

Strengthening Identity. Meeting the challenges together

Training course for youth workers and youth leaders

Introduction

Dear colleagues, youth workers, youth leaders and volunteers,

In 2024 our three organisations Solidarus e.V., Young Folks Lv. and Young Folks Lt. with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union implemented the project 'Strengthening Identity. Meeting the challenges together'. This project was focused on developing partners' capacities to support young in strengthening their identity in the context of current social challenges.

A training course for youth workers and youth leaders with less experience was developed during this project. Now we would like to share this result of our work with you.

We would like to point out that this training course was designed to meet the expectations of specific organisations, reflecting the needs of their employees and the youth they work with. Nevertheless, the international nature of the project made it possible to apply this know-how to different contexts. However, as always in non-formal education, the application of what is described below will require you to adapt to your context, the needs and competences of the trainers, and to more closely examine the methods outlined, which may also be replaced by more appropriate ones.

This training course aims to enhance the competency of young leaders and youth workers in recognizing and responding to identity-related issues in their daily work with youth groups. Participants engage in activities to raise awareness of their own identity and related challenges, increase their understanding of identity issues and their various categories, practice skills for identifying and addressing identity-related situations in youth groups, and develop specific practical steps to integrate their learning into their work with youth.

Its objectives are:

- Enhance self-awareness: Support participants in reflecting on their own identities and understanding how personal experiences shape their perspectives and interactions in youth work.



- Deepen understanding of identity models: Explore different models of identity, including its structural dimensions and links to memory culture, to equip youth workers with a broader conceptual framework.
- Strengthen competencies in diversity and inclusion: Develop participants' ability to recognize and address identity-related challenges in youth groups, fostering more inclusive and supportive environments.
- Expand methodological toolkit: Provide youth workers with diverse non-formal education methods and approaches to effectively engage with identity, diversity, and inclusion topics in their local youth work.
- Translate learning into practice: Help participants develop concrete strategies and action plans to integrate the training's insights into their daily work with young people.

Programme of the Training course

Day 1

Getting to know each other. Ice breaking

Games like: "Name and gesture", "Talking chairs", "Make a line" etc.

1,5 hours

Expectations. Planned programme

"Tree of expectations" with categories: expectations from the programme, from the group, from me (my contribution) and my fears; with following short discussion how don't make the fear become true.

Presenting the planned programme with visualisation on the board, using moderation cards in order to show that it can be corrected according to the group process.

45 min.

First introduction in non-formal education (as a methodology of the training)

Short presentation of the main principles of non-formal education from the trainers, with emphasizing that active participation is important, critical thinking will be and going out of "comfort zones" will be provoked by trainers, but the participants have the right "don't to answer the challenges".

45 min



What is Youth Work

Making mind maps in smaller mixed groups of 4-5 participants. The subject of mind map is “Youth Work”. 30 min for group work.

Tips for the method can be find in many sources, for example here:

<https://www.projectwizards.net/en/blog/2018/08/groupmindmapping>

There are also description of using mind maps with digital tools.

Presentations of the mind maps in the plenary (20 min) and following debriefing as an sessions of questions and comments from the participants to each others´ mind maps (20 min).

Competence based approach to Youth Work

A presentation from the trainers based on the publication:

YOCOMO. A Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally

Published by JUGEND für Europa/SALTO Training & Cooperation (www.salto-youth.net/Training-And-Cooperation, ETS@salto-youth.net). The revised edition of this publication was published in March 2023.

Online access: <https://www.flipsnack.com/saltotrainingandcooperation/ets-competence-model-for-youth-workers.html>

Day 2

Family memory

The method served both – the following getting to know each other on personal level and making connections between the participants, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, as an introduction to the topic of Memory Culture and Identity.

***My Origin** – a method from the project’s **Methodological Workbook**, pages 14-16*

Memory Culture and Identity

A plenary discussion on connection between memory and identity – moderated and visualised by the trainers. It starts with the two words on the flip chart “Memory” and “Identity” and the task to the participants to brainstorm connections between these two things. It might be ideas of inter-influences, associations, things distinguishing them, open questions to both of them or to their connections. The moderated discussion continues with collecting and writing down these ideas and also comments on them. After 15 minutes it turns to the questions to the group “What do we see? What do you think about that? How do you feel about that?” (15 min). No need to make a conclusion



or common summary. This collection of the ideas and questions helps to keep in mind these issues for the following activities.

Collective memory – experiential phase

Participants are divided in 3 mixed groups and sent to the memorials in the city, that are dedicated to different groups of people, who were oppressed by any regime in the country because of their identity.

In Berlin these memorials are: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Sinti and Roma Memorial, Memorial to Homosexuals Persecuted Under Nazism.

The groups have task to visit all three memorials and work deeply with one of them (according the assignment): spend longer time there, individually reflect on the following questions, write down the ideas of the answers and then share them with each other.

The questions are:

- What is your first impression of the memorial, which emotions creates it?
- Whom about is this memorial? Who are represented directly / not directly? From which perspectives? Whom about it makes you think?
- What is special about this memorial?
- What kind of interaction with the memorial are possible? Which senses we are using being there (what we can see, hear, feel by touch etc.)?
- Which symbols, ways of expressions are used in the memorial?
- Ask 10 people coming from the memorial about their impressions and thought and shortly write down the answers.

Day 3

Collective memory – reflection phase

In the same groups participants prepare presentations of their experiences. In this process they already makes next step, so, their task is to share not the answers they collected and not to describe how it was, but to summarise their impressions, emotions and ideas of the visits in visual creative work – posters or 3D paper installations.

Materials: big sheets of paper (e.g. flip chart paper), colour papers, glue, scissors, newspapers and magazines with illustrations, and other available materials for creativity.

Time for preparation: 1,5 hour.



The second step is presentations (40 min) of the results: up to 7 minutes for each group plus 5 minutes for questions from other participants. It is important to moderate that it is not about discussion and critical questions, rather about questions for better understanding.

Debriefing with leading questions (30 min):

- How do you feel?
- What do you take from this activity?
- What does it say about the topic “Memory and Identity”?
- How can you transfer this new knowledge in your professional competencies?

Memory, culture and identity in practice

Man/Mouse – a method from

T-Kit 4 Intercultural learning, Council of Europe and European Commission, March 2018.

Published by the Council of Europe

pages: 87-88

Online access: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/t-kit-4-intercultural-learning>

Available in multiple languages.

Originally the method is taken from “Baustein zur nicht rassistischen Bildungsarbeit”:

www.baustein.dgb-bwt.de/PDF/C1-BilderImKopf.pdf (in German language).

For the debriefing we exchanged questions 5 and 6 from the description for the following ones:

- What does it have to do with memory and identity?
- What is the role of predefined images or stereotypes in the process of seeing something in daily life? How is it connected with memory culture and identity? How does it connect memory culture and identity?

We also extended time for the debriefing to make space for deeper reflection and for more participants to be engaged. So, the total duration of the activity was 1 hour.

My identity – where I belong

For this session we used modified method **Identity Molecule**

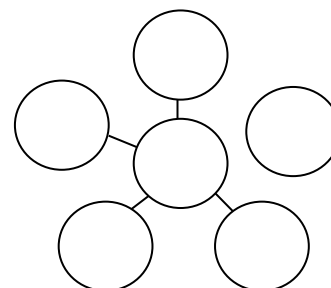
Aims: Raise self awareness on the concepts of multiple identity and self identification by analysing and sharing our own Identities.



It is also an opportunity to self-identify, rather than be labelled by others, and it can establish a broad definition of diversity in a seemingly homogeneous group.

Description: Ask the participants to identify themselves using as many social descriptors as they can (class, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation,...). 15 min.

They should use a model of a molecule. In its central circle they write their names and then they add as many *circles* (atoms) as they need to name their social descriptors (can be interpreted as groups they belong to and roles they have).



Sharing in smaller groups (3-4 people). It is important to say from the beginning that they won't be forced to share everything. So, they can choose which parts of their molecules they share with others. 15 min.

Plenary debriefing (40 min) with the following leading questions:

- Are the molecules of others different from yours? Why?
- Is this molecule different from yours in the past? In the future?
- How did you end up in these groups?
- What does being in these groups mean to you (privileges, barriers, feelings...)?
- Would you like to change your molecule?
- How this influence your youth work practice?
- What can you learn from that for your work with young people and youth groups?

Presentation from trainers **Culture, Identity and Social Realities** with following questions. 30 min.

*Based on the section "Culture, Identity and Social Realities from" the **T-Kit 4 Intercultural learning**, Council of Europe and European Commission, March 2018. Published by the Council of Europe*

pages: 15-17

Online access: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/t-kit-4-intercultural-learning>

Available in multiple languages.



Day 4

Identity, stereotypes and discrimination

Lemons – a method from **More than Culture** by Anne Sophie Winkelmann

Published by JUGEND für Europa, 2014.

Online access: https://roznorodnosc.pnwm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Diversit%C3%A4t-Bildung-more_than_culture.pdf

Pages: 44-49

3 hours

Identity topics in youth work

Visits to local organisations, working with topic Identity

Day 5

Identity topics in youth work – outcomes

Structured sharing and debriefing session to consolidate their insights, exchange perspectives, and critically reflect on the experiences. This session will help transform observations into meaningful learning that can be applied to youth work practice.

1. **Small Group Discussions** (30 min) – Participants will form small groups based on the organization they visited. Each group will summarize their key takeaways, surprising findings, and challenges observed. They will also identify elements that could be adapted to their own work.

Leading questions:

- What stood out to you most during your visit?
- How did the organization approach identity-related topics?
- What methods or practices were particularly effective?

2. **Intergroup Exchange** (40 min) – Groups will then mix to share their insights with participants who visited different organizations. This will foster cross-learning and allow for comparative reflection on different approaches to identity in youth work.



Leading questions:

- How does this visit connect to your own work?
- What new ideas or practices could you integrate into your projects?
- What challenges or limitations might arise in adapting these approaches?

3. **Plenary Reflection** (40 min) – A facilitated discussion will bring all participants together to highlight common themes, key lessons, and any remaining questions or dilemmas.

Leading questions:

- What assumptions about identity and youth work were confirmed or challenged?
- How do different cultural and social contexts shape identity-related youth work?
- What ethical considerations should be kept in mind when addressing identity issues with young people?

How to apply this knowledge to my situations

Forum Theatre, focused on the situations the participants suggest from their experience in youth work. 4 hours

The method is described here: **Act For What You Believe** by Andreea-Loredana Tudorache

Published by A.R.T. Fusion Association, 2013.

Online access: <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/tool/forum-and-image-theatre-manual.1503/>

Pages: 14-143

Day 6

Conclusions and contradictions

Through the “Debates” format the participants summarise the gained knowledge, practice their ability to better articulate and discuss ideas about Identity and become more aware of the complexity of the topic.

The format is described in the project’s **Methodological Workbook**, pages 4-9

2 hours

Youth Pass and Key competencies

Sharing participants’ experiences of YouthPass.



Presentation of YouthPass and key competencies from the trainers

Based on the: <https://www.youthpass.eu/>

The participants asked to write down on posters (with one of key competences on each), what have they learned during the training course. On their own papers they write the tasks for themselves for the next year according to development of each of the competences (as a conclusion on the training).

1 hour

Competencies transfer

1. In small groups (3 people), participants share their reflections and discuss how these insights relate to their current work. (15 min).

2. Action Mapping (45 min)

Small groups (3-4 people) create an “Action Map” by answering:
What are the most relevant learnings for my youth work?

- How can I implement them in my work setting?
- What resources/support do I need?
- What could be the first small step?

Groups visualize their ideas on a flipchart and present them in plenary.

3. Commitment Circle (20 min)

Each participant formulates one concrete action they will take in the next three months.

4. Closing Reflection (20 min)

Leading questions:

- What challenges do you foresee?
- What support networks can help you stay on track?

Evaluation of the activity

Position game, where participants take a place in the room according to their answers to the questions (from the trainers, and from the group) about the meeting. 30 min.

Participants take back their expectations from the tree and report what has happened with them. 30 min.

"Last circle" - "What do I take home from the meeting?". 30 min.

