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GUIDE:

MULTICULTURAL EXISTENCE IN YOUTH WORK





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INTRODUCTION

MODERN SOCIETIES are increasingly diverse due to migration, globalization, and social changes.

As young people grow up in multicultural communities, educators play a crucial role in equipping them with the skills needed to navigate cultural differences with respect and openness.

Migration has led to the creation of diverse communities, which have both benefits and challenges. When a society moves from one that is homogenous to diverse, especially in a short period, it can prove not easy for those living there in terms of co-existing in harmony. Society can be complex, and a multicultural existence is now an integral aspect of life for anyone living in the European Union, due to free travel for its citizens, as well as people who come here because of war, conflict, or climate-related issues.

Educational institutions, especially those that are public, play an integral part in educating the youngest citizens on history, sociology, acceptance, and conflict management tools, to equip them with both theoretical and practical knowledge to foster an accepting and inclusive society. The sharing of culture, language, and history can be not only educational for students but also foster stronger bonds between them.

Educators must create a safe and inclusive environment that allows young people to thrive and grow to the best of their ability. With limited time, funds, and strict curricula, this can prove to be a challenging task. Therefore, the multicultural existence method aims to show educators how to adapt their curriculum and teaching methods to allow young people to develop multicultural competence.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The guide aims to assist educators in identifying cultural and educational cooperation activities that can be utilized in educational and youth work settings through the use of various practical tools detailed in respective sections.

The theoretical knowledge in this guide will complement the existing expertise of educators regarding multicultural existence, which can aid in answering student questions or explaining complex concepts, as well as in implementing preventive programs, such as intercultural conflict management or education on multicultural existence from early ages.

The guide addresses the definition of the concept of multicultural existence, practical tools for working with youth in the EU context, and strategies for working with youth who have migration and refugee experiences in the EU, as well as methods for personal and professional development of educators to underpin this knowledge.

The guide considers the broader context of multicultural existence in the UK, paired with practical tools to enable educators to implement activities and support programs locally, in both formal and informal educational contexts.





CONDUCTOR STRUCTURE

The guide has been created in an easily digestible format, which begins with a brief theoretical background on the multicultural existence method, including its definition and theory within the EU context. This is followed by a more detailed explanation of the multicultural existence method, which encompasses its four pillars. This is followed by practical examples of integrating the technique into the present curriculum to maximize the use of educators' resources.

Good practices and recommendations for educators are included, based on working with youth who have experienced migration or refugee status. The guide features visual elements, including tables, to explain complex concepts clearly. The final chapter comprises self-reflection tools, tips for educators, and resources for diagnosing cultural competence.



CHAPTER 1:

UNDERSTANDING MULTICULTURAL EXISTENCE

1.1. Definition and Meaning of the Concept

Multicultural existence refers to the understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, as well as the ability to interact respectfully with people from different cultural backgrounds. The core components of multicultural existence include **identifying activities that promote cultural and educational cooperation, as well as analyzing information using various tools**. Additionally, they involve coordinating actions that support human rights education and implementing programs aimed at prevention.

The Multicultural Existence method entails examining case studies that highlight discrimination, inclusive practices, and multicultural dynamics in society, communities, and educational settings. This method involves educators conducting critical analyses of these examples and devising methods for incorporating multicultural viewpoints into their lesson plans and curricula.

Through examining real-world case studies with young people, the Multicultural Existence Method addresses important subjects including cultural diversity in education, bias and discrimination, and human rights education. Prejudice reduction, intercultural communication, and the role of education in promoting social justice are additional areas of emphasis.

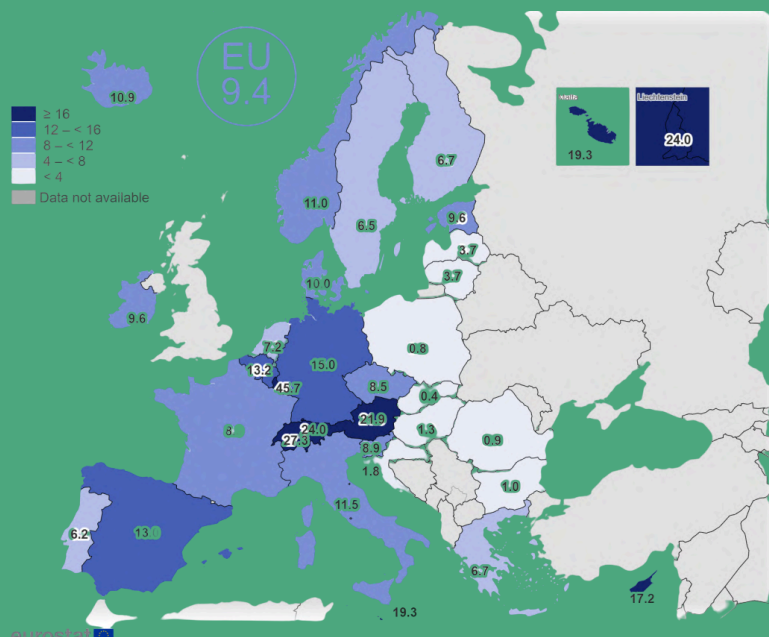


Multicultural existence includes the concept of cross-cultural communication. To harmoniously coexist in a multicultural society, communities must recognize that people from different cultural backgrounds have distinct ways and norms of communication. Cross-cultural communication also includes the idea of respect, active listening, and tolerance of various opinions and values.

To effectively communicate, individuals should be open to the different values, perceptions, and behaviors of others through an understanding of how ethnicity, background, gender, religion, political beliefs, and experiences of migration or being a refugee shape our identities and actions. It involves taking the time to learn about other cultures, including from one another, by showing genuine interest and asking open-ended questions to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences.



In 2022, 915,000 non-EU citizens and stateless children aged less than 15 years immigrated to one of the EU countries, more than tripling the number recorded in 2021. This highlights the growing multicultural reality within European Union education settings and youth work. In the context of youth work and education, this demographic shift presents both opportunities and challenges.



This increasing diversity of the young population can enrich learning environments by broadening perspectives and encouraging intercultural dialogue among young people. Educators have the opportunity to promote empathy and global awareness, as well as the opportunity to allow young people to share their culture with others. It also means, however, that youth work must include programmes which

- actively address language barriers, cultural differences, and the specific needs of migrant and stateless young people.

This trend indicates that multiculturalism will continue to expand in the EU, with some areas experiencing faster growth than others. Consequently, youth workers and educators play a crucial role in supporting integration and creating safe spaces.



1.2. Multicultural competences – theoretical foundations of the EU

Several theoretical models support the development of multicultural competences, including Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence, and the Equality and Diversity Act of the EU.

Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Milton Bennett developed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in 1986, based on academic research and personal observations of various institutions. It encompasses the factors of intercultural communication, engagement, and equity, explaining how people from diverse cultures experience, interpret, and interact with one another. Its primary purpose is to promote the idea of being able to progress across the continuum of cultural understanding. This model supports both the theoretical aspects of interculturalism and enables practical applications.



The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity includes **six total stages**. The first three stages are under the umbrella of ethnocentrism (viewing others based on their own cultural perceptions) and the final three under ethnorelativity (viewing others based on the given context, without judgment).

The DMIS stages are explained below:

Stage 1: Denial - The individual only considers their own culture.

Stage 2: Defense - The individual can be critical of other cultures and hostile towards anything different from what they are accustomed to.

Stage 3: Minimization - Focusing on shared human experience, rather than lived experience, and universal values to reduce prejudice; however, the individual fails to consider the individual human experience, the fact that differences persist.

Stage 4: Acceptance - The individual can accept that other cultures exist and are different and unique from their own. Generally respectful of other cultures and can be eager to learn more.

Stage 5: Adaptation - The individual will aim to change their behaviors and values intentionally.

Stage 6: Integration - The individual will not only change their actions, as in the previous stage, but can also easily shift their perceptions and point of view between different cultural outlooks and utilize this in their decision-making. They can put themselves in other people's shoes.



CHAPTER 2:

THE MULTICULTURAL EXISTENCE METHOD – EU APPROACH

This method uses real-world case studies to explore cultural diversity, discrimination, and inclusion.

2.1 Description of the multicultural existence method

The Multicultural Existence Method is a **comprehensive educational approach that equips young people with the knowledge and skills needed to engage respectfully and effectively in culturally diverse environments.** Its foundation lies in real-life case studies, storytelling, and critical reflection, which help youth explore cultural identity, discrimination, and inclusion.

This method goes beyond mere knowledge transfer. It fosters empathy, critical thinking, and intercultural communication through interactive activities such as role-play, debates, and project-based learning. It also emphasizes human rights education as a core element.

This method is suitable for both formal and non-formal education, making it adaptable for schools, youth organizations, and community groups. It encourages youth to identify cultural biases, challenge stereotypes, and develop inclusive mindsets. Through guided reflection, participants gain the tools to become active agents of social cohesion and justice in multicultural societies.

2.2 The four pillars of the multicultural existence method

The Multicultural Existence Method stands on four foundational pillars that structure how youth work and education can foster inclusive, empathetic, and culturally responsive environments.

These pillars—**Recognition, Dialogue, Reflection,** and **Action**—work to help young people and educators engage with diversity not as a challenge, but as a strength.

These pillars are not abstract concepts. Real-world case studies support each of these pillars, including culturally responsive teaching strategies and critical thinking tools. The method prepares youth for life in an interconnected world and supports educators in becoming facilitators of inclusion and social justice.

1

RECOGNITION

Embracing Identity, History, and Human Dignity

Recognition is the first and most essential step. It involves acknowledging each person's unique cultural background, migration history, and experience. Recognition means valuing diversity as a resource, not an obstacle. It also demands an understanding of historical injustices and structural discrimination, such as racism or xenophobia, that affect access to education and participation.

In practical terms, educators apply this pillar by integrating diverse stories and histories into the curriculum, highlighting the contributions of different cultures, and acknowledging both visible and invisible forms of exclusion. This approach supports a sense of belonging among all youth.

In the Irish model, recognition includes connecting Ireland's own history of emigration with the stories of migrant youth today, thus creating bridges of understanding.



2

DIALOGUEBuilding Bridges Through Communication
and Curiosity

Dialogue transforms recognition into interaction. It creates space for mutual learning, active listening, and the respectful exchange of perspectives. In youth work, dialogue can take various forms, including structured conversations, role-playing, storytelling, or debates on social justice issues.



This pillar encourages participants to challenge assumptions and engage with one another across differences. Through dialogue, young people gain the confidence to share their own identities and to understand those of others without judgment. Ensuring that all individuals and groups have equal access to rights, resources, and opportunities, regardless of their cultural background.

This includes promoting fairness, justice, and democratic participation in all aspects of social life.

As shown in the Irish adaptation, dialogue-based activities such as cultural storytelling or youth councils (e.g., Comhairle na nÓg) foster open conversations about identity, bias, and coexistence in a supportive environment.



3

REFLECTION

Developing Awareness and Emotional Intelligence

Reflection encourages critical self-examination of one's own cultural lenses, prejudices, and social positioning. It moves learners from passive understanding to active awareness. Reflection also provides a space to process emotional responses, particularly when discussing complex topics such as discrimination or inequality.

Educators facilitate this pillar through self-assessment tools, guided journaling, and post-activity discussions. Reflection deepens learning and prepares young people to make ethical and informed decisions when faced with multicultural challenges.

Drawing from the Irish practice, reflection is often supported through case study analysis, empathy-building exercises, and personal storytelling, helping learners internalize lessons and connect them to their lives.

4

ACTION

Practicing Inclusion and Social Engagement

Action is the culmination of the previous three pillars. It transforms awareness into behavior and equips young people with the tools to make a tangible difference in their communities. Action can range from classroom-based projects and school campaigns to community outreach, social media activism, or youth-led initiatives on anti-discrimination.



Educators also play a role in this pillar by creating inclusive learning environments, adapting curricula, and acting as role models who advocate for equity and cultural respect.

Together, these four pillars create a holistic framework. Recognition alone risks tokenism without dialogue. Dialogue without reflection can reinforce surface-level engagement; reflection without action, however, limits its impact.

However, when all four operate together, the Multicultural Existence Method becomes a powerful tool for building inclusive, resilient, and socially conscious youth communities.

2.3 The importance of the multicultural existence method in the 21st century

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, the ability to understand and respect cultural differences has become not only valuable but essential. Migration, technological change, climate displacement, and transnational identities are reshaping the social fabric of communities across Europe and beyond. Young people are growing up in societies where cultural plurality is the norm and where coexistence is no longer a matter of proximity but of daily experience.

The Multicultural Existence Method equips young people with tools to navigate multicultural environments with empathy, openness, and critical thinking.

Through real-world case studies, role-playing exercises, and human rights education, this method helps young people recognize prejudice, challenge discrimination, and appreciate diversity. It also encourages active participation in building inclusive communities. In the 21st century, multicultural existence is not an optional soft skill—it is a civic necessity.

Without it, societies risk deepening divisions, social fragmentation, and allowing discrimination to become more accepted. With it, young people can grow into culturally competent, socially responsible, and resilient citizens who uphold the values of equality, dignity, and solidarity.

This method also supports educators and youth workers in creating inclusive, safe, and culturally responsive environments. When teachers are trained to recognize unconscious bias, adapt curricula, and facilitate open dialogue, they become powerful agents of change in their classrooms and communities. As noted in the Irish model, embedding multicultural existence across all subjects—from literature to citizenship education—ensures sustained exposure and deep learning.

Moreover, this approach aligns with key European values and strategies, including the EU Youth Strategy, the Council of Europe’s White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, and the European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. It promotes active citizenship, strengthens social cohesion, and contributes to the long-term vision of a united and inclusive Europe.

In essence, the Multicultural Existence Method is more than an educational approach—it is a social investment. Empowering young people to think critically, connect compassionately, and act justly lays the foundation for peaceful, democratic, and pluralistic societies in the 21st century and beyond.





CHAPTER 3:

PRACTICAL TOOLS AND EXAMPLES FOR EDUCATORS IN THE EU – WORKING WITH YOUTH

The Multicultural Existence Method promotes inclusion through practical, experience-based learning. This chapter provides concrete examples, interactive materials, and adaptable activities that support educators in formal and non-formal settings, including schools, youth centers, workshops, and community spaces. The methods are flexible and can be integrated into various subjects such as history, literature, art, civics, and language education. Educators use tools such as case studies, role-playing, discussions, and storytelling to explore cultural identity, bias, and human rights.

All tools presented here aim to foster empathy, critical thinking, cooperation, and social engagement among young people.

3.1. Key Elements of Multicultural Existence

The core elements of the Multicultural Existence Method can be translated into the following five practice-based areas:

RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY

Identifying different cultural identities within the classroom and the broader community.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Using real-life case studies, media, or art to reflect on prejudice and discrimination.

DIALOGUE AND COMMUNICATION

Facilitating discussions, interviews, and peer-to-peer exchanges.

EMPATHY AND ROLE-PLAY

Practicing understanding through role-playing and scenario-based learning.

ACTION AND PARTICIPATION

Youth-led projects, campaigns, and collaboration with local or EU-wide initiatives.



3.2. Integration Exercises and Lesson Plans

The following exercises are designed to help educators implement the Multicultural Existence Method through interactive, youth-centered learning. Each activity promotes key intercultural competences such as empathy, cooperation, and critical thinking. These tools are adaptable across age groups and educational contexts and are drawn from practice across the EU, including the Irish model.

Tips for Educators

CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR HONEST DIALOGUE.

ALWAYS BRIEF AND DEBRIEF WITH CARE, ESPECIALLY FOR EMOTIONALLY SENSITIVE TOPICS.

USE VISUAL TOOLS

(E.G., DRAWINGS, TIMELINES, PHOTOS) TO SUPPORT DIVERSE LEARNERS.

EMBED YOUTH-LED LEARNING.

LET YOUNG PEOPLE LEAD ACTIVITIES OR PROPOSE TOPICS

CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

(E.G., MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS) FOR AUTHENTIC PERSPECTIVES AND SUPPORT.



1

“WALK IN THEIR SHOES”

Objective: To understand how systemic and social factors affect young migrants' experiences.

Method: Present a short narrative (written or video) about a young person navigating school life in a new country.

Activity: Divide students into small groups to analyze the scenario. Each group identifies obstacles, support systems, and emotions the character might experience.

Debrief: Groups present different “what could have helped?” strategies. Compare with real examples from local schools.

2

“CULTURAL CLASH IN THE CLASSROOM”

Objective: To help young people recognize and navigate intercultural misunderstandings by practicing empathy, perspective-taking, and respectful communication.

Setup: Divide participants into small groups. Give each group a scenario script and character cards that briefly describe the roles of a newly arrived migrant student, a local peer, a teacher, and a bystander. Each character should have a unique cultural background and point of view.

Activity: Groups act out a short scene involving a cultural misunderstanding, e.g., a disagreement during group work, misinterpreted silence or gestures, or a joke that unintentionally offends someone.

The facilitator can pause the role play at key moments, inviting the group to reflect:

- “What’s happening here?”
- “How does each person feel?”
- “What could be done differently?”

Facilitator Tip: You can also ask audience members to step in and take over a role, trying out alternative responses or solutions.

Debrief Questions:

- What made this situation uncomfortable?
- Which behaviors escalated or helped the situation?
- What does respectful communication look like across cultures?
- How might we apply non-violent communication strategies in real life?

Extension:

Use this role play to introduce tools such as “I-statements,” active listening, or checking assumptions before reacting.

3

“CULTURE BOX” Presentations

Objective: To celebrate identity and foster mutual understanding.

Method: Each participant brings 3–5 objects (or drawings/photos) that represent their culture or personal story.

Activity: Present “My Culture Box” to peers, explaining what each item means.



4

IDENTITY MAPPING: “WHO AM I?”

Objective: To help young people explore the layers of their personal and cultural identity and recognize both similarities and differences within the group.

Setup: Provide each participant with a large sheet of paper or access to a digital whiteboard. In the center, they write their name or draw a symbol that represents themselves. From there, they create a mind map with branches such as:

- Family & background
- Languages spoken
- Cultural traditions
- Beliefs or values
- Hobbies & interests
- Places that shaped me
- "I feel most like myself when..."

Activity: Participants build their identity maps individually. Once completed, they pair up or form small groups to share parts of their maps. Encourage them to highlight both shared experiences and unique aspects of identity.

Facilitator Prompts:

- What surprised you about someone else's map?
- Did you find any unexpected similarities?
- How do your identity elements shape how you interact with the world?

Debrief: As a group, reflect on how our identities influence the way we see, interpret, and participate in the world. Emphasize that identity is multi-layered, constantly evolving, and shaped by both culture and personal experience.

Extension: Display maps in a classroom “identity gallery” (with consent), or create a group “diversity tree” showing the shared roots and different branches of the group.

VARIATION:
“WHERE I COME FROM”

Method: In a circle, each person completes the sentence:

- “One thing about where I come from is...”

or

- “A tradition I love is...”

Facilitator Role: Ensure equal space, encourage voluntary participation, and validate every contribution.

Creative Output: Compile shared stories into a collaborative zine or digital photo-voice project.





5

Youth-Led Human Rights Campaign: “Raise Your Voice”

Objective: To empower young people to become active changemakers by designing and leading campaigns that promote human rights, equality, and inclusion in their communities.

Setup: Begin with a short introduction to key human rights themes (e.g., anti-racism, access to education, religious freedom, gender equality). Facilitate a brainstorming session where youth choose an issue they care deeply about.

Activity: In small teams, participants plan and launch a campaign with a clear message and goal. Formats can include:

- Social media posts or awareness reels
- A short video or podcast
- Poster displays or mural art
- School assembly or youth forum
- Interactive exhibitions or info booths

Support: Encourage collaboration with local organizations e.g. NGOs, human rights advocates, youth councils, or media groups—for mentorship, visibility, or resources.

Youth Ownership: Youth lead every stage—from topic selection and message development to production and public engagement, building confidence, teamwork, and public speaking skills.

• • • **Reflection & Impact:** After the campaign, hold a group reflection:

- • • • What did you learn about the issue and yourself?
- • • • How did your campaign affect others?
- • • • What would you do differently next time?

• • • **Extension:** Document the campaign journey (including photos, quotes, and videos) and share it in a public showcase or online gallery.


 6

“CELEBRATE US!”

Objective: To foster teamwork, creativity, and cultural appreciation by designing a festival that shows the group’s diversity and shared values.

Activity Setup: Divide participants into small teams and challenge them to design an inclusive intercultural youth festival. Each team will plan the event’s key elements, such as:

- Food and drinks from different cultures
- Music and dance performances
- Storytelling or poetry corners
- Art installations or crafts
- Interactive games or cultural quizzes
- Community guest involvement

Guidelines: Encourage teams to think about accessibility, inclusion, representation, and participation. What makes the event welcoming for everyone? How are cultures being respectfully presented?

Optional Extension: This fictional festival can evolve into a real event involving families, school staff, or the local community.



Reflection Questions:

- What did we learn about each other through this activity?
- How did we make sure every voice was included in our planning?
- Why are celebrations of culture important in a diverse society?



7

“MY NAME, MY IDENTITY”

Objective: To encourage respect, curiosity, and cultural recognition through personal storytelling centered around names.

Setup: Ask each participant to reflect on their name. They can share:

- The meaning of their name
- Who chose it and why
- Any nicknames or changes over time
- How others have reacted to their name, and how that made them feel

Activity: In a circle or small groups, participants take turns sharing their stories. Encourage voluntary sharing, and remind the group that there’s no right or wrong way to talk about a name - it’s personal.

Adaptation Tips:

Great as a warm-up or icebreaker, especially in diverse or newly formed groups. Can be adapted for writing, drawing, or digital storytelling for those less comfortable speaking.

Reflection Prompts:

- What do our names reveal about our identities, families, or cultures?
- Have we ever made assumptions based on someone’s name?
- How can we show respect when we hear a name we don’t recognize or can’t pronounce easily?


 8

“FROM TENSION TO UNDERSTANDING”

Objective: To equip young people with practical communication tools for resolving misunderstandings and handling conflict with empathy and respect.

Setup: Start with a short introduction to key conflict resolution skills:

- Active listening (e.g., showing you're listening with body language and responses)
- “I” statements (e.g., “I feel... when...” instead of blame)
- Reflective rephrasing (e.g., repeating back what you heard to check understanding)

Activity: In pairs or small groups, participants receive everyday scenarios where misunderstandings may arise (e.g., being left out of a group chat, misinterpreted silence, clashing opinions). They role-play how the conflict might unfold, first **without** tools, and then **with** conflict resolution strategies.

Tools to Support Practice:

- **Empathy cards** (e.g., “What might the other person feel?”)
- **Emotion wheels** to name complex feelings
- **Mirror games** to explore body language and non-verbal signals

Creative Outcome: Each participant or group designs a “Peace Toolkit”—a visual or written guide with the strategies they found most helpful. This might include drawings, key phrases, or calming techniques.



Debrief:

- What changed when you used the tools?
- How did it feel to be truly heard or understood?
- How can we bring these tools into everyday life - in school, at home, or with friends?

9

“BREAK THE LABEL”

Objective: To challenge cultural stereotypes, spark critical thinking, and encourage respectful discussion about bias and assumptions.

Materials: Prepare cards with common stereotypes or generalizations (e.g., “Girls aren’t good at math,” “All refugees are poor,” “Boys don’t cry,” “People from [X] country are always late”).

Activity: In pairs or small groups, participants take turns drawing a card and discussing:

- Is this statement ever true? Why or why not?
- Where might this idea come from (media, society, personal experience)?
- Who could be hurt by this stereotype?
- What’s a better way to think or speak about this group?

Variation: Instead of printed cards, ask participants to write stereotypes they’ve heard on slips of paper anonymously. Mix and use those for discussion.

Reflection Prompts:

- What surprised you about today's discussion?
- Do we sometimes hold stereotypes without realizing it?
- What can we do when we hear someone repeating a stereotype?

10

“WHAT CHANGED FOR ME?”

Objective: To measure shifts in attitudes, confidence, and understanding around cultural diversity through reflective, youth-friendly tools.

Before the Activity: Begin with a simple, non-judgmental self-check tool. Offer participants a choice between:

- A **visual scale** (e.g., smiling at unsure faces) answering: “How comfortable do I feel interacting with someone from a different cultural background?”

Or

- a quick **journaling prompt:**

“One thing I believe about cultural differences is...”

After the Activity/Workshop Series:

Return to the same scale or question. Then, add a creative layer:

Ask participants to draw, write, or record a short reflection on:

- “One thing I understand now that I didn't before.”
- “A perspective I hadn't considered until today.”
- “What I'll do differently next time I meet someone new.”



Peer Advice Option: Invite participants to anonymously write a message to future workshop participants:

“IF YOU’RE JUST STARTING THIS JOURNEY, HERE’S MY ADVICE...”

Compile the messages into a small booklet or display them as part of a group mural.

Facilitator Tip: Make reflection a regular checkpoint, not just an end activity. Create a habit of asking, “What shifted for you today?”

3.3. Multicultural Education in the Curriculum

Multicultural education isn’t a separate subject—it’s an approach that should be integrated across all areas of the curriculum. It empowers young people to explore cultural diversity, reflect on identity, and critically examine issues such as inclusion, migration, and human rights.

Integrating multicultural content across subjects—such as history, language, arts, civic education, and geography—enables students to view diversity as part of everyday life, rather than an exception. This section provides examples and strategies for incorporating multicultural perspectives into various disciplines, creating a learning environment where all voices are valued and every learner sees themselves represented.

Table 1: Integrating Multicultural Existence Across Subjects

Subject	Integration Example	Competence Developed
History	Study of migration patterns in Europe and their social impact	Historical thinking, empathy, and perspective-taking
Literature	Reading and analyzing stories from diverse cultural backgrounds	Language skills, cultural awareness
Civic Education / Ethics	Debates on equality, human rights, and cultural identity	Critical thinking, democratic values
Geography	Mapping global cultures, migration routes, or climate-induced displacement	Global awareness, systems thinking
Languages	Learning greetings and cultural idioms in different languages	Communication, respect for linguistic diversity
Art / Music	Exploring traditional art or music from different cultures	Creative expression, appreciation of cultural richness
ICT / Media Studies	Analyzing cultural representation in media and digital campaigns	Digital literacy, bias recognition





When multicultural education is woven into the curriculum:

- Students learn to engage with cultural narratives, not just consume them critically.
- Youth from minority or migrant backgrounds feel seen and valued, increasing participation and belonging.
- Schools become laboratories of democratic practice, where diversity is lived rather than merely discussed.



Table 2: Teaching Approaches for Multicultural Education

Approach	Description	Benefit
Case-Based Learning	Use of real-world examples related to diversity and discrimination	Connect theory with life experiences
Project-Based (Experiential) Learning	Youth co-create campaigns or exhibitions on inclusion or migration	Builds agency, teamwork, and practical skills
Peer Learning	Students share personal stories or cultural knowledge in group setting	Promotes ownership and mutual respect
Interdisciplinary Learning	Linking subjects to examine diversity from multiple lenses	Encourages complex thinking and relevance
Reflective Practice	Journaling, discussion circles, or “identity maps”	Supports self-awareness and emotional intelligence
Guest Speakers / Community Visits	Inviting people from migrant communities, NGOs, or diaspora groups	Fosters authenticity, breaks stereotypes





Educators are encouraged to take a whole-school approach, ensuring that diversity is reflected not only in lessons but also in school policies, classroom management, displays, and extracurricular activities. As the Irish model shows, sustained and embedded multicultural education contributes to long-term positive outcomes for students, educators, and communities alike.

CHAPTER 4:

YOUTH WORK METHODS OF MULTICULTURAL EXISTENCE

4.1. Introduction to the EU context of multicultural existence

Ireland has become increasingly multicultural in recent years, influenced by rising immigration, the return of diaspora, and growing global interconnectedness. This transformation is evident in schools, youth centers, and local communities, where cultural diversity is now an integral part of daily life. Irish youth work has responded by promoting intercultural learning, inclusion, and human rights education. The Multicultural Existence Method supports this shift by offering real-life tools for reflection, empathy, and dialogue.

Through exploring issues such as migration, identity, and discrimination through interactive activities and storytelling, the method allows young people to understand diversity and challenge bias. It also connects Ireland's own history of emigration with present-day experiences of new communities, fostering a deeper cultural existence.

4.2. The Three Main Methods in Youth Work

In youth work, methodology plays a vital role in shaping how young people engage with issues of diversity, inclusion, and identity. The Multicultural Existence Method is most effective when used alongside established participatory approaches that prioritize youth agency, critical reflection, and experiential learning.

Based on practice in the EU, three core methods support multicultural existence in youth work:

- Experiential Learning
- Peer-to-Peer Education
- Scenario-Based Role Play and Reflection

Each method emphasizes active participation, personal discovery, and emotional engagement—critical ingredients in building intercultural competence and creating inclusive youth spaces.





Method 1: Experiential Learning

This method is based on the principle of “learning by doing.” Youth explore themes such as cultural diversity, migration, or discrimination through hands-on activities. These might include games, creative workshops, simulation exercises, or intercultural cooking sessions.

	Example
Activity	Human Rights Walk, Cultural Identity Tree, or Intercultural Festival Planning
Outcome	Increased empathy, self-awareness, and understanding of social inequalities
Setting	Ideal for youth centers, camps, and short-term projects

Experiential learning enables youth to connect abstract values (e.g., inclusion, justice) to their own lived experiences. It also supports skill development in areas such as cooperation, communication, and emotional regulation.



Method 2: Peer-to-Peer Education

Peer-to-peer education empowers young people to teach and learn from one another. It supports horizontal learning structures, where youth take ownership of the learning process and co-create knowledge through sharing perspectives.

Component	Example
Activity	Youth-led cultural storytelling sessions, identity workshops, or panel discussions
Outcome	Enhanced confidence, leadership skills, and recognition of diversity within the group
Setting	Works well in schools, youth parliaments, or informal learning groups

In multicultural youth groups, this method also helps to validate minority voices and build a culture of mutual respect.





Method 3: Scenario-Based Role Play and Reflection

This method involves acting out real-life situations related to intercultural tensions or misunderstandings. Youth take on different roles (e.g., mediator, newcomer, teacher) and reflect on the emotional and social dynamics afterward.

When appropriately facilitated, scenario-based learning enables youth to explore power dynamics, confront prejudice, and test inclusive solutions in a safe and supportive environment.

Component	Example
Activity	Role-play on school exclusion, cultural conflict in sports teams, or negotiating shared space
Outcome	Development of empathy, conflict resolution skills, and intercultural sensitivity
Setting	Particularly effective in structured workshops and youth trainings

Each of these methods is youth-centered, adaptable, and grounded in real-life relevance. When combined with the Multicultural Existence Method's pillars—recognition, dialogue, reflection, and action—they form a robust framework for fostering belonging and participation in diverse societies.

Youth workers are encouraged to select and adapt these methods based on their group's needs, cultural context, and available resources. The ultimate goal is to create spaces where every young person can explore identity, contribute to shared learning, and act as a bridge-builder in their communities.

4.3. The Multicultural Existence Method as Contribution in the EU

The Multicultural Existence Method represents a meaningful and timely contribution to the European Union’s efforts to foster inclusion, solidarity, and social cohesion among its diverse youth populations. Rooted in experiential learning, human rights education, and critical reflection, the method equips educators and young people with the tools to navigate cultural diversity with empathy, confidence, and respect.

In line with the **EU Youth Strategy (2019–2027)** and the **European Pillar of Social Rights**, the method supports key priorities, including active citizenship, equality, democratic participation, and intercultural dialogue. It reflects the EU’s commitment to building societies where diversity is not merely tolerated, but embraced as a strength.

By encouraging the development of **intercultural competences, civic responsibility, and collaborative problem-solving**, the method helps youth grow into informed, responsible, and engaged citizens. It also supports educators and youth workers in responding to demographic changes, migration trends, and the increasing complexity of identity in 21st-century Europe.

In practical terms, the method complements EU-funded programmes such as **Erasmus+, Horizon Europe**, and initiatives under the **European Education Area**, by offering adaptable tools that promote inclusive education and youth empowerment across formal and non-formal learning environments.

As shown through its successful application in the Irish context and beyond, the Multicultural Existence Method not only improves individual competences—it strengthens communities, bridges cultural divides, and helps realize the EU’s vision of unity in diversity.



4.4. Conclusions and Relevance for EU

The **Multicultural Existence Method** provides a comprehensive, flexible, and values-based approach to youth education that closely aligns with the European Union's goals for inclusive, democratic, and socially cohesive societies.

It addresses urgent contemporary challenges—rising migration, polarization, discrimination, and cultural fragmentation—by promoting **empathy, intercultural dialogue, and human rights education**.

By integrating practical tools such as storytelling, role-play, peer learning, and community action into both formal and non-formal education, the method fosters the development of **active, culturally competent citizens**. These are key outcomes identified by the **EU Youth Strategy**, the **EU Anti-Racism Action Plan**, and the **European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning**.

The method's strength lies in its adaptability. It can be implemented across diverse national contexts, educational systems, and community settings, whether in urban schools, rural youth clubs, or cross-border Erasmus+ projects.

Its emphasis on youth-led learning, reflection, and participation ensures that young people are not passive recipients but **co-creators of inclusive societies**.

In the long term, widespread application of the Multicultural Existence Method can help **build social resilience, reduce prejudice, and strengthen democratic culture** throughout the EU. It is a timely and relevant contribution toward the EU's vision of a united, respectful, and inclusive Europe—one where every young person, regardless of background, has the opportunity to thrive, connect, and shape the future.

CHAPTER 5:

WORKING WITH YOUTH WITH MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

5.1. Who are Young Migrants and Refugees?

Modern Ireland, like many European countries, is home to a growing number of young people with migration or refugee experience. These youth bring diverse backgrounds, languages, and life stories into schools and communities. Some arrive with their families seeking better opportunities, while others flee conflict, persecution, or human rights violations.

This diversity shapes their educational and emotional needs. While many show remarkable resilience, motivation, and intercultural knowledge, they may also face significant barriers, such as trauma, language difficulties, or social exclusion. Teachers and youth workers must be prepared to recognize both the challenges and the strengths that these young people carry.

The Multicultural Awareness Method offers tools to create safe and inclusive spaces where young migrants and refugees feel seen, heard, and empowered. By encouraging empathy, critical thinking, and cooperation, the method supports their integration and promotes mutual understanding among all youth.





Across the European Union, migration continues to shape the demographic landscape, with millions of children and young people arriving from third countries, often under challenging circumstances. The EU's policies on inclusion, such as the Action Plan on *Integration and Inclusion (2021–2027)*, emphasize equal access to education, social support, and participation in community life. Schools and youth programs are recognized as crucial spaces for integrating intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and non-discrimination.

The Multicultural Existence Method aligns with these EU priorities by equipping educators to leverage diversity as a shared strength and by supporting the well-being and active citizenship of all young people, regardless of their origin.

5.2. Educational and Psychosocial Support – Needs and Good Practices

Young migrants and refugees across Europe face a complex array of educational and psychosocial challenges. These include trauma from displacement, language barriers, cultural dislocation, and social exclusion.

Key Needs of Migrant and Refugee Youth

Youth with migration experience may:

- Experience trauma from war, displacement, or loss of family and home.
- Face language barriers that hinder academic progress and communication.
- Be unfamiliar with local school or youth systems, creating confusion or disengagement.

- Encounter xenophobia, bullying, or cultural misunderstanding from peers or staff.
- Struggle with identity, belonging, and cultural disorientation.

Responding with **inclusive educational practices and psychosocial sensitivity** is the next. Educational support cannot be separated from psychosocial care. Academic achievement, language learning, and social integration are all closely tied to a young person's mental health, sense of belonging, and emotional resilience.

The **Multicultural Existence Method** offers a framework for addressing these needs holistically through inclusive, empathetic, and rights-based approaches.

Educational Support Needs and Practices

Access to quality education is a fundamental right for all children, including migrants and refugees. However, these students often encounter obstacles such as interrupted schooling, unfamiliar curricula, and limited language proficiency. To mitigate these challenges, schools can implement tailored educational programs that focus on

- language acquisition, cultural orientation, and academic bridging. For instance, **newcomer education programs** provide specialized instruction that helps students acclimate to the new educational environment while respecting their cultural backgrounds.



Educational Support Strategies:



Language Support and Multilingualism:

- Offer structured language support (e.g., language assistants, bilingual materials).
- Use visual aids, simplified texts, and peer translation to ensure understanding.
- Recognize and value students' home languages as part of the learning environment.

Culturally Responsive Teaching:

- Adapt content and examples to reflect cultural diversity.
- Include global perspectives in curricula and showcase migrant contributions to society.
- Validate students' cultural heritage to promote confidence and pride.



Flexible Assessment and Learning Methods:

- Avoid high-stakes testing for newcomers early on; use alternative methods like portfolios or oral presentations.
- Allow extra time and differentiated tasks to support varied learning needs.



Safe and Welcoming Spaces:

- Create classrooms and youth centers that signal safety through posters, multilingual signs, and diversity-positive materials.
- Establish clear anti-discrimination policies and zero tolerance for bullying.



Psychosocial Support Needs and Practices

The psychological well-being of migrant youth is paramount for their successful integration. Many have experienced significant trauma, loss, and uncertainty. Adequate psychosocial support encompasses creating safe and inclusive school environments, providing counseling services, and fostering peer support networks. Programs like the **Refugees Well School** initiative implement preventive psychosocial interventions in educational settings to promote mental and social well-being among adolescents.

Additionally, the **Danish Red Cross** provides guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in migration contexts, emphasizing the importance of culturally sensitive practices



Psychosocial Support Strategies:

- Trust-Building Relationships
- Prioritize continuity and empathy in educator-student relationships.
- Assign mentors, peer buddies, or cultural mediators to provide one-on-one support.





Trauma-Sensitive Approaches:

- Recognize that students may carry visible or invisible trauma.
- Avoid forcing personal disclosures, but provide supportive avenues such as art, music, or storytelling to process emotions safely.

Well-being and Mental Health Access:

- Link with local psychosocial services (e.g., counselors, therapists) and offer confidential referral pathways.
- Partner with NGOs and community organizations experienced in refugee support.

Family and Community Involvement:

- Engage parents or guardians through translated materials, inclusive events, and flexible meeting times.
- Host community cafés, storytelling nights, or food-sharing events that honor cultural diversity and build bridges.





Good Practices from the Field

(Examples Inspired by the Irish Model)

● Youth Story Circles

Young people from diverse backgrounds share personal migration stories in small, respectful groups, supported by facilitators trained in trauma-informed practices.

"Newcomer's Guide" Projects: Migrant youth co-create handbooks or videos to help others navigate school or community life. This builds confidence and supports peer learning.

● Intercultural Peer Mentoring

Older students support newcomers with language, routines, and integration. In Ireland, these systems have been especially effective in post-primary schools and youth councils.

● Multicultural Mediation Training

Youth learn how to handle misunderstandings and cultural conflicts through structured, role-play-based training. Programs teach empathy, listening, and de-escalation.

● Integration Through the Arts

Schools and youth organizations use creative methods - such as mural painting, digital storytelling, or collaborative music projects - to foster inclusion and expression.



5.3. Recommendations and Traps – How to Support Without Harm

Supporting young people with migration and refugee experience requires sensitivity, intentionality, and informed practice. While the motivation to help is essential, well-meaning interventions can sometimes cause harm if they reinforce stereotypes, overlook trauma, or place youth in disempowering roles.

This section offers practical recommendations for educators and youth workers, along with common traps to avoid, ensuring that support is inclusive, empowering, and grounded in dignity.

Recommendations for Safe and Effective Support

1.1 Start with Listening, Not Assumptions

Always start by listening to young people’s own perspectives and needs. Avoid assuming what they need based solely on their migration background.

1.2 Build Relationships, Not Labels

Treat migrant youth as individuals with unique stories, strengths, and aspirations—not as “cases” or representatives of an entire group. Avoid framing support around what they lack; instead, focus on their talents, interests, and contributions. Create opportunities for cultural sharing, storytelling, or leadership—but never make them obligatory. Respect each young person’s right to privacy and autonomy by allowing them to choose how, when, and if they share personal experiences. Genuine connection grows from trust, choice, and mutual respect—not from expectations rooted in identity.



1.3 Support Without Isolating

Integrate migrant youth into mainstream activities while offering targeted support as needed. Encourage mixed-group collaboration and peer mentorship to build inclusion.

1.4 Use Inclusive Language

Say “young people with migration experience” rather than labels like “refugees” or “foreigners.” Integrate diverse cultures into lessons, activities, and materials—not just as one-off events, but as part of everyday practice.

1.5 Incorporate Cultural Responsiveness

Reflect students’ cultures in classroom materials, activities, and environments. Acknowledge diverse worldviews in discussions of values, norms, or behavior.

1.6 Collaborate with Families and Communities

Engage caregivers and cultural mediators to build trust, bridge gaps, and support long-term integration by partnering with local NGOs, cultural mediators, or language support services, ensuring transparent, respectful, and linguistically accessible communication with families.

1.7 Offer Long-Term Support, Not One-Off Initiatives

Many young people with migration experience come from unstable environments. Consistency builds trust. Explain rules, routines, and expectations clearly to build trust and reduce anxiety. Follow up, check in, and adapt over time. Integrate multicultural approaches across the curriculum and youth work cycles.

1.8 Provide Educator and Staff Training

Ensure team members are aware of migration-related challenges, trauma sensitivity, and anti-racist practices. Encourage self-reflection on bias and cultural positioning.

Traps to Avoid – Even with Good Intentions:

2.1 Avoid “Savior” Mentality

Position youth as capable participants in their growth, not passive recipients of help. Empower rather than rescue.

2.2 Don’t Overexpose or Tokenize

Highlighting one student’s background to showcase diversity can feel isolating. Inclusion should be collective, not individual spotlighting.

2.3 Be Aware of Trauma Triggers

Avoid activities that may bring up painful memories without adequate support structures in place (e.g., roleplays involving violence or forced migration).

2.4 Don’t Confuse Language Skills with Intelligence

Don’t focus only on what youth “lack” (e.g., language, academic skills). Language barriers do not reflect intellectual ability. Use visual aids, peer support, and extra time rather than lowering expectations. Acknowledge resilience, multilingualism, and lived experience as assets.

2.5 Resist Generalizations

Avoid generalizations. Not all migrant youth are traumatized. Not all face the same barriers. Migration experiences vary widely by age, reason, country of origin, and personal history. Avoid overgeneralizing or romanticizing resilience. Ask open-ended questions and tailor support to individual needs.

2.6 Excluding Youth from Decision-Making

Too often, young people with migration experience are the subject of programs but not participants in shaping them. Failing to involve them in the design and evaluation of activities reinforces passivity. Authentic inclusion means co-creation, not top-down planning.



2.7 Quick Fixes

Single workshops or cultural days are not enough. Avoid relying on one-time events. Sustainable inclusion requires embedded, ongoing practice.

2.8 Assuming Cultural Competence is a One-Time Skill

Intercultural sensitivity is not a box to check but a lifelong learning process. If one training or experience is “enough,” it can lead to arrogance. Regular reflection, feedback, and adaptation are necessary for growth and relevance.

5.4. Multicultural Awareness as a Daily Practice

Multicultural awareness is not limited to workshops or campaigns—it is reflected in everyday attitudes and choices made by both educators and students.

- **In class discussion** – give space to voices from different backgrounds.
- **In materials** – include stories, images, and examples from various cultures.
- **During conflicts** – encourage active listening and seek understanding, not blame.

Small actions can create a significant shift in classroom dynamics, fostering trust, curiosity, and openness. When diversity becomes part of the norm, young people learn to appreciate differences and find common ground. Working together with colleagues, families, and community organizations strengthens this process. Multicultural awareness grows best in a network of support and shared responsibility.

CHAPTER 6:

STRATEGIES FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS AND PREPARATION FOR WORKSHOPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, INCLUDING MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS

6.1. The Importance of Self-Reflection in the Work of an Educator

Educators play a critical role in shaping how young people perceive diversity, inclusion, and justice. To teach multicultural existence effectively, educators must first turn the lens inward to examine their own values, cultural assumptions, biases, and responses to differences.

Self-reflection is not a one-time exercise—it is an ongoing professional and personal commitment. It allows educators to become more aware of unconscious biases, privileges, and emotional reactions that may influence their decisions, classroom dynamics, and interactions with students.

In diverse learning environments, especially those involving youth with migration experience, unexamined assumptions can unintentionally lead to miscommunication, exclusion, or harm. Reflection helps educators create safer, more respectful spaces by identifying and addressing such gaps.





Key Areas for Educator Self-Reflection:

Cultural Positioning: How does my own background shape the way I teach, lead discussions, or respond to conflict?

Unconscious Bias: What stereotypes or generalizations might I hold, even unconsciously?

Power and Privilege: How does my role impact the voices that are heard or silenced in the classroom?

Emotional Responses: What feelings come up for me when discussing topics like migration, racism, or identity, and how do I manage them constructively?

Growth Mindset: How open am I to learning from my students and mistakes?

Ultimately, self-reflection builds trust, empathy, and authenticity in educator-student relationships. It allows educators to lead by example and model the very openness and respect they hope to cultivate in young people. In the context of multicultural existence, it is not just a recommended tool—it is an essential foundation.



6.2. Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

An inclusive learning environment is one in which every young person feels safe, respected, valued, and able to participate fully, regardless of their cultural background, language, migration status, or personal identity. It is a space where diversity is seen as a strength and where all learners are encouraged to bring their whole selves into the educational experience.

Creating such an environment is not a passive outcome—it is the result of intentional design, inclusive attitudes, and responsive practices. Educators play a central role in shaping this atmosphere through their language, materials, behavior, and classroom management strategies.





Key Elements of an Inclusive Learning Environment:

- Physical and Visual Representation.
- Display multicultural posters, books, and learning materials.
- Include images, languages, and symbols that reflect the backgrounds of the students.
- Inclusive Curriculum Content.
- Embed diverse perspectives in subjects such as literature, history, etc.
- Use examples from a variety of cultures, belief systems, and lived experiences.
- Collaborative Norms and Agreements.
- Co-create group rules with students that promote respect, listening, and fairness.
- Ensure students have input into how the space is managed.
- Accessibility and Participation.
- Use multiple forms of communication (visuals, gestures, translated materials).
- Provide opportunities for all students to contribute, regardless of language level.
- Responsive and Fair Educator Practices.
- Avoid assumptions about ability, behavior, or background.
- Treating mistakes as learning opportunities for both educators and learners.



6.3. Preparation for Workshops with Young People with Migration Experience

Working with young people who have migration or refugee backgrounds requires sensitive preparation, thoughtful facilitation, and trauma-aware methods. These youth bring with them diverse experiences—including resilience, cultural richness, and adaptability—but may also carry emotional burdens related to displacement, loss, or discrimination.

Before leading workshops, educators and facilitators should take steps to ensure the process is safe, inclusive, and empowering for all participants. Good preparation lays the groundwork for trust, engagement, and learning.

KEY STEPS IN WORKSHOP PREPARATION



Know Your Group

- Gather background information on participants (age, countries of origin, language proficiency, length of time in the host country).
- Understand community dynamics, including past conflicts or sensitivities.

Clarify Goals and Flexibility

- Define learning objectives but remain flexible. Some activities may need to be adapted based on the group dynamics or emotional readiness of the participants.
- Be ready to simplify language or shift topics based on participants' comfort.





Design Safe and Inclusive Activities

- Prioritize cooperative, non-competitive exercises that build trust.
- Avoid early activities that ask for personal stories or painful memories—let relationships develop first.

Prepare Materials Thoughtfully

- Use visuals, simplified language, and culturally relevant examples.
- Include options for non-verbal participation (e.g. drawing, group movement, music).



Create the Right Atmosphere

- Set up the space in a welcoming way (e.g., circle seating, inclusive posters, multilingual signs).
- Start with rituals or energizers that are fun and culturally neutral.

Anticipate Emotional Responses

- Have a plan in place for students who become upset or withdrawn. Collaborate with school counselors or support workers if needed.
- Establish ground rules for respect, confidentiality, and optional participation.





Build in Reflection and Feedback

- Include time for participants to reflect on what they’ve experienced—verbally, in writing, or through creative expression.
- Ask for feedback to adapt to future sessions and empower youth to shape the process.

Well-prepared workshops foster a sense of belonging, dignity, and engagement, even for young people who may initially feel unsure or disconnected. As shown in the Irish context, when educators take time to prepare with care, youth are more likely to participate meaningfully and see themselves as valued contributors, not just attendees.

6.4. Tools for Diagnosing Cultural Competences

Diagnosing cultural competencies is not about ranking or labeling participants; it is about supporting personal and professional development through self-awareness and guided reflection. The following tools are designed to help educators and youth assess their intercultural readiness, identify areas for growth, and plan next steps in a supportive and inclusive manner. These tools can be used at the beginning, during, or after training or educational interventions.



Diagnosis in educators: self-assessment and reflection

1

Self-Assessment for Educators – Cultural Awareness Checklist

This tool invites educators to reflect on their current intercultural attitudes, practices, and areas for improvement.

Statement

Rate Yourself (1–5)

I recognize my own cultural background and how it shapes my perspective.

1 2 3 4 5

I feel confident facilitating discussions about culture and identity.

1 2 3 4 5

I adapt my materials to include diverse cultural voices.

1 2 3 4 5

I actively challenge stereotypes and discriminatory behavior.

1 2 3 4 5

I seek out training or resources to improve my intercultural skills.

1 2 3 4 5

Scoring and Use: The goal is not a “high score” but identifying areas to develop. Use in team reflection or professional development planning.

2

Youth Self-Reflection “My Intercultural Profile”

This activity helps young people reflect on their comfort, curiosity, and confidence in multicultural environments.

Finish the statements:

- I feel most confident when talking with people from...
- Something I would like to learn about another culture is...
- A moment when I felt included (or excluded) was...
- When I don't understand something culturally, I usually...

Can be completed individually (in journals or visual form) or shared in pairs or groups.

3

Diagnosis in educators – self-assessment and reflection

Understanding one's own cultural competence is the first step toward fostering inclusive, respectful learning environments.

For educators, this involves an honest reflection on their attitudes, practices, and readiness to engage with diversity.

Self-assessment tools can help educators identify strengths, uncover biases, and define areas for growth. Rather than serving as evaluations, these tools promote professional development through critical reflection.



Educators can use a structured checklist or reflection journal based on key intercultural dimensions, such as:

- **Awareness** of one's own cultural identity and assumptions
- **Openness** to different values, communication styles, and learning needs
- **Adaptability** in responding to cultural conflict or misunderstanding
- **Commitment** to learning about other cultures and building inclusive practices

Educators are invited to rate themselves on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the **following statements**:

1. I feel comfortable working with students from different cultural backgrounds.
2. I regularly include diverse cultural perspectives in my teaching materials.
3. I reflect on how my own cultural background influences my teaching style.
4. I recognize and challenge cultural stereotypes in the classroom.
5. I seek feedback from students or colleagues about inclusiveness in my practice.

After completing the scale, educators should select one statement to improve and write down a specific action they will take within the next month. This straightforward process fosters consistent growth and facilitates the integration of multicultural awareness into everyday teaching.

Tips for educators

Tips for Using Diagnostic Tools Effectively:

- Frame diagnostics as tools for growth, not judgment.
- Ensure confidentiality and avoid public comparison of results.
- Follow up with reflection and action planning (e.g., choose one area to develop).
- Combine quantitative (scales/checklists) and qualitative (journals, interviews) methods.
- Adapt tools based on the age, language level, and cultural background of participants.

Additional tips:

- Start small—introduce one new inclusive practice at a time.
- Be open to learning from your students' experiences.
- Use visuals and storytelling to bridge language and cultural gaps.
- Create a classroom culture where mistakes are part of learning.
- Reflect regularly—after lessons, note what worked and what didn't.
- Build partnerships with families and community organizations.
- Address bias gently but clearly, modeling respect and accountability.
- Stay curious—cultural competence is a lifelong learning journey.



FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Embracing Multicultural Existence as a Lifelong Practice.

This guide has demonstrated that multicultural existence is not a one-time topic or isolated initiative; it is a mindset, a method, and a movement that must be woven into the daily fabric of youth work and education. In a world where migration, diversity, and global interconnection are defining features of young people's lives, the ability to engage across cultures is not a soft skill—it is a civic necessity.

The Multicultural Existence Method offers a comprehensive and practical framework for fostering empathy, inclusion, and resilience in both formal and informal learning environments. Grounded in the four pillars of Recognition, Dialogue, Reflection, and Action, the method equips educators and youth workers to move beyond tolerance toward active, meaningful engagement with diversity.

Recommendations for Educators, Youth Workers, and Institutions

- **Embed Multiculturalism Across All Levels of Education and Youth Work**

- Treat cultural diversity as a core strength, not an optional topic.
- Integrate multicultural content and methods into daily lessons, policies, and practices.

- **Invest in Ongoing Educator Training and Reflection**

- Provide regular professional development on intercultural communication, trauma-informed education, and anti-discrimination.
- Encourage self-assessment tools and reflective practices to identify growth areas.

- **Prioritize Youth Participation and Voice**

- Involve young people in the design, implementation, and evaluation of multicultural activities.
- Avoid one-size-fits-all approaches—build on youth strengths, lived experiences, and creativity.

- **Create Safe, Inclusive, and Responsive Learning Environments**

- Ensure visual, linguistic, and curricular representation of all cultures present in the classroom or youth group.
- Build trust through consistent support, respectful communication, and clear expectations.

- **Build Cross-Sector and Community Partnerships**

- Work with families, NGOs, migrant organizations, and local authorities to foster a network of inclusion.
- Share successful practices and learn from diverse perspectives to grow together.

- **Monitor, Evaluate, and Evolve Practices**

- Use diagnostic tools to track progress and identify blind spots.
- Reflect as a team and adapt methods to meet changing needs and contexts.



A Shared Responsibility for a United Future

The Multicultural Existence Method is not only about education, it is about building a shared, inclusive future for all. Educators, youth workers, institutions, families, and young people themselves all play a role. When these actors collaborate, reflect, and act together, multicultural coexistence becomes not just possible, but powerful.



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