



IO2 – Toolbox of Integration

Resources

Handbook – Cultural
literacy



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Young Migrant Integration Leaders

Integration Leader Handbook

The aim of this short handbook is to support you, as a young leader of integration, to use the digital resources provided in the Toolbox of Integration Resources with young migrants in your community. Through this short handbook, we will provide you with some background information on the topic being discussed in the digital resource and then we will provide some guidance on a follow-up activity that you can complete with young people in your local network. The activity included in this handbook will work to further develop their understanding of the topic outlined in the digital resource. In some cases, where group discussions are more appropriate, we will guide you in how to set up a group discussion, and will provide some discussion points and questions for you to introduce to young people in your local group.

The topic of this handbook relates to the digital resource – **Cultural literacy**

Introduction to the Topic

In the dynamic process of exchange between migrants and their host cultures, both parties are affected, migrants, at the same time, adopt and bring their cultural backgrounds into their new surroundings as active contributions to the life of the host community. This process can be fruitful for both sides, but it is a complex and sensitive one in relation to communication and collective identification.

When people try to interact with people outside the group, communication often fails and creates misunderstanding and barriers to making meaning in a situation.

The aim of this digital resource is to show young people how important is developing of their cultural literacy skills or ability to understand, interact and collaborate across different cultures.

You will be introduced to the impact of using cultural literacy skills in the environment and social life, basic rules of how to develop these skill, and what means to be tolerant.

Then you are encouraged to share these knowledge with young people in your group through a short group discussion.

The importance of Cultural literacy:

Cultural literacy is the knowledge of history, contributions, and perspectives of different cultural groups, including one's own group, necessary for understanding of reading, writing, and other media. Cultural literacy requires interaction with a culture and reflection of it. It is one's possession of a broad range of general knowledge and the use of that knowledge to build communication, acceptance, and understanding in an ever changing global society (Desmond, 2011).

Cultural literacy contributes positively to the society in which you live. It reduces prejudice and inequality based on culture, increases the value placed on diversity, and increases participation in the social practices of that society, including access to institutions and services (Anning, 2010).

Some key competencies you can develop to become culturally literate are:

1. Recognise and value cultural diversity and difference
2. Be able to communicate effectively with people from other cultures
3. Understand that there is diversity and difference between individuals within cultural groups
4. Treat everyone as an individual – have an open mind, no pre-expectations or stereotypes
5. Assess each situation and behave appropriately

Using this Resource with a Group

To use this resource with young people in your local group, we recommend that you begin by introducing the topic to people in your group. To prepare what you will say, you should first watch the digital resource yourself and then you can recap on some of the key points mentioned in this handbook.

You should then invite all young people in your group to watch the digital resource. As you won't have access to a projector and a screen, you can invite your peers to log

on to the EXEMPLAR project website: www.exemplars.eu and watch the digital resource on their smartphone, tablet or other device.

Once all peers in your network have watched the video resource, you should begin by asking them:

1. What did you think of the video resource?
2. What did you learn from it? Did you learn something new?
3. How did you find this resource useful and why?

Follow-up Activity

When you have made sure that all young people in your group have watched the digital resource and have engaged in this short discussion, we would encourage you to lead a more in-depth group discussion on the topic.

Activity Name: Group Discussion – What makes you accepted in society?

Timing: We recommend that you should hold this discussion with your group for 30-45 minutes - depending on how much they are willing to engage in the discussion and share with the group.

Materials:

For this activity, you will need to have a space to sit around and discuss this issue with young people in your group, and to provide the pens and note-taking materials for all young people.

As you are doing this work on a voluntary basis and there is no budget for materials, you should contact your local community centre, local government office or even approach local businesses working in the community and see if they would be willing to donate some supplies for you to complete this activity with your peers. They may also be able to help you with the printing!

Setting up a Group Discussion:

- ❖ Before you start a group discussion, it is important that the atmosphere is right and agree with young people in your group that all opinions should be considered as valid and respected.
- ❖ Begin by addressing some of the personal questions to each participant:
 - What is your culture?
 - What are some of the things from your culture that you are proud of?
 - What are some of the things about your culture that you don't like?
 - List some of your values, beliefs and customs (3 of each).
- ❖ When you have discussed these questions, you can then invite young people to go deeper into the topic by discussing the following questions:
 - How does culture define who a person is?
 - What is a common belief about race and how is it untrue?
 - Identify some stereotypes you know of about a particular group of people.
- ❖ Then give all young people in your group a sheet of paper and pencil, and ask them to fill in the table with information about their own culture.
- ❖ Next young people are comparing their information with others and discuss the differences.
- ❖ Through this group discussion, young people would be able to understand the observable aspects of culture such as food, clothing, celebrations, religion, and language are only part of a person's cultural heritage. These things make up how a person lives and what makes his/her accepted in society. Knowledge of those things helps to be aware of what they can do to avoid misunderstandings and successfully interact and collaborate across different cultures in new environments.

Cultural feature	What is acceptable	What is not acceptable
Food		
Clothing		
Celebration		
Religion		
Language		
Non-verbal communication		
Behaviour		
Rituals		
People's names		





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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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Project Number: 2018-1-DE02-KA204-005035