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Guide

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY





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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary societies are facing increasingly complex and demanding challenges. Growing economic inequalities, demographic changes, migration, political polarization, disinformation, as well as climate and health crises all impact citizens' sense of security and belonging. In this dynamic context, we are witnessing a growing need for integration, cooperation, and community. This is where social solidarity comes into play – not only as a moral concept, but also as a foundation for organizing collective life, building social trust, and strengthening bonds between people.

Social solidarity is a multidimensional idea. On one hand, it is an ethical value rooted in the belief that we are not indifferent to the fate of others. On the other, it is a social and political category that defines the relationship between the individual and the community, social responsibility, and institutional forms of support. In practical terms, it means a willingness to help, to act for the common good, to counter exclusion, and to support individuals or groups in difficult situations. Solidarity implies shared responsibility and active engagement in social life – both locally and globally.

In the context of education, social solidarity becomes a value not only to be taught, but above all, to be experienced. Schools, educational institutions, and other social initiatives have enormous potential to shape attitudes grounded in solidarity.



This is where young people learn cooperation, responsibility for others, conflict resolution, how to respond to injustice, and how to recognize the needs of others. Education can and should be a space for strengthening social bonds and building a culture of support.

In recent years, however, we have observed a clear decline in the social capital of trust and a rise in individualism among the younger generation. This stems from various factors – cultural shifts, the digitalization of social life, the pressure to succeed, and a lack of real experience in cooperation and having an impact on one's surroundings. Young people are increasingly less engaged in traditional forms of solidarity, such as volunteering or civic activity, while at the same time, more frequently declaring support for community values – especially in the context of climate change, migration, or human rights. This tension between declared values and actual engagement requires particular attention and support from educators.

Educators – including teachers, mentors, trainers, and facilitators – play a key role in fostering social solidarity among young people. Their task is not only to convey knowledge about values or social norms, but also to create spaces where students can experience solidarity in practice: through cooperation, reflection, project-based work, and participation in social initiatives. What is especially important is building relationships based on empathy, dialogue, and attentiveness – as these form the foundation of any community.





It is also important to recognize that young people today draw a significant part of their inspiration from the digital world.

Therefore, solidarity education should also include digital tools and social media – not only as an educational space, but also as a platform for building communities and promoting pro-social actions.



Student projects can take the form of online campaigns, podcasts, social reports, or collaborative initiatives using technology.



CHAPTER 1:

**COMMUNITY, RESPONSIBILITY, ACTION –
ABOUT SOCIAL SOLIDARITY****1.1. Definition and Meaning of the Concept**

Social solidarity is a spiritual and practical bond between people, based on shared values, common interests, and mutual responsibility. As sociologist Jowita Radzińska notes in her article "Solidarity: Definition and Contexts", it is a "warm" value – one that gains social acceptance regardless of political views, because it relates to what is common, close, and necessary. However, solidarity is not a univocal concept – it can be understood as a spontaneous moral response, as an organized social practice, or as a foundation of social policy.

According to the classical definition by Émile Durkheim, there are two types of solidarity:

- **Mechanical solidarity** – based on similarity and homogeneity (typical of traditional communities),
- **Organic solidarity** – based on interdependence arising from differences and the division of roles (characteristic of modern societies).

Contemporary approaches, such as the model proposed by Andreas Wildt, emphasize that solidarity is more than just an act of goodwill. It is a deliberate ethical choice, grounded in mutual respect, recognition, and reflection. Acts of solidarity are voluntary, but also carry a sense of responsibility – both for oneself and for the community.



1.2. Aspects and Contexts of Solidarity

Social solidarity has multiple aspects:

- **Moral** – as a virtue and an attitude toward others,
- **Institutional** – as the foundation of welfare systems and redistributive policies,
- **Systemic** – as a principle that organizes collective life and ensures social cohesion.

There is also a cultural aspect of solidarity – expressed through narratives, symbols, and practices that shape a sense of community identity.

Forms of solidarity are diverse and include:

- Intergenerational solidarity (e.g., pension systems, elder care),
- Territorial solidarity (e.g., cohesion policies between regions),
- Institutional solidarity (e.g., state-run social security systems),
- Grassroots and digital solidarity (e.g., aid campaigns on Facebook, support groups on messaging platforms, time banks).

1.3. Youth and Solidarity

Today's youth are shaping new models of solidarity – less hierarchical, more networked and participatory. Examples include grassroots initiatives, informal organizations, social media campaigns, and participation in international movements such as Fridays for Future. Young people tend to prefer actions that are fast, concrete, and often involve digital tools, while at the same time showing openness to values such as cooperation, equality, and justice.



Education should strengthen this potential by:

- creating opportunities for joint activities among students from diverse social backgrounds,
- addressing topics such as migration, equal opportunities, and climate change,
- connecting local engagement with global issues – showing that solidarity can take many forms.

1.4. Solidarity Education – Challenges and Opportunities

The greatest challenge in solidarity education is its practical implementation. Time, resources, or institutional readiness are often lacking. Therefore, a systemic approach is essential – embedding solidarity into the overall educational culture. This can be achieved through:

- regular volunteer activities as part of educational programs,
- supporting youth leaders and student councils,
- involving young people in shaping school rules, policies, and projects.

The practice of solidarity can also be linked to environmental, health, and civic education. As a result, an educational environment emerges that not only talks about values, but co-creates them together with young people.





CHAPTER 2:

LEARNING SOLIDARITY – AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION

In the context of civic education and upbringing toward community, increasing importance is being placed on an approach that goes beyond merely conveying knowledge about values – one that enables young people to experience and practice them. Social solidarity, as a dynamic and multidimensional value, requires precisely this kind of education.

In this chapter, we explore the concept of learning solidarity through action, reflection, and cooperation. It is not a method with a fixed formula, but rather a set of educational strategies that support young people in developing empathy, agency, and a sense of belonging.

Education as a Space for Practicing Community

Solidarity does not develop in a vacuum. For young people to understand it and consciously shape it, they need a safe environment that allows them to experience cooperation, responsibility, and a sense of agency. Education – both formal and non-formal – should be a space in which students:

- learn to recognize the needs of others,
- analyze the causes of social injustice,
- take action for change,
- reflect on themselves and their impact on the world around them.

In the solidarity-based approach, the goal is not to convince students that they should “help the weaker,” but rather to build awareness of mutual interconnectedness and shared responsibility.

It is a shift in perspective: from a charitable mindset to one rooted in justice.

Three levels of solidarity education

In order to introduce social solidarity into everyday educational practice, it is worth looking at three levels of youth work:

2.1. Context awareness and understanding

The first step is building knowledge and social sensitivity. Young people should learn about the mechanisms of exclusion and marginalization, understand how inequalities function, and what influences the situation of groups at risk of discrimination. Important here are:

- analysis of case studies and social reports,
- discussions around topics such as poverty, migration, discrimination,
- learning about the history of local solidarity initiatives.

Reflection on the concept of privilege may also be helpful – who am I in society, what privileges do I have, what resources do I use, what do others experience?



2.2. Engagement and Cooperation

The second level is action – creating opportunities to practice solidarity in real life. Young people get involved in projects that have a real social impact. This can include:

- volunteering in local organizations,
- organizing social campaigns at school or online,
- activities for equality, integration, or environmental protection.

It is important that these initiatives are not imposed “from above,” but co-created with young people. In this way, they learn responsibility, planning, cooperation, and communication – key competences not only for democracy, but also for everyday life.

2.3. Reflection and Sustainability of Attitudes

The last, and at the same time the most important, element of solidarity education is reflection. It is what determines whether the experience will be internalized and transformed into an attitude. Reflection can take various forms:

- group conversations after project activities,
- keeping learning journals,
- analyzing emotions, difficulties, and successes,
- relating the experience to personal and social values.

Systematically introducing such moments of pause allows young people to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of their actions, to notice changes in themselves and their surroundings, and to take further steps – no longer as a task, but as an inner need.

Educational Practice – What Works?

Effective solidarity education:

- is based on cooperation between schools and social organizations,
- includes the voices of young people at every stage of activity,
- provides space for experimentation and making mistakes,
- connects local contexts with global challenges,
- engages diverse forms of expression: film, podcast, theater, social media.

An important role is also played by “solidarity alliances” – networks of cooperation between educators, activists, students, and local institutions. Their goal is not only to carry out individual projects, but also to build long-term relationships and learning communities.



The Educator as a Companion in the Process

In the solidarity-based approach, the educator does not act as an expert with ready-made answers. Their role is more like that of a guide – someone who creates the conditions for learning, supports the process, ensures emotional safety, and inspires exploration. It is important that the educator is also ready for self-reflection, to work on their own biases, and to remain open to the diverse experiences of young people.



Conclusion

Social solidarity as an educational practice is more than just a subject or a topic of discussion – it is an approach that can permeate all areas of educational life. Learning solidarity means not only understanding the problems of others, but above all co-creating a reality in which no one is left behind. It is a challenge, but also a great opportunity to raise a generation ready to build a society based on cooperation, empathy, and social justice.

CHAPTER 3:

BRINGING SOLIDARITY INTO EDUCATION – TOOLS, INSPIRATIONS, AND PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

3.1. Solidarity Education in Practice – Key Assumptions

Implementing social solidarity in education is not only a matter of values, but also of everyday practices. For solidarity to be experienced, it must be visible, tangible, and real. This means, among other things, creating an educational environment in which young people:

- learn cooperation and responsibility,
- have an influence on their surroundings,
- discover examples of pro-social actions,
- are encouraged to reflect and act for the common good.

In this part of the chapter, we present three main pillars of solidarity practice in education:

Pillar I: Relations

Building a culture of support and trust within the group.

Practical Examples:

Talking circles, peer mediation, peer tutoring.





Pillar II: Experience

Engagement in community activities and volunteering.

Practical Examples:

Student-led projects, solidarity-focused campaigns, and support actions.

Pillar III: Reflection

Analysis of experiences, emotions, and the outcomes of actions.

Practical Examples:

Tools such as reflective journals, solidarity portfolios, and emotion collages.



Solidarity as an attitude is not a value that can simply be “transmitted.”

It requires processes that allow young people to explore different perspectives, engage in meaningful action, and then reflect on their own experiences. Only in this way can young people build an authentic understanding of solidarity, grounded in real-life experience and personal motivation.



3.2. Introductory Exercises – From Empathy to Engagement

Below is a set of example exercises that educators can use at different stages of working with young people. Some of them aim to build empathy, while others focus on developing social analysis and action planning.

1

Excercise 1: „Who Has It Harder?”

Goal: To raise awareness of differences in access to resources.

Instructions:

1. Students receive roles representing people from different backgrounds (e.g. a migrant child, a single mother, a student with a disability).
2. They read life situations (e.g. "You go to a public office to sort something out") and take a step forward only if their character would realistically be able to act in that situation.
3. After the exercise: Discussion – Who was left behind? Why? What did it feel like? What actions could be taken to reduce these differences?





2

Excercise 2: „Solidarity around me”

Goal: Identifying local expressions of solidarity.

Instructions:

1. Young people work in pairs to identify forms of support and cooperation in their surroundings (e.g. neighborhood collections, community fridges, local foundations).
2. Then, they prepare short presentations – “solidarity maps” of their district or municipality.
3. They can also invite guests and representatives of local aid initiatives to meet with the class.

3

Excercise 3: „If I had to deal with this” (Annex 3)

Goal: Developing empathy and a sense of responsibility.

Instructions:

1. Groups draw a “problem situation” (e.g. digital exclusion, homelessness, online hate).
2. Their task is to prepare 3 possible solidarity-based actions – from small (individual) to larger (group or school-wide) initiatives.
3. Then, they compare their ideas with real-life examples of initiatives led by social organizations.

4

Excercise 4: „Postcards from the Future”

Goal: Developing social imagination and hope for change.

Instructions:

1. Young people imagine that 10 years have passed and their town or city has become a model of social solidarity.
2. They draw or describe this vision in the form of a postcard.
3. Then, they discuss in groups what would need to happen for this vision to come true – and what role they themselves could play in making it happen.





3.3. Thematic Lesson Plans

Below we present ready-to-use lesson plans that can be implemented with young people at various stages of education. The scenarios are flexible and can be adapted depending on the participants' age, the duration of the session, or local needs.



1

Scenario 1: „Solidarity or Pity?”

Topic: The difference between help based on shared responsibility and charity.

Goals:

- To distinguish between the concepts of pity and solidarity.
- To encourage reflection on ethical ways of supporting others.
- To strengthen an attitude of respect and equality toward people in need of support.

Methods: pair work, quote analysis, plenary discussion, reflection worksheet.

Materials: quotes/photos, reflection worksheet.

Lesson flow:

1. **Introduction:** The facilitator asks the group what the difference is between pity and solidarity. Key words are written on the board.
2. **Pair work:** Students analyze the provided materials and fill in the reflection worksheet.
3. **Plenary discussion:** Groups share their thoughts and conclusions.
4. **Summary:** Each student writes one sentence:

“TO ME, SOLIDARITY MEANS...”

2

Scenario 2: “Young People Making a Difference”

Topic: Youth-led social initiatives.

Goals:

- To inspire young people through the actions of their peers
- To develop project planning skills
- To foster a sense of agency and engagement

Methods: brainstorming, case analysis, project work, presentation.

Materials: descriptions of initiatives, project planning sheet, art supplies or digital tools.



Lesson flow:

1. **Inspiration:** Examples of youth-led initiatives
2. **Brainstorming:** What problems do young people see around them?
3. **Project work:** Groups plan their own initiatives
4. **Creating mini-campaigns**
5. **Presentation and reflection**

3

Scenario 3: „My school, my place”

Topic: Identifying Barriers and Counteracting Exclusion in the School Environment.

Goals:

- To identify spaces and situations of exclusion
- To strengthen a sense of shared responsibility for the school atmosphere
- To design actions that support integration

Methods: exploratory walks, mapping, planning.

Materials: school layout/map, observation sheets, planning worksheet.



Lesson Flow:

1. **Introduction:** Discussion about what makes a school inclusive for everyone
2. **Exploratory walk:** Students document their observations
3. **Mapping and discussion**
4. **Action planning**
5. **Presentation and reflection**

4

Scenario 4: „Empathy Circle”

Topic: Active listening and expressing emotions

Goals:

- To build a safe and supportive atmosphere
- To develop empathy
- To practice mindful listening

Methods: talking circles, emotion cards, pair work

Materials: emotion cards, a talking object

Lesson Flow:

- • • 1. **Introduction:** Explaining the rules of the circle
- • • 2. **Warm-up:** Students draw emotion cards
- • • 3. **Talking circle**
- • • 4. **Pair activity**
5. **Summary**



5

Scenario 5: „Solidarity online”

Topic: Digital solidarity and online responsibility

Goals:

- To recognize online phenomena
- To foster responsible attitudes
- To create a solidarity code for online behavior

Methods: case analysis, group work, rule-setting

Materials: online case examples, code of conduct template

Lesson Flow:

1. **Start:** Analysis of a sample comment
2. **Case analysis:** Students discuss scenarios in groups
3. **Plenary discussion**
4. **Creating a digital solidarity code**
5. **Summary and publication**



6

Scenario 6: „A School Open to Others”

Topic: Cooperation with refugees and people with migration experience

Goals:

- To build empathy toward migrants
- To challenge stereotypes
- To design integration activities

Methods: guest meeting, cultural workshops

Materials: multimedia materials, reflection sheet, camera/phone

Lesson Flow:

1. **Introduction:** Associations with the word “refugee”
2. **Guest meeting**
3. **Individual reflection:** Students complete a reflection sheet
4. **Integration workshops**
5. **Project:** “Hospitality means...”
6. **Summary and proposals for further action**



3.4. Tools to Support the Educator's Work

Well-designed solidarity education requires not only knowledge and empathy, but also concrete tools. Below we present additional resources and ideas that can enrich everyday educational practice:

Tool	Function	Practical examples
Decision-making games	Developing critical thinking	Classroom Resource Redistribution Game
Biographical workshops	Building identity and self-understanding	Creating life timelines, identity collages
Long-term projects	Reinforcing attitudes and competencies	Solidarity Initiative – A One-Month Youth Project
"Moving Questions"	Stimulating discussion and opinions	Young people move around the room according to their answers to questions about values.

3.5. Integrating solidarity into the curriculum

Integrating solidarity-related topics into the curriculum can also take place through interdisciplinary projects and thematic pathways. Example approaches:

- **Interdisciplinary project "Community"** (language studies + social studies + computer science): students create a social campaign promoting a selected community value.
- **Solidarity week:** a series of lessons focused on various forms of supporting others, culminating in an exhibition of student work.

- **Project-based learning using elements of Design Thinking:** students identify a problem in their community and collaboratively develop possible solutions.



3.6. Recommendations for educators

It is also worth keeping in mind a few additional tips:

- involve young people in the planning process – let them co-create the rules, goals, and methods.
- consider different learning styles – not everyone feels comfortable with debates or presentations. Include elements of visual art, photography, or movement.
- assess outcomes not only through tests, but also by observing attitudes, using reflection journals, and conducting social evaluations.
- seek partnerships – invite local leaders, NGOs, seniors, and people with refugee or migration experience.



3.7. Summary

Practicing solidarity in education is not about one-time gestures or additional projects. It is a long-term process of building a school culture based on empathy, shared responsibility, and social justice.

Well-designed activities, reflective work with students, openness to diversity, and local engagement turn solidarity from an abstract idea into a tangible experience that transforms both young people and their environment.

Solidarity education teaches that we are all part of a community, and that our actions – even the smallest ones – matter. In times of polarization, uncertainty, and social crises, this is one of the most important lessons a school can offer the younger generation.

Building a space rooted in solidarity is a process that requires time, commitment, and courage. But it is also a process that brings deep meaning to educational work and offers hope for a more just, empathetic, and resilient society.



CHAPTER 4:

IRISH METHODS OF STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

4.1. Introduction to the Irish context

Ireland, a country with a rich history of migration and social change, has developed innovative approaches to building social solidarity among young people. In response to challenges related to racism, exclusion, and prejudice against minority groups, youth organizations, schools, and social institutions are implementing programs aimed at fostering empathy, shared responsibility, and civic engagement.

Social solidarity here is understood not only as a value but as an active social attitude, supported through educational activities, community-based projects, and local initiatives. These programs are carried out in schools and youth centers in cities such as Dublin, Limerick, and Cork, promoting a culture of cooperation, inclusion, and dialogue.





4.2. Three Key Components of the Social Solidarity Method

In the Irish context, three main areas of activity have emerged as the foundation of the Social Solidarity Method:

1

Early diagnosis and preventive actions against prejudice

The aim of this approach is to identify potential situations where acts of intolerance or exclusion may occur (e.g. hate speech, stereotypes about migrants). Instead of punishing young people for “problematic behavior,” educational and formative actions are applied:

- **In schools:** workshops on stereotypes and diversity led by peers and intercultural educators.
- **In youth centers:** storytelling sessions involving people with migration experience.
- **At the local level:** organizations such as Youthreach implement preventive educational activities that connect young people from diverse backgrounds.

How to implement this in your own setting?

- Observe young people's behavior that may indicate prejudice.
- Support peer leaders in promoting equality and empathy.
- Establish partnerships with organizations specializing in anti-discrimination education.



2

Restorative community programs and building responsibility

When exclusion or discrimination has already occurred, restorative actions are introduced, often in the form of community projects and peer mediation:

- Restorative justice circle programs, where young people take responsibility for their actions toward minority groups.
- Peer mentoring – pairing young people with different backgrounds to work through prejudices.
- Social projects (e.g. joint renovation of public spaces, social campaigns).

How to implement this in your own setting:

- Create a safe and supportive environment for discussing difficult topics related to exclusion and prejudice.
- Build restorative relationships between young people and those experiencing exclusion through dialogue, collaboration, and group activities.
- Involve young people in socially responsible initiatives that develop empathy and a sense of community.



3

Participatory and integrative projects that build solidarity

A key element of the method is collective action for the common good. Participants learn cooperation and mutual support through:

- Shared events: intercultural festivals, sports leagues bringing together youth from diverse backgrounds.
- Social initiatives: social entrepreneurship projects, volunteer work.
- Educational activities: creating information campaigns about social exclusion and ways to counter it.

How to implement this in your own setting?

- Identify local needs that can become a starting point for joint action.
- Involve young people in planning and implementing the project to strengthen their sense of agency.
- Plan how to measure the project's impact on relationships and cohesion within the local community.



4.3. The Social Solidarity Method as a Systemic Model

The Irish approach is based on a systemic model that integrates formal, non-formal, and community-based education. Its key principles include:

- building bridges between schools, youth organizations, and local communities.
- developing social and civic competences through learning by doing.
- working with core values: empathy, social justice, and responsibility.

This method is applied in various settings: schools, NGOs, and adult education centers. Thanks to its flexibility, it can be adapted to different cultural contexts, local resources, and the specific needs of each group.

4.4. Conclusions and Relevance for Europe

The Social Solidarity Method aligns closely with European priorities:

- **EU Youth Strategy (2019–2027)** – strengthening participation, equality, and civic engagement.
- **European Solidarity Corps** – volunteering and social action as a form of non-formal education.
- **Civic and intercultural education** – supporting teachers and educators in creating inclusive programs.
- **Values of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** – promoting dignity, equality, and respect for diversity.



The Irish model shows how important it is to combine theory with practice – involving young people not only in discussions but also in actions that benefit their communities.



By transferring this method to other European contexts, it becomes possible to build strong, integrated youth communities based on cooperation, solidarity, and collective action for social justice.



CHAPTER 5:

SOLIDARITY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MIGRATION AND REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

5.1. Migration as a Challenge and Opportunity for the School Community

The growing number of young people with migration and refugee experience is a reality that calls not only for organizational responses, but above all for a response grounded in solidarity. In this context, solidarity means more than integration – it is about creating a shared space where every young person, regardless of their migration history, can co-create social and educational life.

Young people with migration experience are a diverse group. Some have come with their parents in search of a better life, others have fled violence, war, or persecution. Some were born in the country but are still perceived as “different.” A common thread for many of them is the experience of transition, change, and often a lost sense of safety.

It is important to see these young people not only through the lens of deficits (such as language barriers or adaptation difficulties), but also through their potential: multilingual skills, adaptability, psychological resilience, and intercultural competences. A socially solidary environment is one that recognizes and develops these strengths with care and respect for each individual's story.



5.2. Support Through Solidarity – Needs and Good Practices

For education to truly become a space of community, it must be grounded in conscious action. Below are key areas of support for young people with migration experience, implemented in the spirit of solidarity:

- **Safe presence**

This is not just about formally accepting someone into the community, but about genuine inclusion – welcoming them, introducing them, explaining the rules, and inviting them to participate in shared activities.

- **Language support**

A solidary community does not expect linguistic perfection from a newcomer right away. It facilitates communication through translation, peer support, and allowing the use of one's native language during the adaptation phase.

- **Intercultural dialogue**

Understanding and accepting cultural differences is essential for building a sense of community. Teachers and students alike should be supported in developing intercultural readiness.

- **Shared responsibility instead of caretaking**

Support should be offered respectfully, allowing everyone space for independence, decision-making, and making mistakes. This is solidarity based on partnership, not paternalism.

- **Including families**

The families of young people with migration experience are often overlooked. Yet community extends beyond the classroom or group. It's worth inviting parents to co-create events, meetings, and resources.

5.3. Solidarity in Action – Exercises and Practices

Excercise 1

"Our Shared Space"

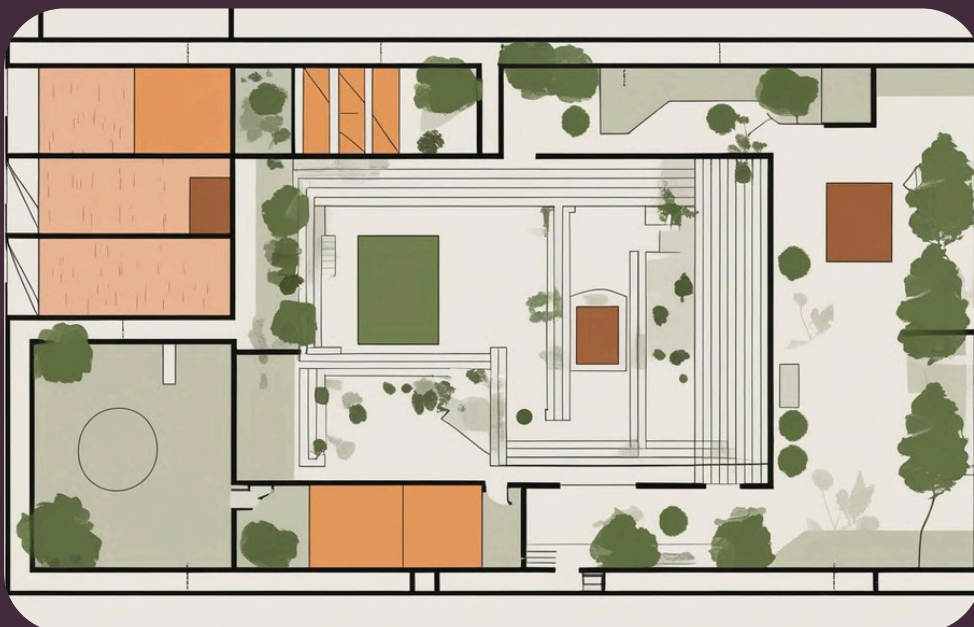
Goal: Building a sense of belonging within the class or group.

Instructions:

Students create a map of their educational setting as a shared space. They mark areas that feel “ours” – friendly, open, where they can be themselves. Then they identify places that need change (e.g. “no one talks to us here,” “we’re afraid to speak our own language here”).

Outcome:

Young people discover that community is not only about physical space – it’s also about relationships, rules, and everyday communication.





Case study

"Our Shared Space"

At a primary school in Warsaw, a "New Student Support Group" was created, made up of older students.

Their task was to support peers with migration experience during their first weeks at school: showing them around, offering language assistance, and keeping them company during breaks.

Autcome:

New students adapted more quickly, felt "seen," and members of the support group reported increased openness and understanding of cultural differences.

Implementation tips:

- Creating such a group can be part of the student council.
- It's worth training the student leaders in communication and intercultural sensitivity.
- The initiative can be supported by teachers, but should be student-led.



5.4 Intercultural Readiness as an Everyday Practice of Solidarity

Everyday readiness to show solidarity with young people who have migration experience is not a program – it is a habit of action, present during breaks, in the classroom, and in relationships.


This includes:

- Asking the question: “Is everything clear to you?” – instead of assuming it is.
- Including the migration perspective in lesson content, for example when discussing contemporary European history.
- Recognizing holidays, languages, and traditions of different groups not as curiosities, but as an equal part of the school’s culture.

Solidarity, in this sense, is not about helping “others” – it is about building a community that everyone has the right to belong to.

5.5. Summary – Solidarity as the Foundation of a Diverse Community

An educational institution is not just a place for learning – it is a laboratory of society. And a society that aims to be just and resilient must be built on solidarity that embraces diversity.



When it comes to young people with migration experience, solidarity is not only a response to difficulty, but a conscious decision to co-create an open, safe, and hopeful environment. Educators play a key role here – not as “problem-solvers,” but as shapers of everyday life, where diversity is seen as a strength, not a barrier.



CHAPTER 6:

EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING A CULTURE OF SOLIDARITY IN EDUCATION

6.1 The Educator as a Solidarity Leader – Role and Challenges

Supporting social solidarity among young people is not possible without engaged and self-aware educators. Teachers, mentors, trainers, and facilitators do more than just teach – they serve as guides in values, model social relationships, and shape the group climate. Their readiness for reflection, attentiveness, and collaboration is crucial in determining whether solidarity becomes a real educational experience.

Working as an educator in this area means continuous growth. It requires the courage to ask oneself:

- Do I recognize mechanisms of exclusion in my group?
- What patterns am I passing on – consciously or unconsciously?
- How do I respond to situations of inequality or indifference?

Solidarity in education begins with awareness of one's role and a willingness to be part of the change – not just a commentator on it.



6.2 Building a Culture of Solidarity Within the Educational Team

Strengthening social solidarity among young people cannot rely solely on individual actions. What is needed is a shared working culture within the educational team, grounded in co-responsibility, dialogue, and collaborative planning of educational processes.

Elements of a solidarity-based culture in a school or institution:

- Jointly establishing rules for responding to violence, exclusion, and isolation.
- Sharing good practices, for example through a “solidarity action bank.”
- Creating space for reflection: educator circles, mentoring, interdisciplinary meetings.
- Planning project activities with the involvement of the entire community – students, parents, and local partners.

It is important that educators are not left alone with the responsibility of “teaching values.” Solidarity is a collective task – including within the educational team.





6.3 Tools to Support Educators' Personal Development

In working on solidarity, tools that support educators in developing reflection, social competences, and systemic awareness are particularly useful. Below are selected suggestions:

Tool	Function	Example of Use
Reflective journal	Developing awareness of one's actions and attitudes	Notes after classes: "What happened?", "What values were present?", "What can I improve?" (Reflection sheet template available in the annex)
Educator circle	Strengthening relationships and peer learning	Monthly meetings: one person shares a practice, the others respond with questions
Inter-institutional supervision	Deepening reflection on complex cases	Analyzing difficult situations with confidentiality and mutual respect
Solidarity self-assessment	Identifying strengths and areas for growth	Survey: "How do I respond to exclusion?", "Do I notice inequalities?", "Do I invite co-decision-making?"



6.4 Workshop for Educators: “Solidarity as Practice”

A simple workshop proposal for an educational team, to be implemented during a staff meeting, training day, or professional learning network session.

Goal: To deepen the understanding of what social solidarity means in the context of education, and how it can be cultivated in everyday practice.

1

Introduction

- Mini-lecture or video on social solidarity (e.g. excerpt from a social campaign).
- Opening round: “What does solidarity mean to me?”

2

Exercise: “Challenge Map”

- Groups create a map of situations in their environment that require solidarity (e.g. youth loneliness, poverty, peer tensions).
- They then generate proposals for action.

3

Reflective work: “If solidarity were our guiding principle...”

Participants complete prompts such as:
“In our more solidary group...”, “I would like...”,
“We need...”

4

Conclusion and planning

- Agreeing on one action each educator will implement in the coming month.
- Exchange of contact details and an invitation to continue collaboration.



Final Conclusions and Recommendations

What does this guide show us?

1.

Social solidarity is not a one-time action, but an attitude and a process.

Building it takes time, consistency, and collective engagement – from both young people and educators.

2.

Solidarity education starts with everyday life.

It doesn't have to be spectacular – it can mean listening attentively, sharing decisions, noticing needs, and responding to exclusion.

3.

Solidarity has many dimensions:

From peer relationships and intergenerational cooperation to environmental and global action.

4.

Young people need space to co-create, not just participate.

The most impactful initiatives are those where youth design, implement, and evaluate actions together with adults.

5.

A systemic approach increases effectiveness.

Solidarity should not be an add-on to the curriculum – it should permeate the culture of the school, organization, or educational community.

Recommendations for educators

- **Recognize the importance of your actions.** Daily gestures of solidarity within a group have the power to shape lifelong attitudes.
- **Take care of your own resources.** Reflection, team support, and professional development are not privileges – they are essential to doing good work.
- **Involve young people in shared decision-making.** Ask for their opinions, needs, and ideas – not only in projects but also in everyday matters.
- **Bring values into everyday language.** Say things like: “We are a group that supports one another,” “No one is left behind here,” “Every voice matters.”

Recommendations for institutions

- **Ensure space for solidarity.** Plan activities that foster reciprocity, co-responsibility, and engagement.
- **Support teaching teams.** Facilitate the exchange of practices, organize joint training sessions, and cultivate a culture of teamwork.
- **Collaborate with local partners.** Involve NGOs, parents, and cultural institutions. Solidarity is built collectively.
- **Include solidarity in development strategies.** It’s not just about civic education – it is the foundation of a modern and resilient school.





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ANNEX 1:
STUDENT REFLECTION CARD

Fill out this card after you have completed your class or project activity. Stop for a moment and reflect on your experience.

1. What happened during today's class?

(Describe the most important moments, topics, situations that you remember)

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2. What emotions did I experience?

(Mark or name the feelings that emerged – positive and difficult)

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3. What have I learned about myself? About others?

(Think about what you have discovered through these activities – in yourself or in your relationships with others)

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4. What surprised me?

(Was anything new, unexpected, inspiring to you?)

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5. What would I like to do differently next time?

(Maybe something you can improve, try a different approach, say?)

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6. What solidarity actions can I take after class?

(Think of specific gestures or actions that you can perform in your environment)

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ANNEX 2:

ROLE CARDS FOR THE EXERCISE "WHO HAS IT HARDER?"

Instructions for the presenter and participants

This activity aims to develop empathy and understanding of differences in access to rights, services and life opportunities depending on a person's social situation. Participants take on different roles and respond to descriptions of life situations from their character's perspective.

Course:

- 1** Each participant draws or receives one card with a character description.
- 2** The leader reads out subsequent life situations.
- 3** After each situation, participants consider whether their character would find it easy, difficult, or very difficult to cope with the situation.
- 4** Participants line up (or step forward/back), creating a "social distancing simulation" of who would be closest or furthest from full participation in a given situation.



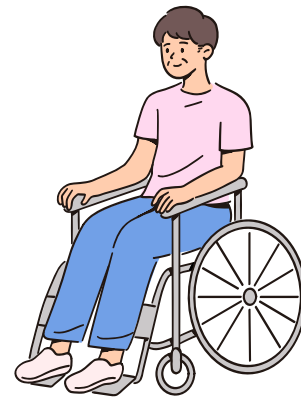


CHARACTER CARDS



Refugee child (age: 12)

- He / She is just learning Polish.
- He / She lives in the center with his family.
- He / She doesn't know the city or the rules of life in Poland well.



Person with mobility impairment (age: 28 years)

- He / She moves in a wheelchair.
- Independent, but needs access to barrier-free places.
- Often encounters problems with transportation and availability of services.



Senior (age: 76)

- He / She lives alone.
- He / She suffers from hearing and vision problems.
- Does not use the Internet, does not have a smartphone.



Single mother (age: 35)

- She works part-time.
- She is having financial difficulties.
- She lacks time and support in caring for the child.



LGBT+ person (age: 19)

- Open to her identity, but experiences discrimination at school.
- Lives with family, who do not accept this person.



Person working under a junk contract (age: 30)

- No right to paid vacation or sick leave.
- There is no steady income or social security.



A person with experience of homelessness (age: 45)

- Currently lives in a shelter.
- No identification documents or access to a bank account.
- Facing difficulties in obtaining work and accessing healthcare.



A student from a small town (age: 17)

- Commutes to school for over an hour a day.
- No access to tutoring or extra-curricular activities and limited access to the Internet.



List of life situations to read

1. A visit to the office to complete documents.
2. Finding a job or having a job interview.
3. Register to see a doctor online.
4. Participating in a cultural event (e.g. cinema, theatre).
5. Finding an apartment to rent.
6. Using public transport.
7. Report the problem to the administration or police.
8. Settling banking matters.
9. Distance learning or taking an online course.
10. Taking an exam or school/student recruitment.



ANNEX 3:

FORM FOR THE EXERCISE "IF IT WERE MY PROBLEM..."

Exercise description:

Participants draw one social problem and try to come up with real solutions from different perspectives: personal, team, and based on inspiration from the actions of other people or institutions.

Problem descriptions:



1

Hate and verbal violence on the internet

The comments under the student's photo contain offensive comments about his appearance. Teachers do not react, and peers remain silent or pretend that it is a "joke".



2

Lack of access to education for children from poor families

Some children don't have money for textbooks, computers or tutoring. They feel inferior and drop out of school because they can't keep up with the rest of the class.



3

LGBT+ youth do not feel safe at school

The student is a non-heteronormative person and from then on experiences exclusion. Teachers do not know how to react, and the management ignores the topic.



4

Older people are excluded from social life

Many seniors do not have access to the internet and cannot use online services or information. They feel lonely because their family and society forget about them.





5

Lack of places for young people to spend their free time

There are no open spaces for young people in a small town – there is a lack of clubs, rooms, safe places to meet. Young people are being chased away from estates and squares.



6

Architectural difficulties for people with disabilities

The school has no elevator or ramps. Wheelchair users cannot participate in classes in other classes or go with others to the cinema or cafe.



7

Menstrual poverty/lack of access to sanitary products

Some students miss school because they can't afford pads or tampons. There are no free products or support at school.



8

Lack of access to psychological help

The student is in crisis, but there is no psychologist at school, or access to one is 10 minutes once a month. Parents cannot provide private care.



9

People with migration experience feel alienated

A new student from Ukraine doesn't speak the language well and doesn't understand the school system. He is left out of conversations and treated with distance by the class.



10

Loneliness among young people and lack of real friendships

Many students feel like they have no one to talk to. Conversations are superficial and relationships are based on the pressure to be "cool" on social media.



11

Lack of respect for people in "invisible" professions

The cleaning lady in the facility cleans the classrooms every day, but no one greets her. Some students treat her with disdain or even mock her.



12

Gender stereotypes that limit the opportunities of girls and boys

Girls are discouraged from studying science, and boys cannot choose to do dance or babysitting without comments like "it's unmanly."





13

Lack of ecological awareness and the effects of climate change

Young people do not know what impact their daily choices (e.g. transport, food, waste) have on the planet. At school, the topic of climate is treated marginally.



14

Religious or racial discrimination in a public place

A young Muslim woman in a headscarf is ridiculed on a bus. No one reacts – neither the passengers nor the driver, who sees the whole thing.



15

Forcing young people to participate in activities they do not agree with

Students are required to participate in a school assembly of a political or religious nature even if they do not share its message.



16

Lack of equal access to extra-curricular activities and trips

Some students don't go on field trips because their families can't pay. No one talks about it in class - it's a taboo subject.



17

High prices of public transport tickets for students

The student commutes to school every day and spends a significant portion of his pocket money on tickets. If he forgets his student ID, he faces a financial penalty.



18

Lack of support for children and young people from violent families

The student comes in sad and withdrawn, but no one asks why. He doesn't trust adults and doesn't know where to seek help.



19

Prejudices against people experiencing homelessness

People pass homeless people without a word, without looking them in the eye. They are often told that it is “their own fault”, regardless of the cause of their situation.



20

Lack of opportunities for young people to have a real influence on decisions at school or in the commune

Young people have many ideas, but no one listens to them. The school government has no real powers, and the voice of young people is treated symbolically.





My idea (individual):

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Group idea (developed with other participants):

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Inspiration from the actions of others (organizations, people, campaigns, events):

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Summary: "What have we learned?"



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ANNEX 4:
SOLIDARITY SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR THE EDUCATOR

The one:

This sheet is for reflecting on your own educational practice from the perspective of social solidarity. It can be completed individually or in a group of colleagues, e.g. during a pedagogical council or workshop.

Reflective questions:

What situations of exclusion or injustice have I noticed recently among young people or in my school/organization?

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Do I enable young people to co-decide on what we do and how?

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In what situations do I show solidarity as an educator?

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What would I like to improve or develop in my approach to working with young people in the spirit of social solidarity?

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Ideas for next steps/actions:

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