



STEPS FOR NGO's GUIDEBOOK

A guidebook on international cooperation

INTRODUCTION

Strategic Tools for Effective Promotion and Sustainability for NGOs – STEPS 4 NGOs

Project STEPS 4 NGOs was a challenge and opportunity for partner organisations from Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Nepal, Mexico, Peru and Vietnam to strengthen the cooperation between the youth sectors in their countries and to establish a partnership network which will be a valuable source for developing and enriching the intercultural dialogue between countries from all around the world. The project was funded by Youth in Action Programme of the European Union, Action 3.2 – Youth in the world and was coordinated by Association “International Initiatives for Cooperation”, Bulgaria. It aimed at:

- Promoting long-term and sustainable cooperation between youth organisations from Programme and Partner countries;
- Fostering the process of development of quality youth policies and services with a special focus on any type of socially excluded young people in Partner countries, based on the European experience in the field;
- Developing a network of youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders from Programme and Partner countries aimed at promoting the exchange of experience and good practices in the field of youth development;
- Building up the capacity of youth organisations from Partner countries with the purpose of contributing towards the process of youth empowerment and active participation which leads to democratisation and civil society development;

Activities in the project were directed to themes that are essential and important for young people from different countries - participation in the development of civil society, cultural diversity, inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, global issues affecting young people, such as climate change, sustainable development, migrations, and the Millennium Development Goals, combating poverty and social exclusion.

The current guidebook “STEPS 4 NGOs” with valuable pieces of advice from all partners in the project was created proposing some tips from the competences of the organisations, obtained from their previous experience in the youth work and during the project activities.

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EXCLUSION


REALITIES

AUSTRIA

Austria has very well developed and applied policies and strategies in social protection and social inclusion that result in provision of high quality services to various social groups in the spheres of social services, educations service, labour market services and health services.

The main social group experiencing problems related to equal opportunities and active inclusion in the social life of the country is composed by **migrants**.

Migration is one of the central phenomena in a more and more globalized world where economic and political changes in one country may affect other, distant countries by migration. Migration is no homogenous process, very different groups of people are involved, e.g. asylum seekers, refugees, qualified working migrants and economically motivated migrants. Migration is an issue of high priority in many countries and they have to revise their strategies concerning immigration. It is of common interest to meet the needs of migrants concerning their vulnerable health and social status bearing multiple risks.



The most vulnerable group in Austria is migrants who suffer unemployment, low access to social benefits and health care.

The immigrant communities in Austria are composed mainly young people who experience difficulties and inequality related to unemployment, low access to social benefits, health care services and active participation in the civil society.

Austria envisages **multiple dimensions of integration and diversity policies.**

The long-term growth of the immigrant population and their gradual integration into the local communities implies that municipalities can no longer treat immigrant communities as a homogenous group distinct from a so-called mainstream population. In recent years in some regions the policy has been therefore shifted from a “minority policy” towards a mainstreaming approach, so as to accommodate the diversity needs that arise among immigrant as well as native populations. Diversity management’ has become a catchword that signals this trend, but it is interdependent and implemented quite differently in different places.

In Austria the City of Vienna is currently undertaking multifarious activities for a cultural opening of health and social services. Also in Styria recently a new approach to integration of migrants in health system, starting from education and self-organisation was presented.

Apart from the policies implemented by governmental structures and institutions, actions are also undertaken on behalf of youth and civil society organizations.

One of the most important fields of action in Austrian youth work of all kinds is the field of prevention of social problems. Not only do many youth organisations identify prevention as their main focus, but there is also a lot of prevention work done without even recognising it as such.


BULGARIA

Bulgaria is a country with a complex composition. The socioeconomic indicators about the youth groups show a situation characterized by a diffuse unemployment and early school leaving, this situation must be analysed in relation to political structures and to educational system.

The investment in the school education mobilizes a lot of resources in a long-term time frame and youngsters from disadvantaged families and the labour market at an early age. In Bulgaria early school leavers display well above-average levels of unemployment. However, other forms of exclusion must be considered as well. Disparities toward gender, ethnic origins, regional origin (urban or rural area) as well as different ways of expressions of oneself are also there.

In Bulgaria young people from immigrant families or ethnic minorities are presented in the official statistics as disadvantaged groups. The case of **Roma** communities is the most popular example.

The census data of 2001 shows that the percentage of Roma community (4,6 %) is the largest after that of Turkish community (9,4 %).



Excluded groups in Bulgaria consist mainly of early school leavers, roma people, youth groups from rural areas, youngsters with disabilities, women from ethnic minorities.

The sedentarization of Turkish community- beginning with the Ottoman presence and continuing during the socialist period- has led to the establishment of ethnic districts. These districts have taken the form of ghettos and confined




communities, often marginalized to the rest of the population.

However, we do not have information of analysis concerning the Roma perception of *inclusion* or *exclusion*, apart from economic indicators. Thus, these data underline the risk of poverty and social exclusion that looms over Roma. It is certain that the general discrimination combined with the desire of Roma communities to preserve their culture as a form of diversity, bring difficulties for the effective “social inclusion”. This process needs a delicate dialogue and actions on behalf of both sides.

Youth groups from rural areas are also strongly affected by economic and social problems. The out-migration of young people is a very common phenomenon. Not only the employment, but also opportunities for developing and expressing oneself remain little in rural and remote areas that is why out-migration has turned into solution.

The role of *gender* is another determinant which requires differentiation: **young women** result to be subject to a higher inactivity, notably in rural areas. This problem brings a form of poverty that concerns not only the economic indicators but also the social life and the implication of oneself to act in local context.

Another problem concerns **youngsters with disabilities** that still represented a “disadvantaged group”. Policies in favour of their “inclusion” in social, cultural and economic activities are not well developed, thus support in the identification of practices addressing this issue is necessary for a multifaceted improvement of the social life.



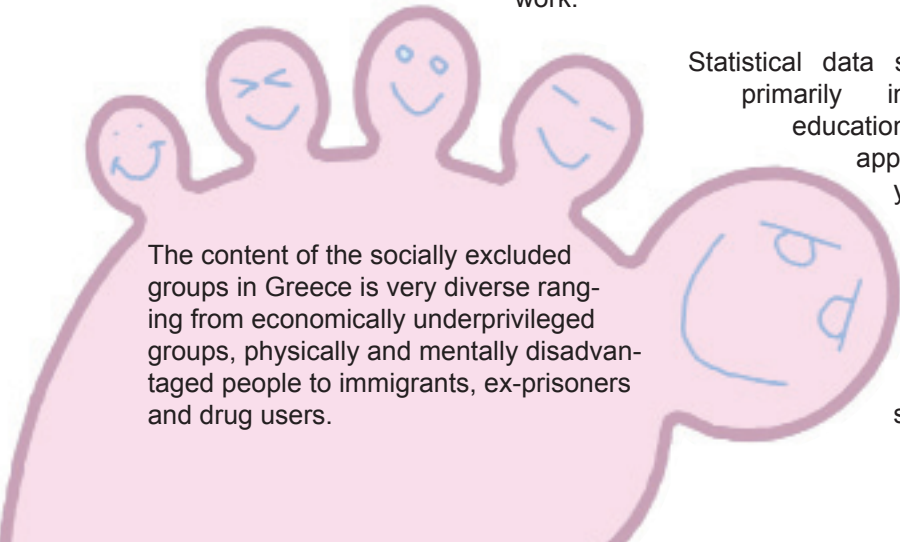
GREECE

Traditionally, the discourse of social inequalities in Greece for a long time represented only “classical” categories of groups predisposed to disadvantages, such as: economically underprivileged groups; single parent families and orphans, and physically and mentally disabled groups, that were objects especially to charitable initiatives.

Later on, during 1980s, in the social policy, other groups were recognised to constitute socially excluded people, such as: repatriate immigrants, prisoners, ex-prisoners, young delinquents, drug users, former drug users, and people living in remote areas, people with specific cultural and religious identities.

Educational inequalities and other aspects of the social life have to be considered for the analysis of the issue as well. Like Bulgaria and Italy, Greece also recognizes the problem of early school leavers, related to indicators concerning unemployment and undeclared work.

Statistical data shows that Greece applies primarily individualised support in education as well as compensatory approaches with 6% of the 14-24 year old youngsters enrolled in evening schools. This leads to the conclusion that a high percentage of young people are “officially” concerned by the “**school failure**”. Like in Italy, this situation fuses to a difficult



The content of the socially excluded groups in Greece is very diverse ranging from economically underprivileged groups, physically and mentally disadvantaged people to immigrants, ex-prisoners and drug users.




access to welfare and to institutional support for youth action.

The multidimensional nature of social exclusion coincides with a complex interaction between institutional structures and individuals: limited resources and opportunities lead also to expression of social unease through deviant behaviors or **sub-cultures often subject to moralist perceptions**.

Another important aspect to be considered is related to **cultural, religious and ethnical diversity**. The post socialist period and the break-up of Yugoslavia have stimulated a new flow of migrations. It's estimated that there are more than 150,000 repatriates and more than 1,000,000 immigrants currently living in Greece. Of these numbers, 98,241 are school-age children.

However, for a long time the state denies such connotation (minority) for these social groups and officially acknowledges the existence of only one minority, Muslims of Thrace. This process brings to politic and cultural construction of the idea of homogeneity that never exists. This **denial of local diversities** can be considered as a form of social exclusion, which has been addressed by new intercultural educational programs.




ITALY

The Italian peninsula is a complex geographical, cultural and political area. The Italian society still suffers the problems of emigration and depopulation of rural and urban areas. In particular, mostly the young people (**students, people in working age**) are affected by this phenomenon.


The issue of social vulnerability is notable especially in the South of the country, where the unemployment is durable. The data of social inequalities, in particular concerning the field of education, shows a high percentage of early school leavers. This situation corresponds also to a durable unemployment. In the South of Italy youth unemployment rates exceed 60% . In fact, the risk to take part in illegal economic activities is there.

Other aspects of social life are consequently affected by the lack of resources. The realization of oneself in the future is a real difficulty. The fact that many youngsters experience poverty is related to the absence of concrete opportunities to realize and express themselves.

Youth groups suffer **regional disparities** as well. The South of Italy (the urban and rural area) remains a place where the politic system reveals all its disfunctions. The absence of institutional and economic support towards youth initiatives and projects is a very evident problem and young people experience the stagnation of social and political life.




Emigration and depopulation of rural and urban areas, as well as immigration are disposed to social exclusion in Italy.



The Italian context is also characterized by a constant flow of **immigrants** from different countries. A xenophobic climate and a risk of social and economical exclusion are there. Migrants Muslim, African and non-African, partially suffer this situation. **Illegal migrants** are exposed to the risk of unemployment and being involved in grey economy, suffering the disqualification of their work.

Young people from immigrant's families are also subject to discrimination regarding their cultural, religious or ethnic identity. Diversities are often interpreted as a presumed threat to be controlled, this has resulted in flagrant demonstrations of discrimination and violence towards those groups. Consequently, the inexistence of official recognition leads to absence of solutions and effective policies to be used by relevant organizations and institutions in order to address the existing forms of social and economic discomfort.



MEXICO

Mexico is one of the countries in Latin America where social exclusion and social inequality is widely spread. Social, economic and politic disparities in Mexico are a complex phenomenon with profound historic background, that could be also related to ethnic, gender, regional and economic diversities.

The well-fare distribution (land, capital, resources) appear very imbalanced, as a result the economic poverty is a very important problem in Mexico.

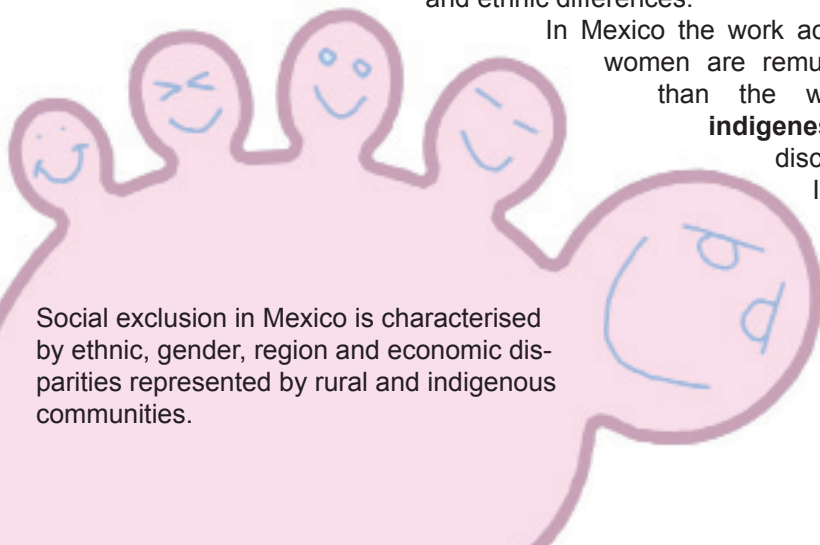
Criminal activities, illegal jobs, drug traffic concern a large part of **rural and indigenous communities, including young people**. Children and young people enter the labour market at an early age to contribute to the income of the household and illegal activities can become a real source of income.


Social exclusion and inequality in Mexico is strongly related to gender and ethnic differences.

In Mexico the work activities performed by young women are remunerated in a different way than the work performed by men, **indigenes young women** suffer this discrimination the most.

In general, mostly indigenous communities are subject to social, cultural and economic exclusion.

Social exclusion in Mexico is characterised by ethnic, gender, region and economic disparities represented by rural and indigenous communities.






Concerning the indigenous communities, social inequality characterizes the Mexican nation since its creation. The Federal District informs that the indigenous people, and also indigenous migrants in big urban areas, suffer discrimination mainly in the field of justice, educational and the health systems.

Regional disparities also have a role in the social exclusion issues. Most of the indigenous population lives in the rural and isolate areas such as mountains and deserts. They are affected by difficult access to educational, health and social infrastructures and social service. In fact, several of these areas register a high ratio of maternal and children mortality, bad working conditions, exclusion of young people from educational systems.

Social studies show that unequal access to health and educational services, regional disparities and differences in the cultural identity, appear interdependent aspects of the social life and they provoke serious structural inequalities in the country.



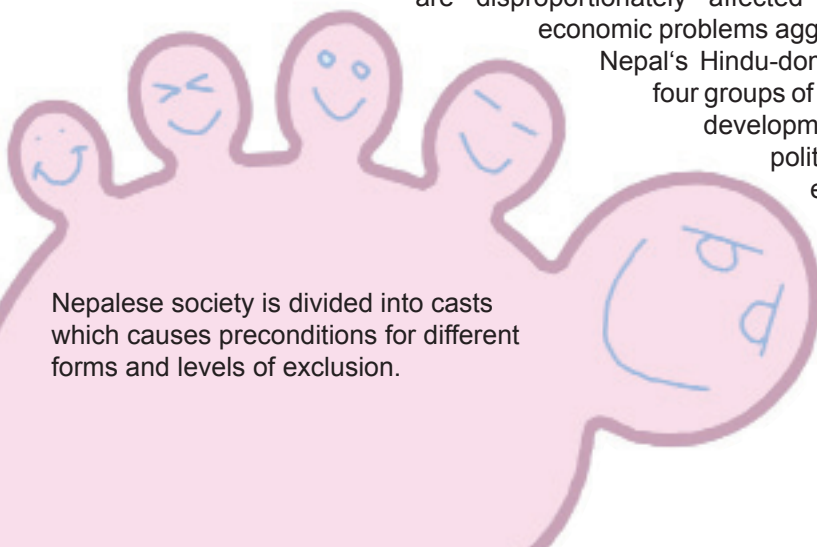
NEPAL

Nepal is home to a mosaic of ethnicities and languages. More than 61 ethnic groups and diverse nationalities reside in the country. Despite the sociocultural diversity, Nepal is facing a vicious cycle of poverty which mainly is the cause of spatial heterogeneity and structural inequalities. The spatial causes of poverty can be seen due to the regional imbalance in the development process, while the structural inequalities have been coupled by 'haves' and 'have nots'.

Structural inequality has further been compounded by the caste system of the country. Although anti-discrimination provisions are contained in the 1990 Constitution, caste discrimination remains ingrained in Hindu-dominated Nepalese society. Poverty, lack of social services (health, education, water and sanitation, etc.) remain pressing problems for rural, lower castes and indigenous peoples, despite economic development and poverty alleviation having been the primary objectives of the Nepali budget for the past years.

Additionally, the bitter truth is that lower castes and minority ethnic groups are disproportionately affected by widespread social and economic problems aggravated by poverty. Generally, Nepal's Hindu-dominated society has excluded four groups of people from the contemporary development processes either through political exclusion (decentralised efforts of development, basic citizenship rights, etc.) or through economic exclusion (concentrated urban market centres) or through social exclusion (sociocultural attributes—a legacy of age old culture,

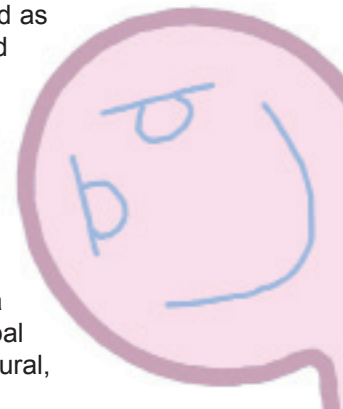
Nepalese society is divided into casts which causes preconditions for different forms and levels of exclusion.





etc.).

These four groups are:

- **Dalits or lower caste people:** The Dalit community in Nepal is not only discriminated to use and have access to public utilities and places but excluded from the legal system and public policies.
 - **Indigenous people or Janajati:** The Nepali state has recognised 61 indigenous communities only in 1999. However, the state has defined the communities conservatively by calling them groups that face socioeconomic and cultural backwardness. Indigenous people face consequences in terms of discrimination, because of their small population and due to historic and current discriminatory treatment by the state and society.
 - **Madeshi or Terai inhabitants:** In spite of having a long history of origin and habitat, the Madeshi community is practically considered as outsiders. They continue to be marginalised and have faced exclusion in active political participation, administration and governance, decision- making and policy planning. Moreover, they face problems like issues of citizenship and finding their true identity in their own native land.
 - **Women:** The Constitution of Nepal has guaranteed the right of equality to women, however discrimination against women and problems concerning women manifest themselves in a number of ways in Nepal. The low status of women in Nepal can be traced to a number of interrelated economic, legal, cultural, political, and institutional factors.
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PERU

Peru is a country where social exclusion is very profound but at the same time very subtle.

Sociological and anthropological evidence suggest that there are several mechanisms through which ethnic and racial discrimination affect the life of a large part of the population.

However, precise measurements of the extent to which the potentially excluded groups are affected, are almost nonexistent. In Peru the majority of the urban population has a mixed background, and most of them will be *mestizos*. However, this mixed population is and is perceived as highly heterogeneous.


Social exclusion in the form of racial or ethnic discrimination is widespread in Peru, a highly multiracial and multilingual country.

Poverty, economic and social wellbeing are clearly related to ethnicity, race and cultural traits.

Indigenous are more likely to be poor than any other ethnic group. While overall poverty rate in Peru is 49%, the poverty rate of the indigenous population (those whose mother's tongue is Quechua, Aymara or other native language reach 70%.

The most common reason for social exclusion in Peru is based on people's ethnic and indigenous origin.





Moreover, more than 75% of the indigenous people can be found in the three bottom deciles of the income distribution.

Social exclusion goes beyond poverty. Many groups in the society are excluded from markets for certain goods and services in a process that may affect economic outcomes through different channels. It may affect the access to public and private assets (human, physical, financial, or organisational capital).

Many studies account for the various forms of social exclusion that take place in Peru.

Gender discrimination has been studied in reference to the access of women to political leadership, in educational enrolment and attainment and in labour market performance: participation and wage differentials.

Ethnic discrimination has also been studied, usually through case studies and ethnographic studies. In Peru, racial and ethnic differences explain differences in access to public services, to education, health and to social networks. This in turn affects human capital accumulation and hampers social mobility prospects of individuals with specific backgrounds.



VIETNAM


Vietnam is a complex cultural and political area. Its social and cultural composition officially consists of 54 ethnic groups. The geographical distribution of the population shows a considerable concentration of minorities in the mountainous areas, notably in the North and in the Centre of the country where the access to infrastructures and services remains little and more difficult.

In fact, many studies focus their attention on the social inequalities through the prism of ethnical diversity.


The “Viet” or “Kinh” group appears in the statistical data at 86 % of the total population, concentrated in coastal area and inland deltas. They represent a group generally well-fare population, which has an easy access to infrastructure facilities, health service and education.

“Hoa” or Chinese is the second majority group : their economic power is relatively important and they live in inland deltas and coastal areas as well. In Vietnam social exclusion and poverty concerns mainly **ethnic minority groups** and the analysis of this process have to take into consideration the inequalities in the ethnic structure of the society.

The data related to poverty shows general improvement, but the poverty of ethnic majority groups remains much lower than that of ethnic minority groups.



Inequalities mainly impact ethnic minority groups in Vietnam.




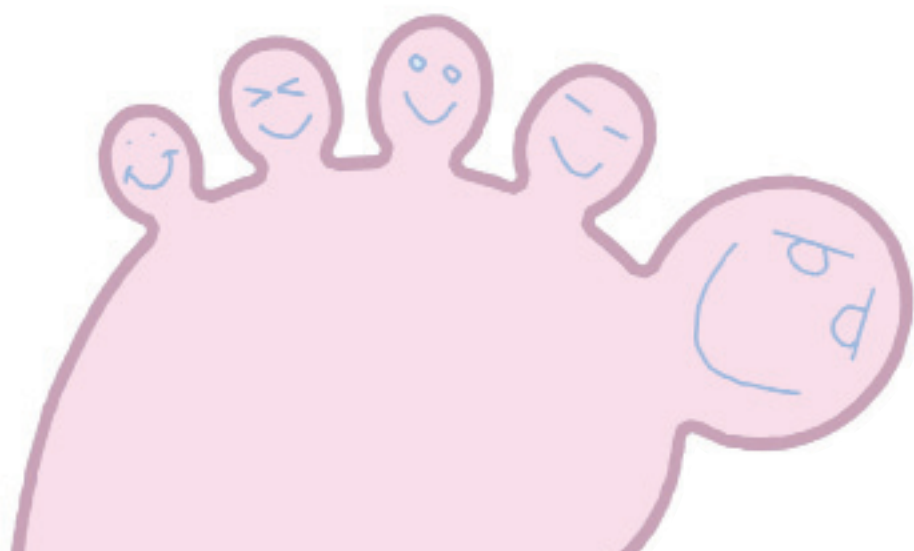
Poverty levels are higher in the upland areas of the centre and northern Vietnam where the minority groups are concentrated. Social vulnerability highly affects minority groups as it concerns them even higher than poverty does. In recent anthropological studies, this issue is analysed in relation to unequal access to markets, government services, political representation, resources, information, and social infrastructures. Regional and socioeconomic disparities contribute strongly to the creation of structural and social inequality among minority and majority groups and among different minority groups.

The access of young people to education is another ratio that shows considerable variations. The access to primary school education is more common, with an important exception - the Hmong, for example, whose literacy rates are around 5-10%. Nevertheless a larger gap concerns the secondary school education. Various studies attribute these gaps to poor infrastructure and accessibility, language and cultural barriers, limited quality of teachers, low suitability of curriculum and the perception among minority groups that returns to education are low.

Further on, gender inequality is also there. However, the quality of health services provided to women is dropping in mountainous areas. A high percentage of ethnic minority women are not able to use the assistance from qualified health workers. Certainly, this fact should be analysed in an overall anthropological prospect as various factors (economic, cultural, social and political) could be taken into consideration.

As a conclusion, social exclusion and the social vulnerability of youth groups in Vietnam remains highly related to creation of economic inequalities based on ethnic diversities. This phenomenon deserves a deeper analysis, which also has to take into account profound transformations coming from Vietnam's integration in the global capitalist economy.







SOCIAL INCLUSION



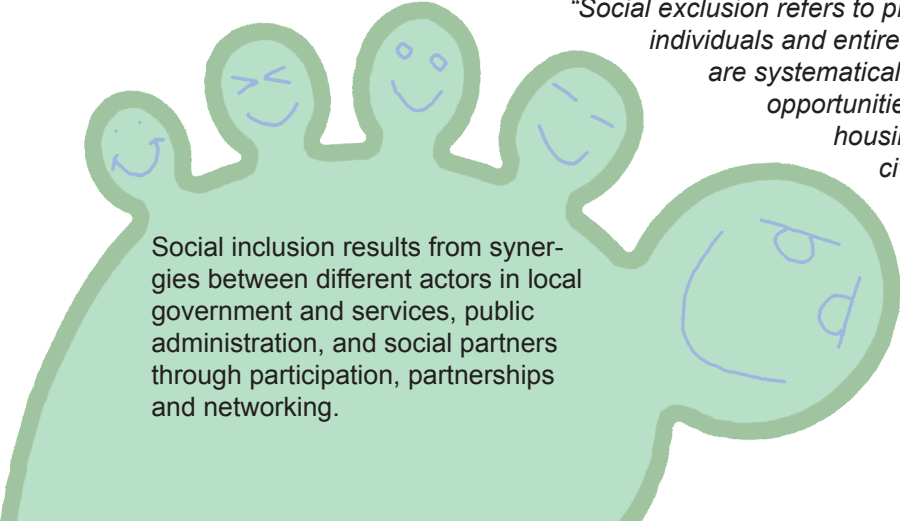
Concepts of “social inclusion” and “social exclusion” are complex and multidimensional notions, corresponding equally to complex phenomena and processes. Institutional perspectives in most cases interpret *social inclusion* or *exclusion* in terms of integration in the labour market, relating these concepts exclusively to the economical data. In contrast with this approach, A. Walther and A. Pohl suggest:

(...) Integration does not occur in a mechanical way by ‘putting’ young people into education or work but is dependent on individual decisions and active engagement in the construction of ones own biography (2005 : 33).

So, *social inclusion* and *exclusion* are processes implicating multiple dimensions of everyday individual and social life. These are influenced by different conditions: physical, social, cultural, political, economic, and geographical. These will depend also on cultural categories and local perceptions; these will depend on how you relate yourself in terms of gender and status, sexuality, ethnicity affiliations, mobility, ability and disability (Idbooker, Salto-Youth inclusion: 10). So, these processes aren't a simple result of wealth's lack or prosperity.

It's important that social exclusion and inclusion are not considered as a dichotomy: one is normally not totally excluded or included. (...) Exclusion and inclusion are also not static phenomena (Definitions of social exclusion and social inclusion by ICT: 2).

“Social exclusion refers to processes in which individuals and entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities and resources (e.g. housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation and due process) that are normally available to members of society and which are key to social integration”. Dr. Lynn Todman



Social inclusion results from synergies between different actors in local government and services, public administration, and social partners through participation, partnerships and networking.

Social inclusion can be defined as every process aiming at reducing the gap between people who belong to a disadvantaged group from any social point of view (living therefore in a status of social exclusion), and the population who can fully enjoy the rights and the opportunities offered by the society

Concerning youth groups, a lot of studies concentrate their analysis on statistical data's employment or unemployment, ignoring the self-construction processes and the youth's potential to develop personal choices and identities. Certain, economic conditions and access to local resources are also important indicators of a youth social inclusion. However there aren't singles elements to define this complex and changing process.

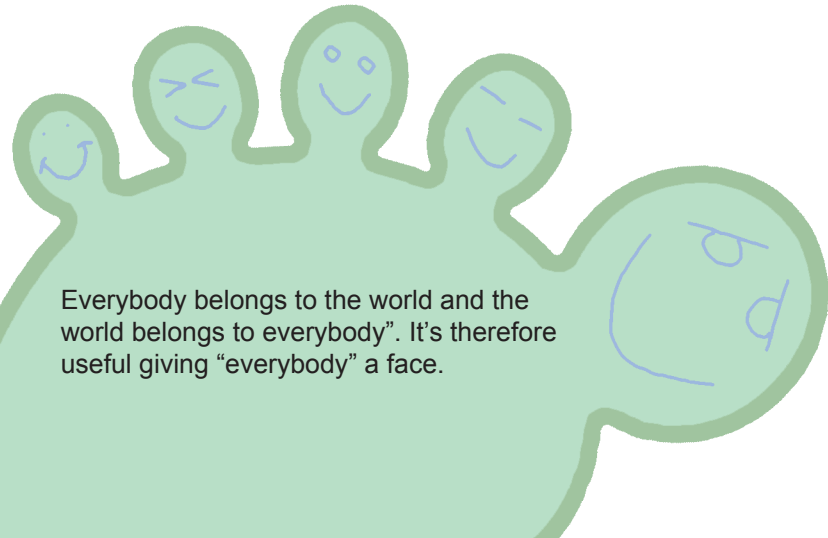
Starting from these premises, social inclusion can intuitively be defined as every process aiming at reducing the gap between people who belong to a disadvantaged group from any social point of view (living therefore in a status of social exclusion), and the population who can fully enjoy the rights and the opportunities offered by the society.

This process should be considered of primary importance, as reducing differences inside of civilian population it's a duty to be solved by all the actors of an active society, starting from the government until local NGO's and active population, as underlined during Millenium Development Goals' meeting. The third point defined during this meeting, "Gender equality and Empowerment of Women", is a good example of what social inclusion is.

Nevertheless, it's not easy putting into practice an inclusion policy, since the heterogeneity of the subjects, and is therefore useful observing the situation case by case. This does not mean that all the forms of social inclusion need a different solution. The projects concerning the inclusion of excluded groups have in fact a common guide line: the integration and the cultural interchange between the disadvantaged group and the integrated group. This approach is the first step of this complex process that cross all the fields previously mentioned.

The European Commission's **Inclusion Strategy** for the Youth in Action programme lists a number of obstacles that young people can face, which prevent them from taking active role in their society. These can include:

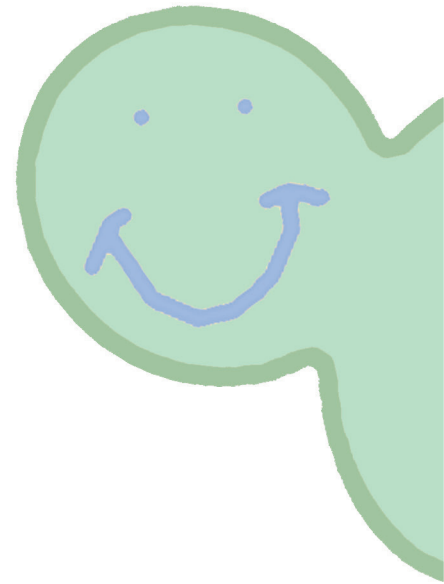
- **Social obstacles** are based on discrimination, limited social skills, anti-social behaviour, (ex-) offenders, young single parents, broken homes, etc.
- **Economic obstacles** are based on low standard of living, low income, dependent on social welfare, longterm unemployed, homeless, in debt, etc.
- **Disability**: mental, physical, sensory or other.
- **Educational challenges** are based on learning difficulties, early school-leavers, school dropouts, no qualifications, different cultural/linguistic background, etc.
- **Cultural differences** are based on young immigrants, refugees, national or ethnic minorities, linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion problems, etc.
- **Health problems** are based on chronic health problems, severe illnesses, psychiatric conditions, mental health problems, etc.
- **Geographical obstacles** are based on remote or rural areas, but also urban problem zones: decaying city centres, suburban mass-housing estates, areas of social misery, districts with a high crime rate or lack of social networks etc.

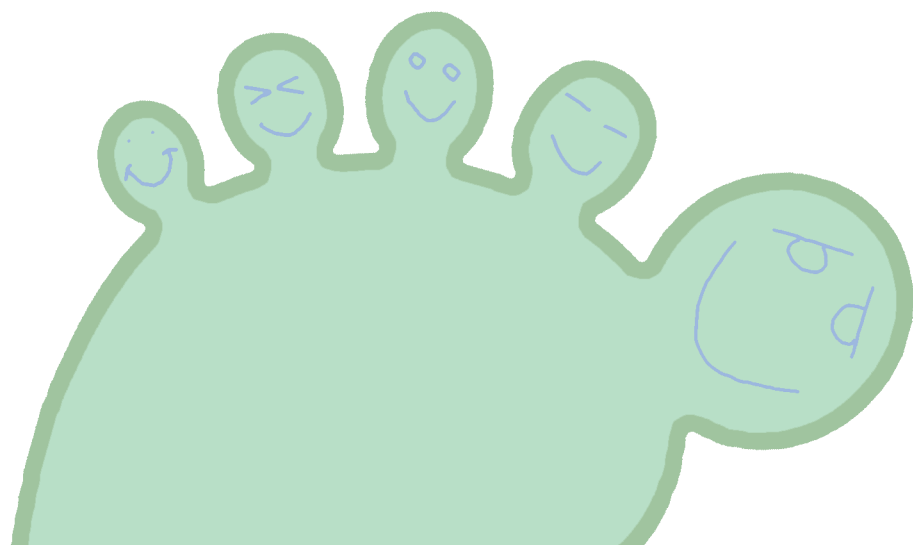


Everybody belongs to the world and the world belongs to everybody". It's therefore useful giving "everybody" a face.

Some short practical tips for including the excluded

- Create conditions for an interactive dialogue: creating forums for asking about expectations and projects of excluded groups; considering their opinions and suggestions for improving social and economic resources. Create a space to share different experiences to construct a real communication and to fight barriers.
- Give prominence to personal qualities and skills: creating a space for exploring and sharing different cultures and knowledge; working about multiples expressions of yourself (artistic, manual, intellectual, sportive, etc.).
- Implicate the excluded people in the social, political and cultural programs: give them access to the local projects and initiatives; developing their sensibility about active political and social participation.
- Create the opportunity for mobility and exchanges in other countries: giving prominence to growth of their knowledge and experience.







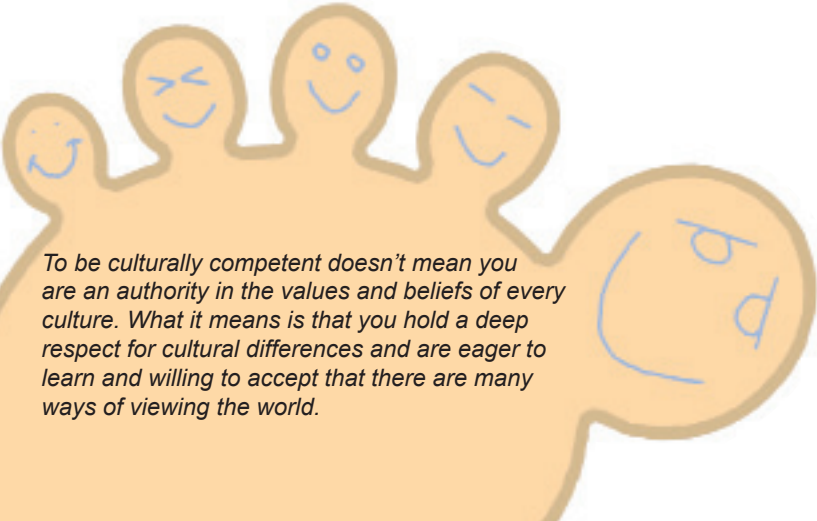
**CULTURAL
AWARENESS**

Cultural awareness is the foundation of international cooperation and partnership and it involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions. Why do we do things in that way? How do we see the world? Why do we react in that particular way?

Cultural awareness becomes central when we have to interact with people from other cultures. People see, interpret and evaluate things in different ways. What is considered an appropriate behaviour in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one. Misunderstandings arise when we use our meanings to make sense of the others' reality.

Culture is complex. It is a shared system of meanings, beliefs, values, behaviours which vary from person to person and group to group and through which experience is interpreted and carried out.

Understanding a culture takes time and patience. Very often the underlying social values, assumptions, and behaviours associated with a culture can be difficult to understand from an outside perspective.



To be culturally competent doesn't mean you are an authority in the values and beliefs of every culture. What it means is that you hold a deep respect for cultural differences and are eager to learn and willing to accept that there are many ways of viewing the world.

Degrees of cultural awareness

There are several levels of cultural awareness that reflect how people grow to perceive cultural differences.

My way is the only way

At the first level people are aware of their way of doing things and their way is the only way. At this stage they ignore the impact of cultural differences. (Parochial stage)

I know their way, but my way is better

At the second level people are aware of others' ways of doing things, but still consider their way as the best one. At this stage cultural differences are perceived as source of problems and people tend to ignore them or reduce their significance. (Ethnocentric stage)

My Way and Their Way

At this level people are aware of their own way of doing things and others' ways of doing things, and they chose the best way according to the situation. At this stage people realise that cultural differences can lead both to problems and benefits and are willing to use cultural diversity to create new solutions and alternatives. (Synergistic stage)

Our Way

This fourth and final stage brings people from different cultural background together for the creation of a culture of shared meanings. People communicate and interact repeatedly with others, create new meanings, new rules to meet the needs of a particular situation. (Participatory third culture stage)

Why is cultural awareness necessary?

Cultural awareness is crucial to help members of a multicultural communities and groups identify where things may be going wrong or how to best leverage their differences.

Cultural differences manifest in many ways. Within a multicultural team or group a person's cultural background will impact how they will think, act and behave. We have moved away from the monochromic look of our societies, to one that is now coloured by representatives from all over the world. With this new multicultural context come differences in cultures which in turn bring differences in areas such as communication, attitude towards conflict, approaches to task completion, perception of time and decision making styles, and a plethora of other cross cultural differences.

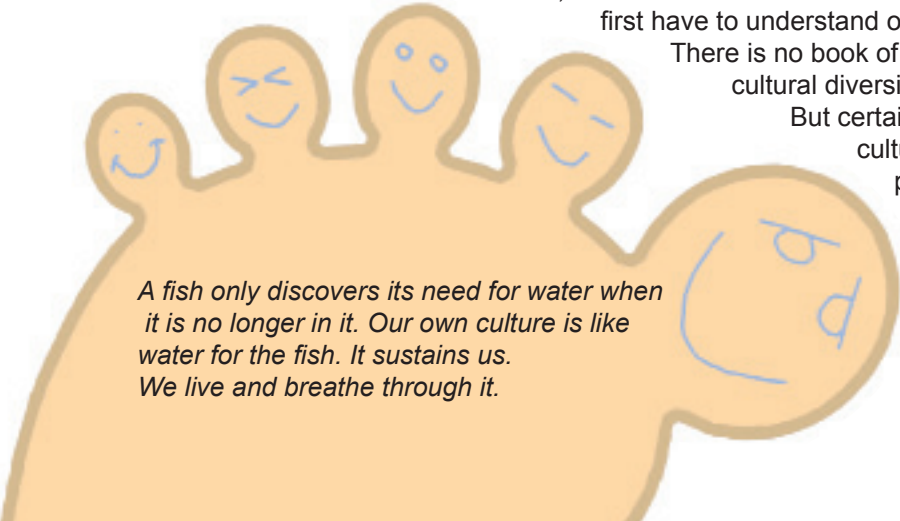
Unless people come to realise these differences between them through cultural awareness, problems can continue and even intensify.

How do I build cultural awareness?


We are generally aware that the first step in managing diversity is recognising it and learning not to fear it. Since everyone is the product of their own culture, we need to increase both self-awareness and cross-cultural awareness. Everyone has a culture which shapes how we see the world, ourselves and others. To understand another culture we first have to understand our own culture.

There is no book of instructions to deal with cultural diversity, nor recipe to follow.

But certain attitudes help to bridge cultures. Although the below presented set of tips on cultural awareness is not exhaustive and exclusive, it may offer some sort of guidance on how to go about realising change in the multicultural environment.



A fish only discovers its need for water when it is no longer in it. Our own culture is like water for the fish. It sustains us. We live and breathe through it.



Build your cultural knowledge: Understand your own culture. Try and learn a bit more about other cultures. Understand and accept the logic of other cultural frameworks.

Admit that you don't know: Knowing that we don't know everything, that a situation does not make sense, that our assumptions may be wrong is part of the process of becoming culturally aware. Assume differences, not similarities.

Suspend judgments: Collect as much information as possible so you can describe the situation accurately before evaluating it. There are aspects of culture that are fundamental but subtle and important to grasp if you are to function effectively within a new cultural context.

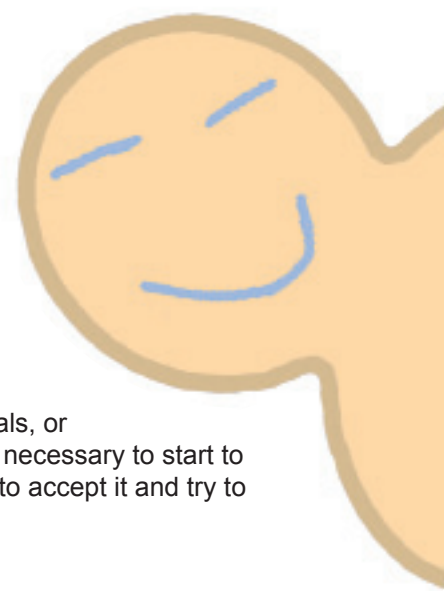
Treat people as individuals: Information in other cultures is usually based on generalisations. This means that the information will not apply to every single member of that culture. Be aware of this and try and deal with people as individuals.

Avoid stereotyping: Try not to judge and mark people based on their looks, language, dress, and other outward appearances.

Withhold conclusions: Try to avoid jumping to conclusions about people. One of the first rules of cultural awareness is refraining from assuming one way is wrong and one is right.

Refrain from interpreting: Resist the urge to automatically interpret words, gestures, values and other aspects of behaviours according to the standards of your culture. Remember that although a person's behavior may not make sense in your culture, your behaviour may not make sense in his or her culture either.

Accept values: Be careful not to impose your personal values, morals, or beliefs. Do not preach your cultural norms. At the same time it is not necessary to start to respect the new set of cultural values immediately, you simply need to accept it and try to understand it.



Show empathy: Understanding someone from another culture can be hard. People really do see the world in fundamentally different ways. People behave as they do because of the things they believe in and value. In order to understand another person you need to try standing in his/her shoes. Through empathy we learn how other people would like to be treated by us.

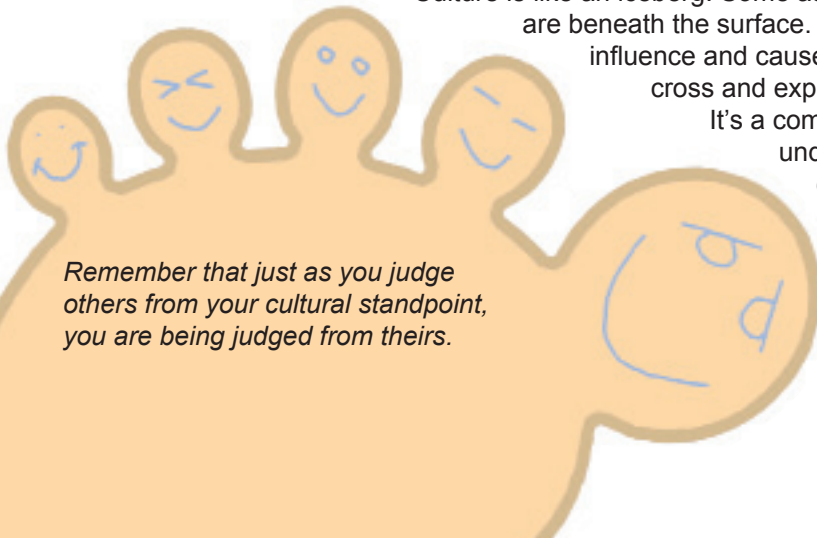
Systematically check your assumptions: Ask your friends and colleagues for feedback and constantly check your assumptions to make sure that you clearly understand the situation. It's easy to misinterpret things people do in a cross-cultural setting. To keep from misunderstanding the behaviour of others you have to try to see the world from their point of view, not yours.

Celebrate diversity: Understanding and respecting cultural differences can lead to greater harmony in your life, your community and the world.

Living and working in a multicultural environment very often leads to a clash of cultures and ends up in cultural shock which can be explained as the feelings of anxiety, disorientation and confusion that people may experience when they are immersed in a new cultural environment. The first visible aspects that can cause perplexity are the behaviour of people, the language-verbal and non-verbal, the clothes, the traditions, the cuisine, the religion, the perception of time, even the climate.

Culture is like an iceberg. Some aspects are visible, others are beneath the surface. Invisible aspects of culture influence and cause the visible ones. But to cross and experience cultures isn't easy. It's a complex process in which understanding the context is everything.

Remember that just as you judge others from your cultural standpoint, you are being judged from theirs.





There are four provisional stages of adaptation in a new culture.

Honeymoon: First exciting contact with new culture

You start feeling excitement, curiosity and slight concern.

Initial confrontation: First intensive feeling with new culture

You start feeling confusion, you are mystified about the others' culture and behaviour.

Adjustment crisis: Problems intensify

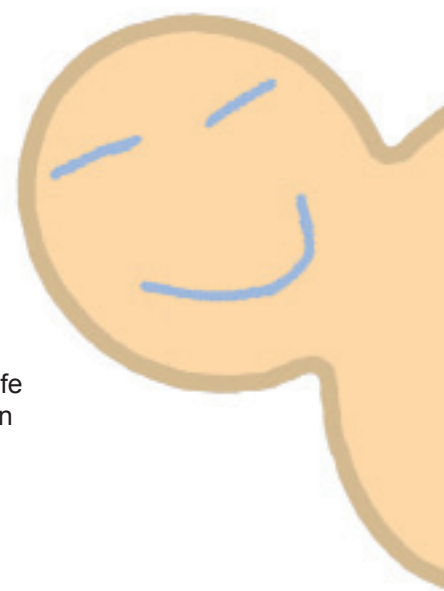
You start experiencing frustration, anger and strong confusion.

Recovery: Sense of belonging to culture emerges

You start to understand the new culture and enjoy many aspects of it.

Attempting to understand the cultural background of your partners and friends will enable you to put cultural differences into context, understand your own culture on a more profound level, and contribute to a more enriching exchange experience. As you familiarise yourself with the language, customs, and beliefs of the people from the other culture, you will improve your ability to function, interact and communicate within a new cultural context.

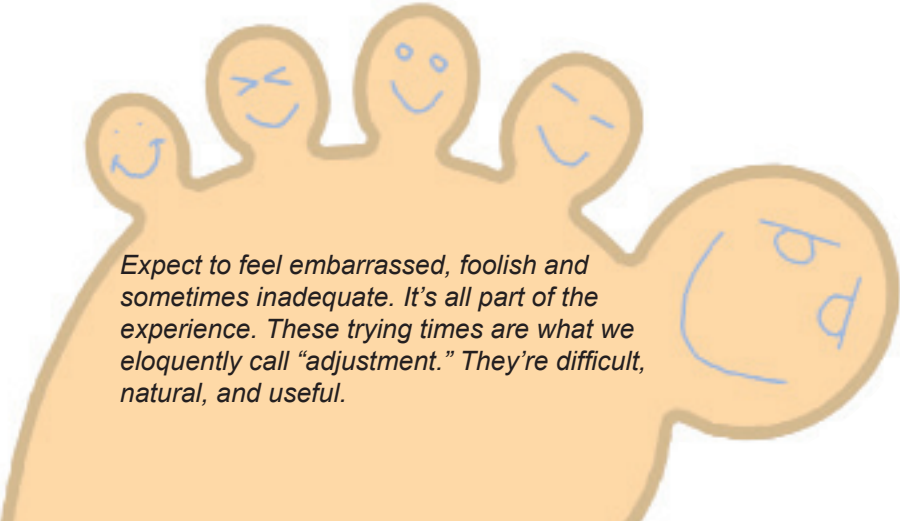
In becoming culturally aware, people realise that:

- We are not all the same
 - Similarities and differences are both important
 - There are multiple ways to reach the same goal and to live life
 - Each situation is different and may require a different solution
 - Diversity provides the ground for beauty and creativity in life
- 

Increasing cultural awareness means to see both the positive and negative aspects of cultural differences. Cultural diversity could be a source of problems, in particular when an organisation needs people to think or act in a similar way. Diversity increases the level of complexity and confusion and makes agreement difficult to reach. On the other hand, cultural diversity becomes an advantage when the organisation expands its solutions and its sense of identity, and begins to take different approaches to problem solving. Diversity in this case creates valuable new skills and behaviours.

Successful organisations have the ability to:

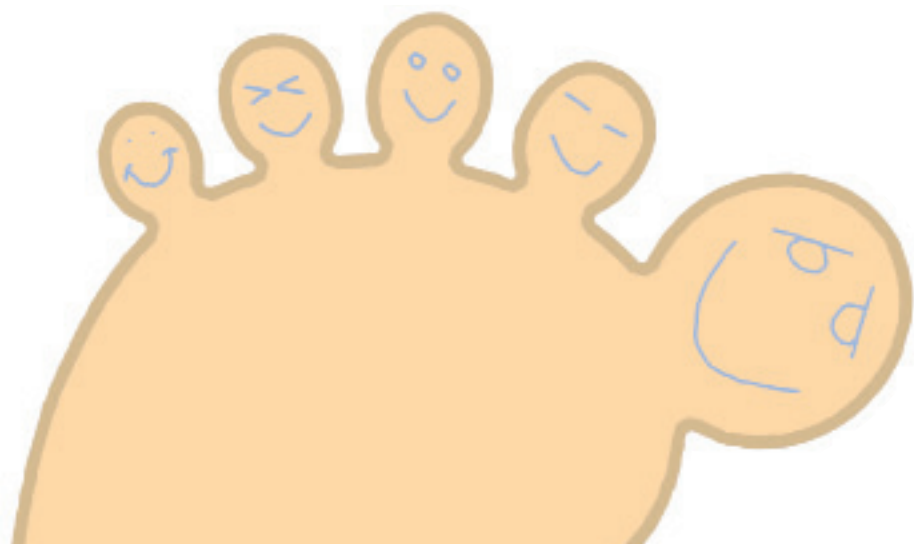
- Accept and value diversity
- Manage the dynamics of difference
- Acquire and apply cultural knowledge
- Adjust to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve



Expect to feel embarrassed, foolish and sometimes inadequate. It's all part of the experience. These trying times are what we eloquently call "adjustment." They're difficult, natural, and useful.

Culture cannot be taught. It can be only lived and experienced. The best way to become culturally aware is to meet and travel across cultures, interact with people, share their emotions, explore their lifestyles, see, taste, smell and touch the new cultural reality.







ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Recently there is an emerging shift from a more passive to a more participating and powersharing approach when it comes to participation in social life. Excluded groups have their outstanding role for the sustainable societal development by actively participating in the decision making processes, by sharing and contributing with new, inspiring ideas, by being the incentive for social change. Participation is valued as a human right and it plays a crucial role in maintaining democratic principles and is key to personal development.

Communities seeking to empower themselves can build active citizens' participation by welcoming it, creating valuable roles for each person to play, actively reaching out to build inclusive participation, and creating and supporting meaningful social opportunities.


Active citizens' participation develops true democratic processes and moreover it leads to higher rates of resource acquisition and use, better results, higher levels of volunteerism and a brighter community spirit.

Levels of active participation

Several levels of active participation can be distinguished based on the impact scale of the demand-and-benefit driven results.

First level: Myself

At that level my participation is driven by personal demands to solve problems and achieve gains while exerting my individual civil rights. My personal gain is the focus of my efforts.



Every person has the right to be an active citizen. Active participation is the soul of an empowered community.

Second level: Myself and my group

At the second level my participation affects not only my life but the life of an extended social group. While standing for my rights, I am concerned and also stand for the rights of the group that I represent and belong to. My achievements are beneficial both for me and my fellows

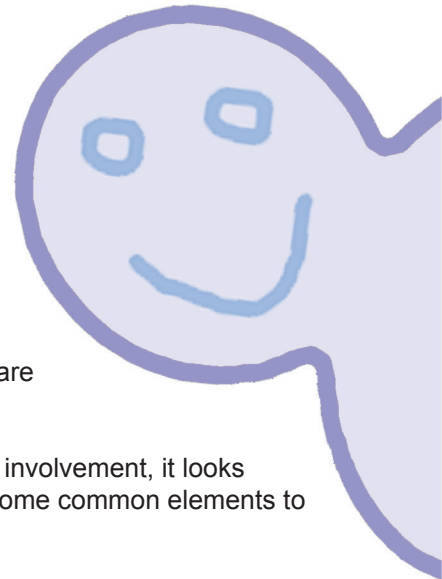
Third level: Myself, my group and the community

I am driven by totally philanthropic and idealistic incentive to support and encourage the social development of my community. I have social responsibility towards the community that I work and live in. I address current issues of social injustice, propose solutions and create opportunities and benefits by taking an active role in community processes. I am more concerned about the further social impact of my efforts than the impact that it will have on my personal life. At that stage very often I am the social innovator who suggests new patterns of social behaviour.

What are the principles of active participation?

Active community participation is key to building an empowered community. It is also crucial to achieving community success. In addition, participating communities achieve greater citizens' satisfaction with their community. What does a participating community look like? While it varies from one place to another, there are several characteristics that participating communities share.

The truth is that there is no one right way to achieve deep community involvement, it looks different and obeys different rules in every community. Yet there are some common elements to sound participation that can be found in all communities.



It requires the involvement of many people. In participating communities many people are involved in the activities of the community. Community is not simply run by an elite leadership, but it is the work and the achievement of all its members.


It is many centered and multisectoral. Participating communities are open to involvement by all groups and responsibilities are divided in a way to best show and promote their skills, talents and capacities. Power and responsibility are decentralised. Participating communities have many centers of activity and community action engages the natural enthusiasm of its citizens.

It is open and well informed. Participating communities conduct their activities openly and spread information about them widely. Citizens are well informed about the events done in the community and about their opportunities for personal involvement in meaningful roles.

It welcomes fresh and innovative ideas. In participating communities there is no such thing as a bad idea. All ideas are treated with respect and welcomed as a source of inspirations with potential value for the entire community. Participating communities encourage citizens to offer their best and contribute to the common well-being.

It is inclusive, diverse and reaches out to all community groups.

Participating communities make no distinctions among various groups and types of personalities who offer support and contribute to the community development. All persons are warmly welcomed regardless of color, age, race, prior community involvement, level of education, occupation, personal reputation, disadvantages, religion, or any other factor. Furthermore, participating communities do



Participation in which people don't quite know why they are there, what the goals are, how it will work and what will come afterwards - is a recipe for disaster...

not sit passively, waiting for a diverse group of citizens to present themselves. They actively reach out to all citizens to encourage their participation.

It is open-minded and transparent. Participating communities operate openly and with an open mind. They are not controlled by any single organisation, group or philosophy and they facilitate the discussion of a diversity of viewpoints, rather than push its own agenda. Participating communities are not ego-driven but focused on operating a high-quality, open decision-making and participatory process.

How do we build active participation?

It's widely believed that any group of people have the power to change the world. But before that, they need to be motivated to become active citizens. How can they be inspired? How can they take an active role their communities? What are the tools and approaches that we can use? Those matters need to be addressed and profoundly considered by nowadays society.

Welcome it

The most important action you can take to encourage citizens' participation is to welcome it. People know when they are welcome, and when they are not. Welcoming participation means more than behaving friendly. It requires opening the process to newcomers and inviting their active participation.



Some actions that can help are:


- Provide them training and support to get them equipped with skills and information necessary to address local realities and needs.
- Offer young people opportunities for educational and professional development.
- Be glad for the opportunity for new contributions, despite any resentment that you might feel that they were not present to help with already completed tasks.
- Explain where things stand, so participants can fit into the process easily.
- Offer a variety of opportunities, so newcomers can find roles that best fit their interests and skills and ways they wish to engage.
- Make participation voluntary and show respect and appreciation to young people's efforts, knowledge, skills and competences.
- Value newcomers' input, take their ideas seriously, even when they represent viewpoints that have previously been considered and rejected. Be patient.
- Create safe, supportive and conformable environment where people can create and express themselves freely.
- Ensure transparent, non-discriminatory participation of young people.
- Create relationships based on mutual trust and respect.
- Don't leave them out by making decisions among the old members.

Create Real Roles

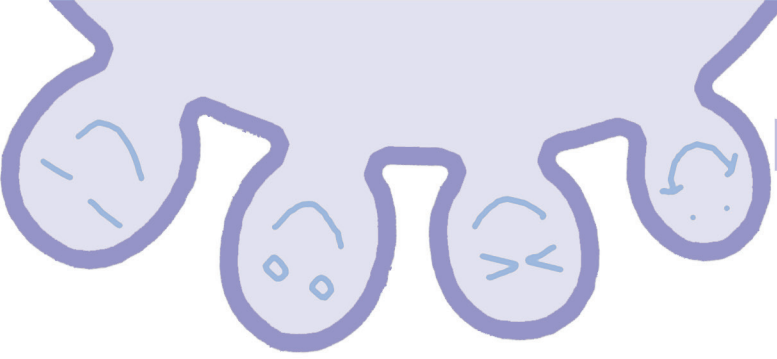
Nobody wants to stand on the sideline. Each of us wants to play a position in the game. This is as true for newcomers as for those who have been participating for some time.

In every community there is more than enough work to keep people busy and involved.

- Assign new participants something that gives them a sense of meaningful



The real reason for active involvement is not to gain a notoriety and power but to get shared responsibilities when working for the sustainable development and growth of your community.

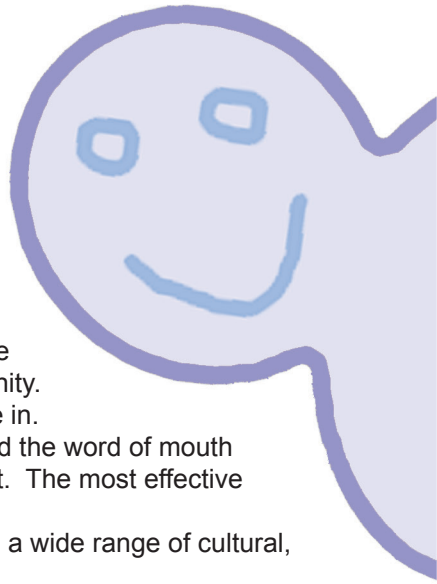


involvement and helps them understand that their contribution - no matter how small - advances the overall effort.

- Hold them accountable for their results. This is an excellent way to help them see their contribution to the strategic plan and it also assures their work has focus and value.
- Expand their roles as time goes to take full benefit from their willingness to contribute. At first newcomers' duties may not carry much responsibility, while they are learning.
- Focus attention on the community rather than the individual personality as it might feel threatening for old members to give responsibilities to someone new. But fresh ideas are the lifeblood of a vital community, and additional hands can help renew the strength of those who have carried out the loads of work in the past.

Reach Out

Because of past discrimination, or just because of the belief that community development is someone else's job, citizens may be reluctant to step forward. This is especially true for members of socially excluded groups historically left out of community affairs and for groups that have newly arrived. To achieve the broadbased participation that is essential to building a true community, you need to reach out and access all community groups.

- Promote and provide information about the activities in all media channels – social and mass media - that have proven to be effective and are a source of reliable information for your community.
 - Making presentations at meetings which you initiate or participate in.
 - Have direct contacts with the members of your community, spread the word of mouth about what you do and try to achieve for community development. The most effective techniques involve direct, personal contacts.
 - Seek and enjoy diversity - ensure the participation of people from a wide range of cultural, social and economic backgrounds.
- 

Get Ready

Turning toward an open, participative community process is not an easy thing to do. It means introducing ways of working that you may not be familiar and comfortable with. It means inviting new and challenging ideas into to be discussed and considered. It means working closely with unfamiliar people with whom you may feel you have little in common, or who make you uncomfortable. It means accepting the fact that the outcomes you anticipate may not be the ones that eventually occur. It means tolerating a more difficult decision-making process until new groups are fully accepted and have fully adjusted, and new working methods are established. For some well-grounded actors it also means giving up a cherished personal or social role, in favor of others whose right to share resources and contribute must be acknowledged.

As your community makes this transition and as individuals change their own perspectives about community-wide participation, they are also left with the feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment and feel the sense of ownership and belonging to their own community.

However, the more important reason for community involvement is to build a true community in the place you live and work. And it is to make that community a better place for all who belong to it.



Active participation brings a deep sense of joy that comes from knowing you are a valuable part of something beautiful that is larger than all of you - a living community.

IMAGE BUILDING




The image building and media coverage for any youth organisation is getting more and more important. If the activities of the organisation are more widely known, then the organisation assumedly will be able to accomplish more. Media not only gives exposure of the activity of the organisation, but it also gives it credibility. And having a good knowledge about different types of media, public relations and marketing of youth NGO is increasingly important in today's climate for the positive image building of youth NGO.

Media appears to have an increasing role in the daily life of civil society organisations and in particular of youth organisations as by using appropriately its potential they can reach a wider circle of youngsters, even disadvantaged ones.

General approaches that should be used to promote and build the image of the organisation

Lobbying

Lobbying is a tool that simply implies putting pressure on a stakeholder. In a few and simple words, lobbying simply means getting in touch with the right person in order to influence change and foster action. Today communication has raised to an unprecedented level, and you should treat each communication tool as a mean for putting pressure on the person or group you want to lobby.



The main rule of journalism is **Be Brief**, and it applies to all sectors of media.

Media and journalism

Mass media is a business, its currency is information, they sell information and they buy information, therefore it is important for a media officer to know how to sell information to the mass media. The most important element of a good mass media is information, since media is the business of information. Every good journalist and producer/editor has its own information channels and informers, just like the police. When working with mass media, media officers should be aware what is the best way to provide information to press, TV and radio; how to deal with interviews; how to establish relationships with media and how to organise media events.

Non-profit marketing

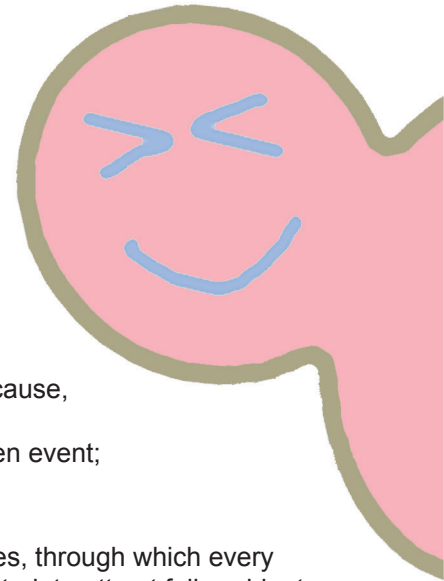
Naturally, many organisations are still avoiding marketing, believing that it is a sacred territory reserved for the business. The growing importance of non-profit organisations around the world demonstrates that the basic principles of marketing are fully applicable to the non-profit sector and that marketing is the key to success. The terms “target groups”, “segmentation”, “marketing mix” and its components – product, price, place and promotion – have become an integral part of the work in the third sector.

Campaigning

Depending on the stage of the lifecycle of our organisation, event or cause, the campaign may be qualified as:

- introductory campaign – intensive campaign that starts before a given event;
- sustaining campaign – aimed at forming loyalty to the cause;
- reminder campaign – aimed at maintaining the loyalty to the cause.

No matter what type the campaign is, there are several different stages, through which every cause or campaign goes through: to be recognized, to be communicated, to attract fellowship, to stay with people, to be sustainable.



The internet

Internet is an obligatory and inevitable part of the overall communication strategy of each organisation. The main internet tools that are used for promotion and image building are: websites, web 2.0 tools (blogs, social networks, microblogging, sharing video and photo content, online video, geolocation) and e-mail marketing.

How to make effective promotion and image building of NGOs

When lobbying

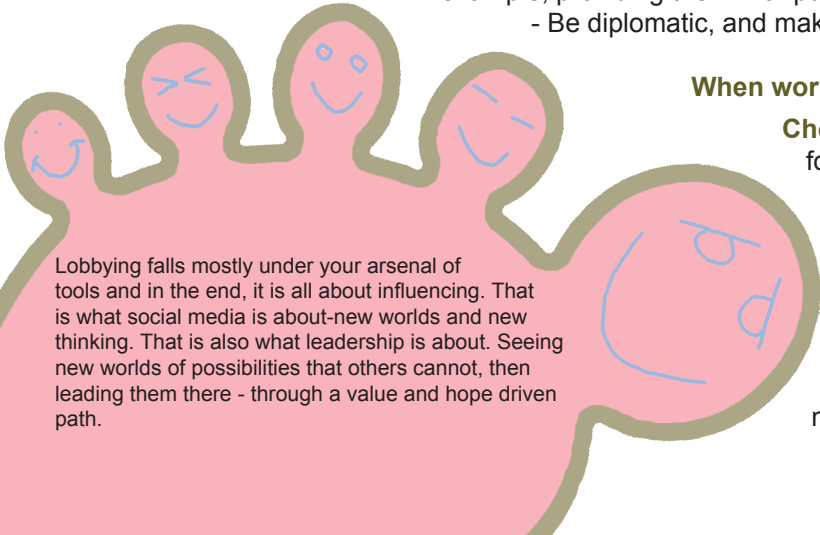
There are several ground rules to follow:

- Do not beg but propose, after all you are doing them a favour by contacting and sharing with them your plans.
- Wedge in a threat - show them what will happen if they do not support you.
- Seduce them - show them what you are actually good at, your contacts and who already supports you.
- Give them a perspective of what will happen due to their support, and throw in extra offers, for example, providing them with publicity as a token of gratitude.
 - Be diplomatic, and make concrete proposals.

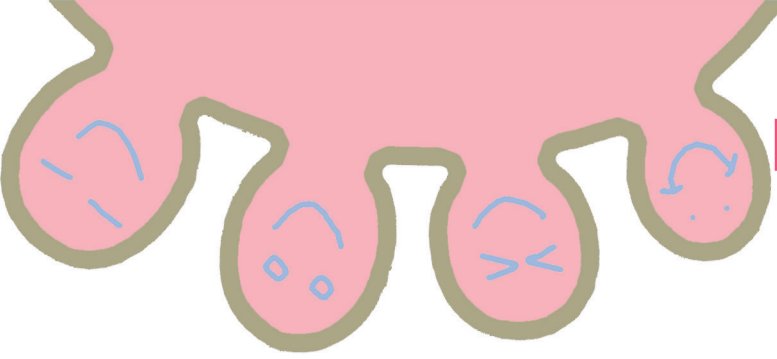
When working with mass media

Choose a Message, a reason for choosing this message and a way to deliver it.

Once the news are chosen decide on how and where to present them. It shows your **priorities**, and it can manipulate the thoughts of the audience about the news, because it's you who



Lobbying falls mostly under your arsenal of tools and in the end, it is all about influencing. That is what social media is about-new worlds and new thinking. That is also what leadership is about. Seeing new worlds of possibilities that others cannot, then leading them there - through a value and hope driven path.



create their moods. The same principle as above applies to **sequences** (the series of images which makes a scene)

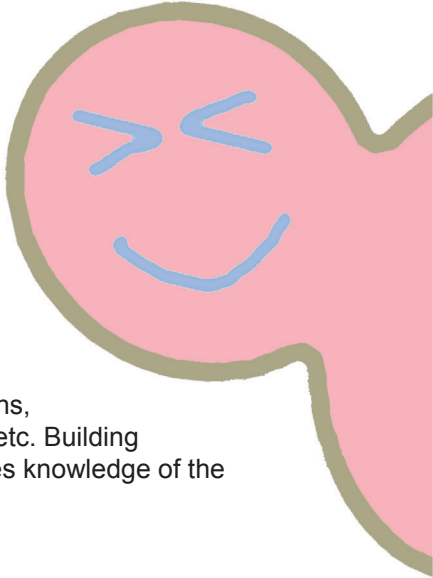
Some tips about press releases: speak the language of media and the language of its audience; carefully choose “your” media;

Organise media events and invite media to participate in your activities: you can give the journalists a special treatment, and can approach them individually, exchange contacts, and also discuss issues of your organisation, projects, activities, future plans, etc.

When developing your marketing strategy

Get to know your target groups better. In order to design the most appropriate strategy for the respective purpose, get to know what are the needs, desires, beliefs, prejudices and fears of the people you are targeting. Also, it is good to have in-depth understanding of their behaviour, preferences and tastes. Knowing these will help you to select the most appropriate marketing mix to address them.

Make use of your resources. The activities of nonprofit organisations usually depend not only on the targeted groups, but also on other audiences, which provide the resources for the organisation. These audiences cover not only the variety of funding sources, but they also include the people who contribute to the non-financial activities, such as public institutions, international organisations, business corporations, customers, private donors, media, volunteers, etc. Building sustainable relationships with each of these specific audiences requires knowledge of the goals they pursue and of their guiding principles.



When organising a campaign

Build a solid team of collaborators. You should assign and delegate different types of tasks to the members of your team as you will have to work on different levels: coordinating events, working with online media, working with offline media, working with sponsors.

When using the internet

Create your website. Anyone should be able to tell in four seconds who you are/what you do when they enter your home page. A good home page should definitely have: a guessable URL, correct and full contact information, e-mail sign-up (so you can approach people after their visit), key word density (so people will find you via search), images - strong, emotional ones that are clickable (people expect images to be clickable – redirect them to the information of utmost importance and priority).

Make use of web 2.0 tools. Nowadays these tools, especially social networks, prove to be the some of most effective tools not only to reach your target group but also to get feedback from them and gain new followers.

Several basic rules determine the success of your online presence and your efforts: persistence, positive attitude, proactivity, originality.

The benefits for your organisation would be tremendous if you have learned and have acquired the know-how to make a good promotion of your activities.

The more a social campaign resembles a commercial product campaign, the more successful it is.





IMAGE BUILDING

Benefit 1: First you become more transparent and visible.

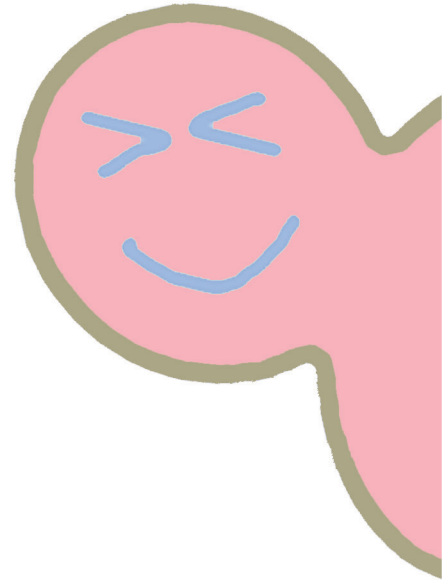
Benefit 2: Your mission is better understood and your message more easily articulated to the public.

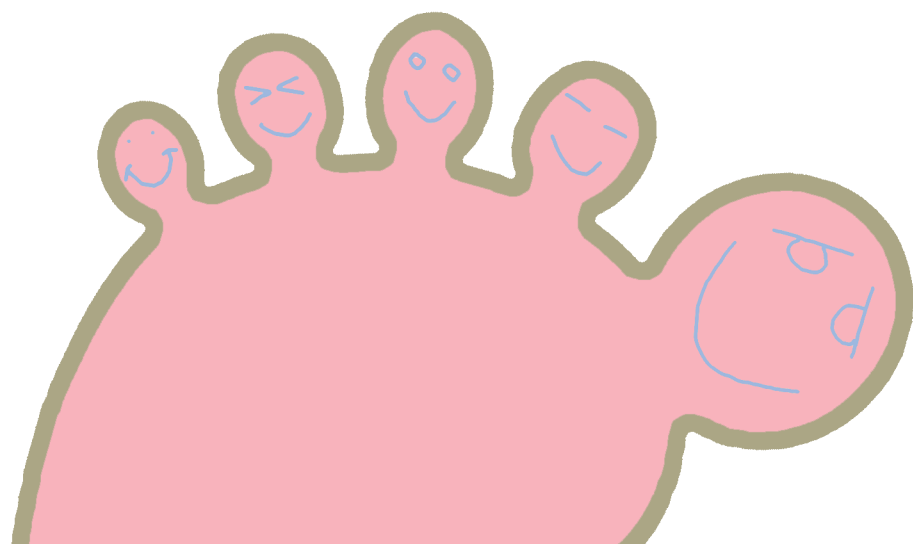
Benefit 3: Furthermore, you generate greater interest towards your activities and attract new followers and members,

Benefit 4: Step by step you start reaching out to representatives of excluded groups that fall into your target.

Benefit 5: Finally you become more influential and have gained trust and recognition.

Consider all the above stated benefits when you do non-profit activity and want to be effective in addressing the needs of the target groups that you serve. Your promotion and image building is crucial for the success and the sustainability of your work.

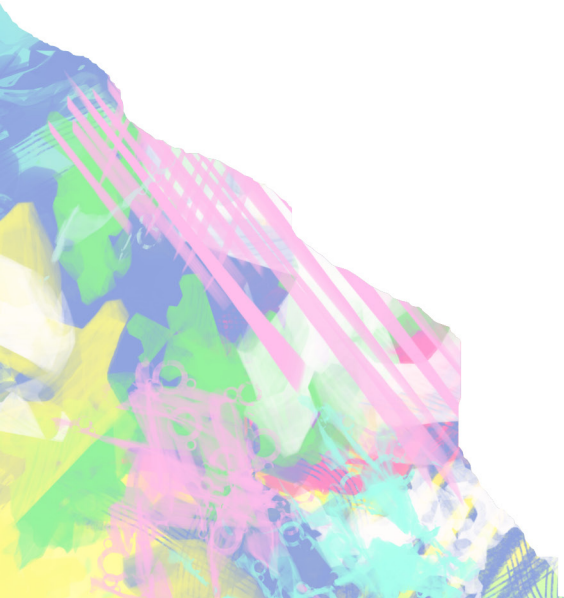






**INSPIRATION
for YOUTH**

Here are some thoughts, comments and feedback from participants that motivate us and inspire us to keep doing what we do...





Mexico

- The course was very important for my life and the information and organizers were and inspiration for me.
- Now I'm very inspired to visit and volunteer in another country, it is very nice. We love you...
- This program really helped me and amplified my vision.
- I have learnt dropping off the stereotypes and prejudices.
- I realized the importance to be open minded, to listen to other's ideas, learning about other cultures. Finally to be more friendly and active
- I think the trainers have a lot of experience, and they taught us many things, sharing with us special moments. We really enjoyed spending time with them. We'll always remember you.
- I realized how important the culture inside us is.
- Add me to your world!

Vietnam

- I had a chance to practice what I had learned. Beside I worked with my team together and we had fun. I realized that if I focus on what I am doing, I will do it faster and more efficiently.
- I was so impressed by the funny games that we played during the training sessions and I have learnt that if you want to understand something, you have to take part in it, you have to do, not only talk. And the games, the activities that you make are very helpful to teach people and to give them the chance to participate.
- The trainers really let us work independently and the most important element is that you learn from what you are feeling and experiencing.
- I have learnt how to manage a project. I find it very useful for myself.





Nepal

- I like the way they made us understand about some topics through good examples and playing games. I learned about team management, active participation, fund raising, etc. I was really impressed by their way of teaching.
- I liked the ability to get a shy group and involved it into the activities.
- I have improved knowledge and built self-confidence.
- I will take in my memory games, friends and trainers.
- This experience taught me about team work with cooperation and different types of training strategy. If we put more enthusiasm and effort it will be much better!
- This experience changed drastically my opinion about voluntary work.
- I've understood that any kind of work, if you have a good team, can be easily realized. STEPS 4 NGO's SAVE THE WORLD.
- Even small groups or a single person can make a change.
- Get involved anyway you can.

Peru

- I have learnt a lot about intercultural variety, sharing my own culture with other people and appreciating the beauty of foreign cultures.
- I made a lot of friends with which I will keep in touch.
- I have understood and appreciated the structure and the value of non formal education.
- I learned to work in a team and to not think only about myself, but to work for the achievement of common objectives. I gained a lot of experience.
- The culture of each country is something amazing, if you can appreciate its customs and traditions without prejudices and without denying our origin.





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This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme



EACEA

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