Interculturalism and ending racist and xenophobic discrimination

SÍ A LA PAZ
JÓVENES POR LA PAZ SOSTENIBLE
Y LA CIUDADANÍA GLOBAL

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Interculturalism and ending racist and xenophobic discrimination

I. Introduction

This manual is part of the project "YES TO PEACE. Youth for sustainable peace and global citizenship", funded by the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, AECID) and implemented in collaboration with the Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (Movement for Peace, Disarmament and Liberty, MPDL) and the Instituto NOVACT de Noviolencia (NOVACT Institute for Nonviolence).

It is part of a set of five guides designed to provide answers and raise new questions for education professionals who would like to learn about the concerns and interests of young people with regard to current threats to peace, as well as their understanding of the different elements of peace and how they engage. It outlines the ways in which education can be used to promote values, attitudes, knowledge and skills among young people so that they become global citizens who are motivated to act locally as leaders and promoters of a Culture of Peace (CP).

This collection of manuals, prepared by Fundación Cultura de Paz with the contribution and supervision of MPDL and NOVACT, addresses different key themes that are essential for nonviolent conflict resolution: gender equality, intercultural coexistence, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and environmental justice, and the defense of human rights in the broadest sense of the term. The topics they address are based on the educational needs, interests and concerns of young people between 11 and 25 years of age (with some participation from people up to the age of 39), from both formal and non-formal education settings in five regions of Spain – Cantabria, Catalonia, the Community of Valencia, the Community of Madrid and Extremadura – which were identified in a previous diagnostic report. The results were compiled in a report produced by the Fundación Cultura de Paz, and are available at the following link: https://www.mpdl.org/sialapaz/06_Informe%20de%20diagn%C3%B3stico%20final.pdf.

The manual is organised into several sections that guide the reader from general topics to more specific ones. Following the description of the central theme of the Culture of Peace, the realities and challenges identified in the aforementioned diagnostic report are presented, centred on ending discrimination based on racism or xenophobia and building societies that are proudly intercultural. In the following section, examples of good practices aimed at promoting youth involvement in peacebuilding processes developed by various international delegations of the MPDL and NOVACT are presented. Some of these are described in the form of group activities, with the aim of inspiring and providing specific methodological resources. Following this, pedagogical recommendations and general strategies are presented which can facilitate educational work on this topic in various contexts. Lastly, a glossary of key terms is provided to assist with understanding and using the manual.

In short, this manual is not only a guiding framework, but a practical and accessible tool that aims to accompany educators in building sustainable and equitable alternatives. We intend for it to be a living resource, inspiring collective processes of learning, action, and hope in the certainty that other futures are possible

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II. Thematic overview

Building a Culture of Peace requires full recognition of the cultural, ethnic and racial diversity in our societies. **Interculturalism is not limited to peaceful coexistence between cultures, but is based on transformative dialogue between them and involves acceptance, reciprocity, and mutual respect, as well as equal opportunities for meaningful, substantive social participation by all cultures.** This approach makes it possible to foster shared cultural expressions, overcome prejudices and stereotypes, and build a diverse society based on empathy, shared responsibility, and human rights.

Intercultural exchanges **can be challenging as a result of differing views and customs, and require learning to live together; embracing each other's similarities and differences.** Under no circumstances is it a question of encouraging a minority or non-dominant group to forget their primary cultural identity or confine it to private life, in order to imitate or blend in with the culture of the majority or dominant group when in public. It is about recognising that we are different as human beings but equal as members of society. We shall not try to conform to a single identity, but rather celebrate the fact that each person can freely express their multiple identities and encourage everyone to feel involved and represented in all areas of society, removing all potential barriers.

Building a diverse, welcoming and peaceful society requires us to end the dichotomy between 'us' and "them", putting an end to a system that considers the dominant ethnic-cultural group in a particular context as superior and which labels all minority or non-dominant groups as 'others'. This also requires dismantling narratives that associate migration or race with being dangerous, as well as **fostering a shared sense of belonging that strengthens social cohesion in the face of xenophobia and racism.**

However, in contexts marked by structural inequalities, **it is not enough to celebrate the mutual contribution that diversity brings; it is also necessary to denounce and dismantle the systems that produce and perpetuate exclusion, discrimination and violence directed towards people belonging to minority or non-dominant Indigenous, ethnic or cultural groups.** Systemic racism operates through laws, institutional practices, media narratives, social attitudes and rhetoric that give advantages and privileges to some groups and deprive others of opportunities and rights. As stated in the MPDL's Strategic Plan 2022-2026, "All levels of society are permeated, to a certain extent, by attitudes that promote intolerance towards those who are different. This is the most visible result of introducing narratives that stigmatise those who do not think, act, or behave according to the social and cultural norms established by the privileged classes". Racialised people - those who are perceived as different because of their origin, skin colour, culture or phenotypic traits - are the most affected by this unequal, oppressive and discriminatory treatment by various social actors, which limits their equal opportunities for access to education, employment, housing and political participation,

among other things, and can lead to all kinds of violence.

The fight against discrimination therefore requires adopting an anti-racist and anti-xenophobic perspective that questions and critically examines existing power structures, while recognising the voices of those who have historically been silenced, with the aim of transforming these oppressive and discriminatory structures. This movement seeks to eradicate all forms of racism - whether institutional, social or symbolic - and to create opportunities for coexistence based on justice, equality, remembering, and making amends.

Lasting peace is only possible when all people feel recognised, valued and protected. Promoting interculturalism and combating discrimination ultimately means promoting a fairer and truly democratic society.

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III. Issues and challenges in working with youth on this topic, as identified in our diagnostic report

Prior to the detailed presentation of the educational experiences that we hope will inspire our work as youth educators, we would like to share some of the main conclusions identified in the above-mentioned diagnostic report.

When we asked about the participants' understanding, interests and concerns regarding the interaction between cultures and the racist and xenophobic discrimination that exists in the world, we found that their understanding of what intercultural coexistence entails was quite similar to that of the organisations leading this project. 85.5% of participants indicated that this coexistence requires respecting and accepting differences so that no one is left out. Similarly, 56% disagreed with the statement that one of the main problems in our societies is that migrants do not want to adapt. However, it was observed that 7.3% had feelings of resistance to interacting with people from other cultures and expressed fear of losing their identity.

Although the above results may be influenced by social desirability bias, they suggest that an educational and media narrative **has largely taken hold that values cultural diversity positively, understands that intercultural interaction requires adaptation by all involved, and which advocates for such interaction to be based on ensuring the social participation of all cultures on equal terms and through mutual exchange.** It is also possible that this notion is influenced by everyday experiences of direct positive coexistence between cultures in school, neighbourhood or digital contexts.

However, we must not ignore the fact that there are **some who perceive diversity as a threat and associate migration with the loss of traditions or the disruption of a supposed national 'cultural order'.** This result may be the consequence of racist rhetoric or narratives that continue to convey the idea that any national population must be homogeneous in order to guarantee peaceful coexistence. This conclusion reveals that there is still work to be done in encouraging all people to recognise and feel satisfied with embracing their diverse cultural identities, without fear of losing one of them when coming into contact with others.

In addition, there is **widespread ignorance about the actual conditions faced by migrants,** especially those in the host society. For example, 40.9% of participants are **unaware of how existing social and economic assistance programmes work,** which are available to any citizen in a vulnerable position, as well as those specifically aimed at people seeking international protection or asylum or migrant minors who are accompanied or not, and their degree of influence in determining whether or not a migrant in this situation can join the labour market. Furthermore, 61.4% of those surveyed were unaware as to whether or not the rumours circulating about the type of financial aid that the Span-

ish government has allegedly made available to unaccompanied migrant children are true. This data highlights a significant information gap regarding the social, economic and administrative situation of migrants, which provides fertile ground for the circulation of unsubstantiated misinformation.

However, we see that **a large proportion of respondents (88%) rejected the most explicit xenophobic and supremacist rhetoric, recognising that racism and xenophobia do indeed exist in Spain,** while 53% considered the frequently made link between unaccompanied foreign children and criminality to be false.

) Educational challenges identified

Taking these conclusions as a reference, the following challenges were identified in the educational effort to boost young people's motivation and abilities to take on responsibilities in building proudly intercultural societies free from racist or xenophobic discrimination:

1 Encourage reflection on the meaning of coexistence that goes beyond its connection with tolerance and respect. While coexistence can lead to the construction of cooperative relationships, without further context it does not provide for real interactions or exchanges between different cultural groups. It is therefore necessary to encourage a deeper understanding of other cultures (to combat the ignorance that lies behind racism and prejudice), promote collaboration and **recognition of diversity as a source of strength, and challenge racism and xenophobia as cultural violence imposed by the self-serving rhetoric of the privileged classes.**

2 Raise awareness of issues such as unaccompanied minors, or the economic status or employment situation of migrants, and the difficulties they face in receiving assistance. As is done in the initiatives in the field, it is important to **combat prejudices stemming from ignorance by fostering exchanges between people from different groups,** collaborating with groups that advocate for their rights, and designing joint spaces or actions.

«56% disagreed with the statement that one of the main problems in our societies is that migrants do not want to adapt»

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IV. Good Practices

The following are a series of experiences in promoting youth participation in peacebuilding processes, focusing on interculturalism. These experiences have been highlighted by teams from some of the international delegations of the MPDL and NOVACT, and will hopefully serve as inspiration for the readers of this manual.

The good practices identified in the different regions have proven useful in promoting coexistence between different cultures and people from diverse backgrounds, against a background of significant polarization, prejudice and ignorance of the reality of those who are mistakenly considered to be 'the others'. The experiences gathered in the Kurdish-inhabited area and Tunisia are particularly noteworthy as successful examples in this area. Through these, participants who would never have met otherwise have been brought together in a shared project through dialogue, meetings and debates to move the initiative forward.

Name of the activity:
Campaign "I am for peace".

📍 Kurdistan

✴ Theme(s)

CP theme(s) involved

◯ Gender equality and prevention of violence
◯ Care for the environment
◉ Defense of human rights
◉ Interculturalism and anti-discrimination
◯ Poverty reduction
◉ Non-violence/ peaceful conflict resolution/ other specific contents

Other topics addressed

None.

🎯 Objective/s

In the wake of the spread of hate speech, it is important to create opportunities for dialogue, foster mutual respect, highlight cultural differences, and rely on religious and social leaders or influencers who play an active role in the community. The aim is to promote respectful debate and create a safe space for listening, talking and sharing experiences.

Involve local authorities to emphasize that the opinions of young people and women are equally valid.

👥 Detailed target population

Women and young people (17 and 18 years old).

📍 Location or area of intervention

Syrian Kurdistan

✦ Key information that would allow us to better understand the progress made on the Culture of Peace theme in this context.

In north-eastern Syria, talking about peace is complicated; it is difficult to imagine attaining it. However, with the fall of al-Assad, it has become necessary. It is a situation of urgency, where communities feel it is important to do something, but the economic situation is getting worse with each passing day, with anxiety about the immediate future. In this circumstance of frustration, there has been an escalation of hate on Facebook directed at people who belong to a different religion.

On the other hand, it is important to point out that in this context, people live and work within the community; there is shared space between men and women, and everything is decided together. One of these spaces for meeting, dialogue and decision-making are the communes. They do not depend so much on self-government (which is only recognised by the region of Catalonia, Spain). They are community organisations that are closely connected to the people, with one in each neighbourhood. When there are problems in the community, they are solved in the commune through direct debate and the search for agreements. However, according to NOVACT (report in January, New Agenda for Peace in Syria), these spaces lack a gender perspective, as men and women are not listened to equally in cases of gender violence.

The area is affected by poverty, access to electricity is difficult, and the Turkish government restricts access to water as a weapon of war. Its inhabitants can now travel to Damascus relatively safely, but previously they only had relations with Kurdish territory in Iraq, which were not good.

🕐 Duration

6-8 weeks. 5 hours per day each week.

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Materials required

Audio-visual material. Involvement of Next Step and Next Story, which are development and journalism training agencies. Cameras, recorders, software for editing material.

Implementation of the activity

Training was conducted in the design of campaigns aimed at preventing the escalation of hate, led by the DOS organisation, with young volunteers; an organisation that emerged from the university when the Syrian revolution began. Later, training was carried out with a women's organisation linked to the Syrian Kurdistan Government. Next Step and Next Story presented their strategies to the groups for connecting with young audiences, their audiovisual skills and their focus on combating hate speech.

The campaign was launched through a webinar with youth from Northern Syria, experts and the diaspora community. An insightful and constructive debate took place and continued through social media. One of the pieces in the campaign was a post with a photograph of people of different religions discussing an everyday topic, and despite having very different opinions, they were able to come together and engage in dialogue. On social media, a traditionally-minded woman appeared talking about women's rights, which she had never thought about before, and engaging in dialogue with a more politically active woman.

This campaign was later taken to schools with the intention of promoting respect among different people and dialogue, allowing those involved in the intervention to take full ownership of it.

Analysis of risks, difficulties and achievements.
If there were relevant difficulties, indicate the mechanisms to overcome them.

RISKS:

There were militias and confrontations in the area. Transportation was complicated.

It was important to the participants that the campaign not be politicised and that no one (neither the authorities nor tribal leaders) claim ownership of it, and they did indeed manage to maintain that independence.

DIFFICULTIES:

Communication with authorities.

It was difficult to recognise the importance of bridging the gap between rural and urban areas, of not ignoring what is happening in the countryside. Transportation was not easy.

Financial difficulties in supporting the travelling expenses of volunteers.

It was difficult for the selected influencers to believe in the message and get involved in the campaign.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The campaign had a huge impact on social media and has continued to contribute to the experience.

There was a significant learning experience for the volunteers. Knowing that they have the intellectual capacity to do this gave them greater autonomy. They were on the front lines making decisions and making mistakes.

What changes or transformations has this experience brought about or contributed to?

A change in mentality was noticed. There has been a shift from insults to dialogue. This is a campaign to prevent a situation that is leading people to an undesirable outcome. It was clear to all participants that with the fall of Assad, it is important to foster coexistence.

Lessons learned, recommendations for the future and adapting to working with youth

It is very important that training be educational but not simplistic. It is essential to involve volunteers from the very beginning.

Name of the activity:
"Digital organizing"

📍 Jordan

Theme(s)

CP theme(s) involved

- ◉ Gender equality and prevention of violence
- ◯ Care for the environment
- ◉ Defense of human rights
- ◉ Interculturalism and anti-discrimination
- ◯ Poverty reduction
- ◯ Non-violence/ peaceful conflict resolution/ other specific contents

Other topics addressed

- Youth empowerment
- Promoting the role of women as peacebuilders
- Countering hate speech

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Objective/s

The main objective of the "Digital Organizing" good practice in Jordan is to promote the empowerment of young people, equipping them with the tools, knowledge and strategies that enable them to lead awareness-raising initiatives and become active agents of change in their communities. The intervention seeks to strengthen their capacity to identify local issues, mobilise their peers and make a positive impact, by combining digital skills, critical thinking and community leadership. This way, young people not only acquire practical skills, but also develop a sense of purpose and responsibility for the social challenges around them.

Detailed target population

The intervention is aimed at young women and men between the ages of 18 and 35, a key age group for fostering community leadership and active participation in processes of social change. The participating population is mainly composed of refugees, many of whom come from rural areas and have varying functional abilities, and who face particular challenges in accessing resources, education, and opportunities for participation.

The project seeks to address these specificities, offering inclusive and adapted spaces that allow young people to build their digital, communication and leadership skills. In this sense, they are empowered to play a leading role in awareness-raising initiatives and are able to influence their communities in a significant way, resulting in a positive and sustainable impact at a local level.

Location or area of intervention

Amaan, Mafraq and Zarqa in Jordan

Non-formal education

Key information that would allow us to better understand the progress made on the Culture of Peace theme in this context

In Jordan, addressing issues such as interculturalism and gender equality faces significant barriers, arising from self-censorship and prevailing social norms. While these issues are widely discussed, in practice they are often dealt with in a superficial manner, avoiding delving into critical debates that could create tensions or questions in the community. This limitation hinders the development of more in-depth and thoughtful analyses of social issues, restricting young people's ability to engage in authentic social criticism and promote meaningful change in their environments.

Experience shows the need to design teaching and facilitation strategies that allow these issues to be explored in a safe, respectful and participatory manner; fostering spaces for critical dialogue without jeopardising social acceptance or the safety of participants.

Duration

The project has a total duration of nine months and is structured in different phases that allow for the progressive and coherent implementation of activities. The first phase, lasting two and a half months, focuses on awareness-raising, preparing the young participants to understand the key issues and raise awareness of the problems they will address in their communities.

The second phase, lasting one month, is dedicated to the creation of awareness-raising campaigns. During this period, participants design content, messages and communication strategies that reflect their vision and the needs identified in their environment, strengthening their creative and leadership skills.

Finally, the third phase, which lasts six months, focuses on the publication and dissemination of the campaigns. This stage allows the initiatives generated to reach a wider public, putting into practice the skills acquired and evaluating the impact of the actions on the target communities.

Intervention strategy and/or methodology

The project's intervention strategy focuses on strengthening youth leadership through a "youth-led movement" approach, in which young people themselves are key players responsible for the planning, implementation and follow-up of awareness-raising initiatives. This approach aims to empower participants, giving them autonomy and building their capacity to have a direct impact on their communities.

The project also relies on strategic alliances with local partner organisations, which provide knowledge of the context, facilitate the implementation of activities and contribute to the long-term viability of the actions. In addition, influencers and UN agencies are invited to provide feedback on the campaigns developed by the youth, enriching the content and strengthening the visibility and legitimacy of the messages.

Lastly, the methodology incorporates nonviolent community mobilisation, promoting the active participation of the local population and encouraging the dissemination of messages of social change in a safe and respectful manner. This combination of youth leadership, institutional collaboration and community mobilisation allows the project to generate sustainable impact, building capacities and networks that last beyond the formal duration of the intervention.

Materials required

The project has a digital platform that constitutes one of its main educational resources: the website https://academy.novact.org, which offers a set of 10 courses and theoretical materials designed for training and awareness-raising on key issues. This platform allows participants to access structured content on leadership, community mobilisation and digital skills, ensuring flexible and independent learning.

During the intervention, young people took specific courses that strengthened practical and strategic skills, including social media skills, storytelling and cybersecurity. These trainings

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provided them with the necessary tools to design and manage digitally-focused awareness-raising campaigns, ensuring that their messages were clear, effective and secure.

Each campaign had its own dissemination channel, and all initiatives were shared through the Instagram profile https://www.instagram.com/basmetjeel/, highlighting their work and encouraging interaction with the community. This combination of educational platform and digital dissemination channels has been key to fostering active participation, the ownership of content, and the dissemination of messages of social change.

Implementation of the activity

The project was structured in three complementary phases, allowing for steady progress from raising awareness to implementing and disseminating digital campaigns led by young people.

In the first phase, an outreach process was carried out with local partner organisations and influencers, with the aim of obtaining and harnessing existing knowledge on community mobilisation. At the same time, efforts were made to raise awareness among young people through online courses available on the educational platform, strengthening their digital and leadership skills. During this phase, teams of young people were also formed to lead their own awareness-raising campaigns, establishing a collaborative and participatory framework from the beginning.

The second phase focused on creating campaigns and closely supporting the teams, reviewing content and implementing the ideas that were generated. Participants also received training in pitching, developing skills to effectively present and transmit the vision and objectives of their campaigns. This phase culminated in the 'Digital Festival', a space for presenting the campaigns to key players in the sector, including influencers and UN agencies, where young people received direct feedback and participated in constructive dialogue to enrich their initiatives.

Lastly, in the third phase, the campaigns were published and actively disseminated. Each team created its own dissemination channels, while all content was also replicated on a joint channel, ensuring the visibility of the initiatives and the possibility of reaching a wider audience. This phase enabled young people to become more proficient in using digital tools and strengthened their capacity to lead sustainable community mobilisation processes.

Analysis of risks, difficulties and achievements.
If there were relevant difficulties, indicate the mechanisms to overcome them.

RISKS:

One of the main risks identified in the project is related to the commitment of youth participants. Maintaining their motivation and active participation throughout the different phases is a significant challenge, especially in a context where digital and community mobilisation initiatives require perseverance and responsibility.

To mitigate this risk, the entire project structure and phases were shared with participants from the beginning, allowing them to clearly visualise their role and the level of commitment required. This transparency sought to generate realistic expectations, strengthen ownership of the activities and foster a sense of shared responsibility. In addition, ongoing monitoring and support strategies were implemented, designed to sustain enthusiasm, resolve difficulties, and ensure that teams felt supported at every stage of the campaign.

DIFFICULTIES:

During the implementation of the project, several difficulties were identified that offer important lessons for future interventions. One of these was the lack of small funds allocated to each team, which limited participants' ability to obtain their own resources for the production of campaign materials, partially restricting their creativity and autonomy in their efforts.

Another difficulty relates to the subject matter addressed by the teams, as few focused their initiatives on gender equality, leaning instead towards strategies to counter hate speech. This highlights a challenge in terms of prioritising and selecting content, as well as the need to offer greater support and guidance on the relevance of different approaches.

Additionally, it was found that the lines between hate speech and gender equality are sometimes blurred, leading to confusion in both the understanding of the issues and how to address them in campaigns. This situation highlights the importance of strengthening the conceptual and practical training of young people, ensuring that they have a clear understanding of the objectives of each issue and how to address them effectively in their awareness-raising initiatives.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

Among the main achievements of the project was the high level of interest and participation among the youth, who organised themselves into teams to work collaboratively on the design and implementation of their campaigns. This dynamic allowed new networks and relationships to be forged, fostering the exchange of ideas and experiences among participants and strengthening group cohesion.

The project also managed to create a safe and trusting environment, where young people could share personal experiences and reflect on issues in their environment, which enhanced the authenticity and impact of the campaigns developed. As a result of this process, eight campaigns were launched, each consisting of five members, which allowed for structured and meaningful experimentation with digital community mobilisation.

In terms of participation, the project began with 71 young people enrolled and, throughout the different phases, culminated with 40 active participants, reflecting the sustained commitment of those who became more deeply involved and managed to fully develop their initiatives.

What changes or transformations has this experience brought about or contributed to?

The experience has led to significant transformations among the young participants, encouraging them to take an active role as agents of change within their communities. Through the design and implementation of digital campaigns, they have developed leadership, communication and community mobilisation skills, allowing them to directly influence their communities and promote positive social change.

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Furthermore, the intervention has had a multiplying effect, as the knowledge, tools and experiences acquired by participants can be replicated and shared with their peers and other members of the community. This in turn reinforces the impact of the project, ensuring that the awareness-raising actions and lessons learned lead to sustainable transformations, as well as building stronger and more proactive youth participation networks.

Lessons learned, recommendations for the future and adapting to working with youth

Among the main lessons learned from this experience is the importance of keeping a clear focus on the objectives and contents of the project. For awareness campaigns to be effective, it is essential to provide young people with all the necessary materials, both theoretical and practical, to enable them to develop their initiatives independently and to a high standard.

The need to systematise hybrid sessions was also identified, combining online training with face-to-face activities to ensure consistency, continuity and a structured learning experience that is accessible to all participants.

Experience also shows that it is essential to allocate specific resources for the creation of campaigns, ensuring that teams have the necessary means to produce promotional materials and put their ideas into practice. This not only facilitates the effective implementation of the campaigns, but also enhances young people's ownership of the project and reinforces their sense of responsibility and commitment.

These lessons highlight the importance of carefully planning both resources and methodology, adapting strategies to working with young people and ensuring conditions that foster creativity, active participation and the sustained impact of the intervention.

Recommendations for adapting good practices to the Spanish context

) "I am for peace" campaign in Kurdistan

Public awareness campaigns that promote positive messages of coexistence can be transferred to the Spanish youth sector through the creation of collective murals, urban interventions, hashtags on social media, or performances in public spaces. Involving young people in the design, creation and dissemination of these messages allows them to take ownership of the narrative of positive peace, counteracting hate speech and normalising the language of respect, inclusion and solidarity in their communities. Furthermore, it is essential to always include, whenever possible, collaboration between diverse individuals (racialised people and non-racialised people, girls and boys, members of the LGBTQI+ community, migrants and non-migrants, etc.). This teamwork helps to break down stereotypes and dismantle prejudices through understanding the realities of others and working together.

) Digital organizing in Jordan

Digital activism is a natural fit for Spain, given the prominence of social media and digital media and platforms in the daily lives of young people. Training young people in digital communication tools, content production and critical thinking enables them to create digital and online media campaigns that condemn discrimination, promote equality and raise awareness of initiatives for peace and intercultural understanding. Furthermore, it is essential to work on media literacy and encourage a critical view of the content shared across digital channels, enabling young people to identify misinformation and dismantle the hate speech that pervades social media; promoting conscious, thoughtful, and transformative use of digital environments.

) Other possible practices

In addition to these recommendations, the team of educators from MPDL and NOVACT involved in this project offers a series of workshop guides that may inspire the educational work proposed below:

Activity:
Roots

Objective

1. To promote self-esteem and empowerment based on the culture and heritage of each young person.

2. To share differences and diversity based on personal experience, generating insights to appreciate differences.

3. To promote active listening, reduce resistance to what is different, and foster social cohesion.

4. To promote intercultural support.

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Materials

Chairs, mobile phone or camera.

Duration

1 session

The activity

Verbal group technique, involving dialogue, in which young women share information about their roots, allowing the group to reflect on the differences and enriching aspects of different cultures and to appreciate them.

BEFOREHAND:

Unlike other techniques, this one requires prior instruction, which should be reviewed one to three days before the session. Provide instructions such as: **"You must find one or two objects that allow you to talk about your heritage: your culture, roots, family. It should help you recall an important memory, experience or anecdote from your heritage".**

START:

Each young person is asked if they have brought the object(s) with them. If anyone has forgotten, encourage them to look through their belongings or on their mobile phone for an image of something they would like to present. If they do not have the items or cannot find anything, they should imagine the object and describe it when it is their turn. At the beginning, ask the young people how they are doing. Then explain the rules:

• "One by one, we are going to present what we have brought. We will recall an anecdote or experience and explain why our roots are important to us, what our heritage has given us. The rest of the group should remain silent."

In the case of groups of more than 15 young people, two circles will be formed that operate in parallel. It is recommended that there be two facilitators; one in each group. With this technique, the facilitator should include themselves in the group, that is, bring their own object and participate as part of the group to serve as an example.

THE ACTIVITY:

The technique is carried out in a circular formation, without any tables placed in between. Taking turns, each person presents their object and explain its origins. They share their stories one by one.

Guidelines for leading the activity:

• Ask them questions.

• Increasing speaking time increases the feeling of value of what they share.

• Ask what the object means to them, or ask more about that anecdote and their family. For rounds where their explanation is somewhat superficial, this allows the participant to delve deeper and not feel left out of the group, helping them to overcome their fear of sharing.

• Speed things up if time is running short: ask them to keep things brief if a lot of time has been used up and there are still many participants waiting.

CLOSING:

20 minutes is sufficient time. The following issues should be explored:

• How it felt to explain what they felt when they imagined what they were going to say.

• What they liked or were surprised to hear from another participant

• If time is available, they may share what they thought after listening to the other participants.

• Ask them: 'Why does a different culture cause rejection?' 'Has sharing and listening caused you to feel rejection, or what has it caused you to feel?'

Conclude by asking them to support other people and their cultures, making them feel appreciated the way they have felt in this session.

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V. General final recommendations

The following suggestions for adapting the work experiences outlined in this manual are aimed at promoting youth participation in peacebuilding, with a focus on strengthening their transformative potential.

1. Adaptation to the local context

) Connect the local and the global:

Help identify the different forms of social injustice or violence (direct, cultural and structural) in the area of intervention, linked to the thematic focus on peacebuilding, as well as their connection with similar occurrences in other parts of the world. In doing so, we can address cross-border issues such as the lack of job security among youth, structural racism, violence against women, violence on social media or hate speech; emphasizing both commonalities and differences, while continuing to highlight intersectionality.

) Listen from the beginning:

Young people should be co-creators from the start of the educational processes in which they participate, not just beneficiaries. In this regard, the sub-topics addressed in the intervention and the activities or methodologies that shape them will better connect with their interests and be more relevant to them, and the insights will be more meaningful. In the consultative process that preceded the design of these manuals, it became clear that 'feeling listened to and being able to discuss matters' was one of their main concerns. In addition to proposing exploratory talking circles on topics of interest, such as those recommended in restorative educational practices, the following references can be consulted for initial insights into the issues that seem to be most relevant for youth in Spain in relation to each of the pillars of the Culture of Peace addressed in these manuals:

- Diagnostic Report "YES TO PEACE": https://www.mpdl.org/sialapaz/06_Informe%20de%20diagn%-C3%B3stico%20final.pdf
- Informe Juventud en España 2024: entre la emergencia y la resiliencia, Ministerio de Juventud e Infancia, INJUVE (2024 Youth Report in Spain: Between emergency and resilience, Ministry of Youth and Children, INJUVE).

) Use accessible and culturally relevant language:

Avoid technical jargon in our approaches and engage with youth culture (music, social media, sport, urban art).

) Value the internal diversity of groups:

Recognise cultural backgrounds, migratory journeys and diverse gender identities, ensuring that all voices are heard. Apply an intersectional approach in order to analyse how gender, class, ethnicity, age and other factors are interconnected and lead to inequalities.

2. Conditions for a safe space

) Develop coexistence agreements together with young people:

Respect, confidentiality and active listening. For the talking circles approach, such as those recommended in restorative educational practices, the following basic agreements are suggested: only the person holding the talking stick may speak while the rest should listen, speaking is voluntary, and all members must respect one another.

) Include protocols for mutual support or care in case of discomfort:

Some topics (violence, racism, poverty) may be personal triggers.

) Recognising young people as key players:

We should make it clear to students that they are not passive recipients of information. This means avoiding one-way communication, encouraging participation from everyone, and moving away from adult-centered perspectives. By showing genuine interest in what students know and think, we help them see that knowledge is built together. This approach challenges the old idea that "the teacher knows best" and recognizes that students' minds are not just blank spaces to be filled in by adults.

) Promoting courageous spaces:

Based on the experience gained in Palestine and presented in the Gender Equality Manual, the aim is to go beyond creating a safe space to address uncomfortable issues in order to produce alternative perspectives, moving away from the prevailing attitudes that glorify violence. To find inspiration when initiating these conversations between individuals and groups in polarised or tense contexts, with the aim of developing a common strategy to achieve transformations that guarantee long-term coexistence, we can refer to John Paul Lederach's "Improbable Dialogues", or *Discrepancia bienvenida: guía pedagógica para el diálogo controvertido en el aula* (Welcome Disagreement: Educational guide for dialogue on controversial issues in the classroom) from the Escola de Cultura de Pau (School for a Culture of Peace).

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3. Suggested methodologies

〉 Art and culture:

'Theatre of the oppressed', mural painting, music, photography or community circus as creative tools that foster emotional engagement, as well as critical personal and collective reflection based on the experience of real or realistic situations that are motivational.

〉 Sport and play:

Promote cooperation, respect and the prevention of violence.

〉 Community dialogues and forums:

Reinforce social cohesion, especially in intergenerational and intercultural spaces. For the design of these talking circles, we suggest referring to examples of restorative educational practices, such as those of Belinda Hopkins and Circle Time or Talking Circles.

〉 Digital technologies:

Offer an opportunity to design youth campaigns on social media around any topic of interest, based on nonviolence. As an inspirational resource for this work, we suggest the "Digital Organising" programme developed by NOVACT, an online training resource to design impact campaigns that promote a global Culture of Peace through the use of new information and communication technologies: https://novact.org/es/formacio/.

4. Key factors for long-term viability

〉 Continuous processes:

Avoid isolated one-off activities and pursue educational processes based on a planned medium- to long-term approach that allows for project-based work, and which integrates common content across different subjects.

〉 Youth leadership groups:

To foster young people's motivation and abilities so that they are drawn to and able to get involved in their communities, and raise awareness or promote social mobilization in others, helping to scale up processes.

〉 Work in networks:

Coordinate with community associations, educational centres, social services, and youth groups to connect insights gained with real opportunities for participation.

〉 Intergenerational shared responsibility:

Involving educators, families and youth centre staff as reliable role models.

〉 Involvement of local authorities:

Key to ensuring long-term and financial sustainability.

〉 Participatory evaluation:

Include opportunities for young people to evaluate what they have learned and suggest improvements, strengthening their role as co-creators in the processes.

In short, these recommendations do not provide a definitive solution, but rather a set of open guidelines that each group and each educator can adapt to their own circumstances. It is essential to maintain the conviction that young people play a leading role in peacebuilding and environmental justice, and that our educational mission is to support, facilitate and empower them. With this in mind, each experience can become a seed of change, an opportunity for shared learning and a firm step towards a more just, sustainable and peaceful future.

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VI. Glossary

- **Anti-racism:**
"A social and political movement led and planned by people of colour aimed at ending structural racism in all its forms: institutional and social, both symbolic and tangible." (SOS Racismo Madrid).

- **Intercultural coexistence or interculturalism:**
"The situation where different cultures coexist and interact with each other in a balanced and respectful manner, allowing for the creation of a shared cultural identity through open dialogue and mutual understanding" (UNESCO). From a critical and transformative perspective, we recognise the need to transcend the traditional notion of interculturalism, which is often limited to celebrating diversity without questioning the structural inequalities that permeate our societies. This approach involves creating spaces for interaction and exchange based on genuine equality, dismantling narratives that associate migration with danger, and promoting inclusive messages rooted in human rights, empathy, equality, and a shared sense of belonging. Addressing this key issue is essential to moving towards a culture of peace that not only values diversity, but also tackles the deep-rooted causes of inequality and exclusion.

- **Discrimination.**
This is the unequal and unfavourable treatment of a person or group on the basis of their ethnic origin, gender, age, abilities or religion, which limits or denies their fundamental rights and freedoms. It is based on prejudice, stigma and stereotypes, and manifests itself in attitudes of rejection and exclusion that prevent full participation in social, economic and cultural life. It is a form of expression of both direct and cultural violence (values, beliefs, social norms and practices that normalise, justify or downplay violence) or structural violence, because the unequal system prevents certain groups from accessing basic resources (such as education, health, work or housing) on equal terms.

- **Inclusion:**
"This is the objective of policies that promote interculturalism, value diversity and seek to ensure equal rights and opportunities by creating conditions for the full and active participation of all members of society on the basis of a common set of values, a shared sense of belonging to the community and a diverse local identity" (Council of Europe). We must differentiate the inclusion we advocate for from the models of assimilation or integration, which consist of encouraging minority groups or those with less social power than the dominant group to conform to the prevailing values and confine their cultural expressions to the private sphere, so that belonging to the new community is contingent upon this one-way effort to conform.

- **Migration:**
Movement of people from their usual place of residence to a new place of residence, either across an international border or within a country. In most cases, international migrants move for reasons related to work, family or studies. Some people are also forced to leave their homes and countries because of conflict, persecution, disasters or other reasons. People who move across borders, such as those seeking asylum or refuge, represent only a relatively small percentage of the total number of international migrants. Migration has existed throughout human history.

- **Racialised person:**
"A person who, by virtue of physical, phenotypic, cultural or perceived origin characteristics, is socially categorised as different from the white or dominant majority, and who, as a result, may be exposed to systematic processes of discrimination, exclusion or structural violence. Racialisation is not based on actual biological differences, but rather on social constructs that assign hierarchies to certain groups according to their perceived "race" or ethnic origin (Council for the Elimination of Racial or Ethnic Discrimination (CEDRE), Government of Spain).

- **Racism:**
"Systemic racism can be defined as policies and practices in society as a whole that result in undue and persistent advantages for some people and unfair or detrimental treatment for others on the basis of ethnicity" (Amnesty International); for example, by considering their values or customs to be of lesser value or undesirable, or by favouring white people in job selection processes and access to resources.

- **Xenophobia:**
"A set of attitudes, prejudices and behaviours that lead us to reject, exclude and often disparage people because they are perceived as foreign or alien to the community, society or national identity. This is an attitude that can cause a great deal of pain and harm to refugees and migrants. Xenophobia can be expressed through verbal rejection, but also through physical or psychological violence. Nobody is born a xenophobe; it is a learned attitude" (International Organisation for Migration, Chile).