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Identity Development

**PREVENT
RADICALISATION
THROUGH
IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT**



IDENTITY IS KEY

SHARING THE EXPERIENCE OF CHANGE WITH CONFIDENCE. GUIDEBOOK FOR YOUTH WORKERS.

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OSTBAYERISCHE
TECHNISCHE HOCHSCHULE
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INTRODUCTION

Looking back to the whole process our Erasmus+ (PR)IDE project group run through during the project, this intellectual output “Identity is the key – Sharing the Experience of Change with Confidence” can be seen as the crystallization of something that accompanied us latent all the time. It was like a sort of studying together, with this output as the essence of what is important to enhance youth workers’ working attitude.

The publication was originally meant to be directed to youngsters themselves but during the process of the project we found out that the material should be directed to youth workers and volunteers which use the concept of (PR)IDE to bring together groups of young people including students, migrants and refugees who have experienced voluntary and non-voluntary migration. This guidebook can also be used as an instructional tool for international volunteers and interns, who want to discover the dimension of their intercultural experience.

We focused on the process of the integration of youngsters - as we experienced on a national level that the activities which have been provided by youth centres who work with mixed groups automatically lead to an act of prevention of radicalisation.

When we started the project, we did this based on the idea of approaching the field with the transformative learning theory of Mezirow. But how to apply it in practice? How to make it really usable for working in the youth workers’ field?

The eureka came with our own shift of thinking.

All the time, we had been thinking of the transformative learning process going vertically into depth of a topic. That brought some very good results and insights, and we see it as an essential tool for the work with youngsters. You can find it in this Guidebook in Step 2 under the ‘Interpersonal Level’ ”Manifest”: Working on disorienting dilemma. This refers to the part “working on emotions”, means working with the critical incident technique, in the output IO1 [The use of transformative learning in the](#)

[prevention of radicalization](#)¹. So, if you are interested you will find there a concrete example how to use the method.

Then we had the first draft of the Guidebook, which described the way of a beautiful process of a youth workers' daily work with young migrants. You will find it throughout this Guidebook in the "Individual Step" and in the "Guide Step". We were quite satisfied, but the role of the youth workers and special needs towards their attitude took more and more the center stage. As well the need of finding steps or even patterns, which make it possible to create a tool or – like we did – a guidebook became more obvious. We wanted to enhance youth workers and find a way of conveying learning what we had learned.

And surprisingly we found it! We "simply" had to shift our thinking from vertical to horizontal, meaning shifting our perspective from looking alongside the overall-process of working with young migrants. That was the moment we translated the transformative process to single steps over the youth workers' working process, which you will find now in the 'Conceptual Step'.

Now it was easier to create a step, too, which mirrors how you as a youth worker can proof or evaluate if you are "on track" with the young migrants' work. The step *Analysis: Observation and Evaluation* links to the theoretical framework behind, which you can follow in *The use of transformative learning in the prevention of radicalisation* more deeply.

This guidebook aims to offer a perspective on systemizing your working processes and to encourage you in finding your own way to learn more and more how to hold strong feelings of young migrants by giving space to talk, by sharing and listening to each other instead of keeping feelings unspoken and covered, and left alone, hidden inside of young people who search, like everybody, for contact and relation.

¹ If Link does not work, open document here: <https://bit.ly/327V41o>

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STEP ONE: VISIBILITY OF FEELINGS

CONCEPTUAL STEP

A disorienting dilemma

ANALYSIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

Observation that different type of identities do not go hand in hand

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL “MANIFEST”

Coming to a new country

INDIVIDUAL STEP

Trust building

GUIDE STEP

Disorienting dilemma starts when coming to a new country and trying to reinvent one's self.

A disorienting dilemma occurs when people have experiences that do not fit their expectations or make sense to them and they cannot resolve the situations without some change in their views of the world.

This feelings start mainly because immigrants belong to different religious and cultural backgrounds, have different political views, and nowadays are seen as the economic burden and only living on a social well fare. Living in the diverse neighbourhoods helps creating less segregation and negative attitude within the community.

STEP TWO: ELABORATING WITH FEELINGS

CONCEPTUAL STEP

Self-Examination with feelings of guilt and shame

ANALYSIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

Learning how to deal with emotions, which mainly come from dissatisfaction with one's current life position, feeling rootless, facing discrimination and lack of acceptance

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL "MANIFEST"

Work on disorienting dilemma

INDIVIDUAL STEP

Better integration of emotions that they can share and speak out

GUIDE STEP

This step mainly refers on working on the trust building activities on the three levels: «feel like at home» which is reflection of intercultural dialogue and cultural mediation. Second level would be building "a second home", working on creating respectful coexistence and safe living and working environment. Third level would be, "adapting to system of how country functions", this could be reached by working on institutional trust, political trust, health care trust, working policies and welfare of the state.

STEP THREE: EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

CONCEPTUAL STEP

- Critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural or psychological assumptions
- Knowing the community, preparing yourself

ANALYSIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

They come to ask for things

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL “MANIFEST”

Information input

INDIVIDUAL STEP

Better know how

GUIDE STEP

Information and communication network among schools, non-government organisation, municipality and companies employing foreign workers or immigrants could be of a great help to exchange information, experience and mutual assistance. Mutual assistance creates established structure, giving clear steps that immigrants should take helps them to be more oriented towards what they should do and what is that local community expects from them.

STEP FOUR: PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

CONCEPTUAL STEP

- Recognition of ones discontent
- The process of transformation
- Sharing

ANALISIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

- Get rid of the feeling of strangeness by creating normality
- Expressing in mother tongue

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL “MANIFEST”

Give everybody space and time to share stories

INDIVIDUAL STEP

- “I am ok”
- “My language is ok”

GUIDE STEP

Active multilingualism helps working on learning the local language and culture, as well as, deepening the knowledge of mother languages. Secondary schools should think of offering mother languages as an optional subject instead of English.

Multilingual environment, diverse environment is the best ground for starting a »second home«.

However, it's important to have in mind that learning a new language and self-assurance is an individual process. It will be necessary to establish the implementation of an individualized and differentiated program in schools. Introduce volunteering and peer-to-peer learning and helps immigrants in getting a human support and becoming a part of the group. This leads towards working on communication in mother tongue, communication in foreign language, mathematical competences, digital competences, learning by doing, social and civic competences, sense of initiatives, entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and lifelong learning.

STEP FIVE: THE GROUP AS RESOURCE

CONCEPTUAL STEP

- Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions

ANALYSIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

- Belonging to a group
- Caring for the group
- Participating
- Taking an active part

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL “MANIFEST”

Using group as a resource, youth workers, experts

INDIVIDUAL STEP

Ownership of their own activities

GUIDE STEP

Cultural mediators, role models or people sharing their own experience, is an action which supports and develops great ways of integration and invites to mutual collaboration. Role models motivate young people to reach certain goals in a new society, such as, having more local friends, studying, finding a job, creating a new social network and developing their interests. Working on supporting role models helps immigrants to get a social support which is crucial for emotional wellbeing. Cultural mediators could be trained to work in schools, as the rights advocates, social activities and promoters.

This creates several positive things when it comes to emotional state and wellbeing of an immigrant, it helps him/her being understood, accepted and involved. Also, it gives a sense of giving something back to the community and to the people from your own culture. It is highly recommended that cultural mediators encourage talking in English, also, it helps in the transitional period of Adapting to a new culture also creates a feeling of belonging and security, opening new networks which will provide new values and aspirations which immigrants highly need in the beginning. These positive aspects help bringing down the barriers and building a trust.

In the process of reinventing self, self-portraying and overcoming difficulties we must be aware that immigrants are highly vulnerable and that they sometimes lose the trust within one's own community. Ownership of their own activities makes an intercultural connection between locals and immigrants easier.

STEP SIX: GETTING ACTIVE

CONCEPTUAL STEP

Planning a course of action

ANALYSIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

- Observe activities
- Make a special group

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL “MANIFEST”

- Activities to promote (making videos)
- Provide material
- Using methods and tools

INDIVIDUAL STEP

- Self-confidence of being able to do and have impact
- Self-efficiency

GUIDE STEP

On this level youth workers are seen only as the support for already established group that has all tools and efficiency. This means that the group is already involved in social and cultural life. On the other hand, here are some guide steps how to do it. Support film festival, immigrant film festivals and motivate the group to apply or participate, promote traditional dance and culinary, apply and be the part of artistic and cultural project and events in order to promote skills and raise

awareness.

STEP SEVEN: USING YOUR SKILLS

CONCEPTUAL STEP

Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing ones plan

ANALISIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

- Young people are able to use a tool
- They feel being important to the group

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL “MANIFEST”

- Need support
- Support provided by youth workers

(Feelings: "I have this skill, Someone believes in me I am useful to the group.")

INDIVIDUAL STEP

- Personal believes, feeling accepted and useful for the rest of group

(Feeling: "I can manage; you should stay out of the activity and just support.")

GUIDE STEP

This step especial emphasis self-initiative. This means that the group had already acquired the tools and methods and is willing to progress. This could mean that the youth workers could help looking for the scholarships and studying options,

should inform about prequalification programs, and notification of already gained diploma. Also, help with start-ups for small business, Migrant Participation Projects, Social entrepreneurship and small grants with the help of European Commission.



STEP EIGHT: DISCOVERING NEW ROLES

CONCEPTUAL STEP

Provision during the new roles

ANALYSIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

Empowering several people

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL “MANIFEST”

- Add some new possibilities
- Try out some new things

INDIVIDUAL STEP

Feeling encouraged, proud

GUIDE STEP

On this level it is important to think about the experiences of social exclusion among young people who according to conventional standards are integrated (who have a job, who take higher education and who are included in social networks with people from the majority population). Mastering the behaviour demanded in a regularized school or work setting, wish to explore the world by travelling to other countries, are extremely relative points to support and guide.

STEP NINE: EMPOWERMENT

CONCEPTUAL STEP

Building competences and self-confidence in roles and relationships

ANALYSIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

- Empowering individuals
- Personal development
- Feeling of importance

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL “MANIFEST”

- individual talks
- Being put in the role model’s position

INDIVIDUAL STEP

Feeling accomplished

GUIDE STEP

Who is doing the excluding? Are there some specific people who exclude others? If so, are these other young adults of the same age, as in street racism, or is the exclusion made by the individual’s own family? Or is the exclusion caused by people in positions of power such as employers, teachers, politicians, police or social workers?

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STEP TEN: REINTEGRATING

CONCEPTUAL STEP

Reintegration into one's life

ANALYSIS OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

- Reflecting how to cope out of the group
- Change of perspective

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL "MANIFEST"

Self-awareness

INDIVIDUAL STEP

Transformation of perceptives

GUIDE STEP

Integration is a continuous two-way process in which society is changing as the population is becoming more diverse and immigrants acquire knowledge and skills that they need in society and working life. This requires commitment on the part of the immigrants and the country receiving them. Today immigrants learn fast and transformation learning can stop at any of these steps. As in any learning process it is an individual progress and perception.

What most of the immigrants stated, is that they want to create friendly relationships and opportunity for a new start.

CONCLUSION

While going through all the steps, it is important to remember that transformation can stop at any step, which doesn't mean that it didn't happen. It still provides intercultural learning and stepping into intercultural context and making transformation.

Process of learning is always two-sided action.

This guidebook helps understanding immigrants and locals, their position, psychosocial aspects and guide steps to overcome certain stages.

Education, nationalism, culture, interests or political views can be one of the factors to influence our perception of immigration and immigrants. The most significant factors to affect our perception towards immigrants and immigrations are related to new information or political views.

Keeping in mind that immigrant lost their own property and live in bad conditions, leads towards mutual understanding of both immigrants and locals. Especially because they have to start over again reinventing their identity, integrating and building "second home". It is very important to work on emotions and building trust.

Guide step in transformative learning helps youth workers and immigrants to understand what is happening. Also, that one has control over what is happening, learn out of what's happening and make an important development. It is crucial to acquire skills and work on becoming part of the group and building "second home".

Multilingual and multicultural environment is the best ground to build "second home".

Youth workers and organisation that work with immigrant can use transformative learning and refer to it while identifying specific problems and working on preventing them.