate only at the individual level, it requires working simultaneously the personal and collective levels. Our task therefore consists of reinforcing the “practical” dimension of intercultural education by making sure that young people, through the group, reach concrete conclusions relevant to their daily lives.

In order to pursue our work with young people (taking a group work and participative approach) we count on a major tool: the activities. These are the resources with which we work to facilitate young people's ownership of their experience, both intellectual and emotional. It is important to understand that the activities are not an end in themselves but the pretext, or the key to the door to what is really important, a common learning process based on the exchange of opinions and experiences, the discovery of new dimensions of reality, the common creation of alternatives and the awareness of racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance.

The activities in this pack have been developed as tools to use within a group learning process. How you decide to use them will depend on the age, abilities and interests of the young people in your group and the space and time you have available but they have been designed to enable you to develop your programme according to a sequential methodological process:

- G** - indicates activities which will help form and consolidate the group. These activities will help the creation of a good group atmosphere and reinforce communication skills and group dynamics. They include icebreakers.



If people do not have good discussion, active listening and interpersonal skills and if they do not have an insight into the process and dynamics of group work (the ability to work with others towards a common goal in a spirit of mutual respect and co-operation) then they will find some of the activities, especially those at level three, hard or even impossible. The activities in this pack have been developed within the framework of Intercultural Education, they are based on mutual respect for the individual, the belief that everyone grows through experience and that experimental learning is fun, enjoyable, rewarding and positive and leads to personal and social development. If this is not clearly understood then difficulties and conflicts may develop as people are challenged to explore their thoughts, feelings and emotions about their prejudices, beliefs and view of the world. Good group work ensures a safe environment to explore these.

- I** - indicates activities which will provide an insight into our images of people from cultures, countries or social origins different from our own.



It is important to work with these images because there is a strong link between the



images or stereotypes we have of people and prejudice and discrimination. Unless we understand where these images come from and learn to be critical of them we cannot analyse the influence they have on us and on our view of the world. If we are to be able to tackle racism and intolerance then the first step is to recognise these images for what they are - namely just that - images which often have little to do with reality.

M - indicates activities which will enable people to discover and analyse the social, economic, cultural or educational reasons that lie behind situations of discrimination, refusal, exclusion and marginalisation.

Unless we are able to recognise the mechanisms that exist which perpetuate exclusion and discrimination we will never be able to tackle and change them. It is essential that we have an insight into the vested interests, power and politics at local, national and global levels which are the root cause of the conflicts between people. Few people would choose to leave their homes if it were not for war, famine, lack of employment opportunities, political and religious persecution etc. Similarly competition for housing, jobs, education and health services set people against one another. We have to ask ourselves why the world situation is as it is and why it is so hard to reform.

A - indicates activities which develop awareness about the possibilities for individuals and groups to act in order to bring about or to pursue social change based on values of solidarity, respect, acceptance of 'difference' and free exchange of ideas.



There will have been little point in people using this pack unless they learn and grow and start to make changes as a result. Change is seen as an essential outcome of the activities. Taking action may be at a personal level, for example being more aware of ourselves and our view of the world and recognising the importance of our personal actions. Action can also be things people do together at local level within their own communities to support minorities or others who are 'different'. Action can also be working together for change within organisations at local, regional, national and international level to bring about a fairer, tolerant intercultural world.

In English there are phrases like: 'No one ever made a greater mistake than they who did nothing because they could only do a little' and 'To walk a mile you have to take the first step'. Such phrases exist in all languages and we suggest that you start making a collection of your own. You will find other ideas to help you start taking action in the A-Z for the campaign on page 62.

III. Developing an intercultural education programme

It is important to bear in mind that the reality in each European country varies significantly both within each country and between countries. We would therefore recommend that you, as the facilitator of the activities, adapt them to the actual situation which exists in your country, region or town. If the examples given, or the questions suggested, for debriefing and evaluation are not relevant in the social and cultural context of your