SMART Balkans

Civil Society for Shared Society in the Western Balkans

Pomoć Deci

PEER EDUCATION MANUAL

Norway

CPCD Centar za promociju civilnog društva

IDM Institute for Democracy and Mediation
Instituti për Demokraci dhe Ndërmjetësim

CRPM Center for Research and Policy Making
...policy impact since 2004

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS "ACTION FOR GIRLS' RIGHTS TO EQUALITY, PEACE AND SECURITY" PROJECT?

The "ACTION FOR GIRLS' RIGHTS TO EQUALITY, PEACE AND SECURITY" project aims to support and encourage civil society participation and influence on the respect of the rights of young people, especially women and girls, on peace building reconciliation and security through capacity building, networking and advocacy for gender anti-discrimination, equality and empowerment of girls in the project countries in creating peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development in WB.

The programme is introducing an approach to empower young people, especially girls from various ethnic/minority/majority groups as drivers of sustainable peace-building, anti-discrimination, gender equality and promoting social cohesion in four Western Balkans countries through gender-based empowerment in a peer-to-peer manner creating peer influencers for social justice and prevention of peer gender-based violence.

PEER TRAINING FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

In the framework of the "ACTION FOR GIRLS' RIGHTS TO EQUALITY, PEACE AND SECURITY" project which aims to empower young people, especially girls from Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo* and Albania to become peer educators, Pomoc deci has developed a tailored peer training programme meant for young people to start their path as peer trainers and tackle important social issues like gender equality and fight against gender-based violence.

The needs assessment among young people in the project has shown that most of them are willing both to learn more about gender equality, prevention of gender-based violence and how to fight gender-based stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, and to how to become active participants in the process of developing gender equality. Therefore, peer approach has been chosen as a main method to satisfy the young people's needs.

Although it has been developed based on the updated needs assessment of young people and specifically for the sake of the "ACTION FOR GIRLS' RIGHTS TO EQUALITY, PEACE AND SECURITY" project, this manual draws upon materials and tools developed by Pomoc deci and its partners over the years, the most notable being:

- the 'Peer training programme' of the GIRLACT programme;
- the Manual for Peer Trainers by EPTO
- the 'Learning for Well-Being' framework of the Universal Education Foundation
- the 'Peer Training Manual' of the ACT4ROM programme.

Through specifically designed and chosen pedagogical approaches and training tips, this manual is meant for young peer educators but also for teachers and other youth workers to achieve the following objectives:

- developing self-awareness of participants' personal and cultural identity;
- developing appreciation for socio-cultural diversity;
- developing empathy, critical thinking, and communication skills;
- recognising own and others' stereotypes and prejudices and their manifestations;
- identifying personal and group actions for change; transferring and disseminating the learning.

This Manual will help peer educators to envision a peer education project not as a single event to organise but as a sustainable process. Indeed, implementing a quality peer education project requires defining in detail all aspects BEFORE a kick-off event, identifying everything that is needed DURING an activity and to plan what should be done AFTER in terms of evaluation and follow-up.

The main goal is to help participants build upon their skill set and guide them confidently and successfully into the workforce or to support them as they pursue their entrepreneurial journey on equal basis regardless of their gender. Keeping and reviewing notes before meeting with participants again helps to ensure that time is used wisely and that you are constantly keeping them on track. There will be a great amount of interaction with the youth, the partners facilitating the programme and the facilitators of the youth sessions. You want to be able to document and demonstrate their progress.

Overall, a facilitator should:

1. Act as a guide and resource for youth
2. Give consistent and reliable support to youth
3. Give constructive and helpful feedback to youth
4. Act as a role model for youth
5. Build confidence and independence in the youth
6. Accept and relate to youth and respect their choices even if they differ from your own

Structured in 5 chapters, this Toolkit will take a reader through all the steps and practical aspects of a peer education project and make it qualitative:

1. Introduction to Peer Training
2. How to plan and prepare
3. How to work with people
4. How to monitor and evaluate
5. How to sustain learning

All terms used in the masculine gender include the masculine and feminine genders of the persons to whom they refer, unless stated otherwise.

This Manual was developed with the support of the "SMART Balkans – Civil Society for Shared Society in the Western Balkans" regional project implemented by the Centar za promociju civilnog društva (CPCD), Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) and Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) and financially supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). The content of the Manual is the sole responsibility of the project implementers and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA).

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO PEER TRAINING

WHAT IS PEER EDUCATION?

A peer is a person who belongs to the same social group as another person or group. Peers are individuals who share related values, experiences and lifestyles and who are approximately the same age. The connecting element, or "peer factor", can also be based on other aspects of a person's identity such as ethnicity, religious or philosophical belief, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, socio-economic and/or health status, physical or personality traits, history or origin, etc. A peer is also a colleague, a fellow teacher, as well as one young person to another.

We learn a lot of what we know and who we are throughout our lives from our peers. Peer education is a way of giving an intention to such an important influence. It is a way of influencing our peers' life in a way that is positive.

Peer education is a "non-formal learning process that gives empowerment, confidence and independence to young people whatever their background".

Peer education happens when young people or colleagues carry out informal or organised activities with their peers, over a period of time, to develop their knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes enabling them to be responsible for themselves and others and to create a space where they can feel well, safe and respected[1].

Peer education rests on the idea that "people are the experts on their own lives and are therefore the best starting point in any learning process"[2]. Peer education enables youth and other groups to deal effectively with problems that affect them. The process can be partly social; thereby establishing forums for young people to explore new frontiers; helping to solve problems; and letting people in positions of authority gain a better understanding of the point of view of youth.

As obvious as it may sound, the success of peer education initiatives lies first and foremost in one's capability to truly consider another human being as an equal partner. According to the Domino Manual produced by the Council of Europe:

1 Adapted from United Nations Population Fund and Youth Peer Education Network (2005). Youth Peer Education Toolkit. Training of Trainers Manual, New York (USA).
2 SALTO Youth Cultural Diversity Resource Centre. PEERing In PEERing Out: Peer Education Approach in Cultural Diversity Projects.

- Youth are ready-made experts. They have a unique perspective on the issues that affect them and can often "make things happen".
- As role models to their peer group, youth have the potential to demonstrate effective communication styles and approaches. This may be accomplished through workshops and games, music and mass media, discussion or storytelling.
- Where resources are limited and large numbers of people have to be reached, peer group education has a multiplier effect. Such programmes also have an informal cascade effect, creating a "buzz" in a local community.
- If encouraged and supported, youth can control the process of education and information exchange. Whether or not this occurs depends upon the setting in which a programme is operating. Peer group education can help to foster youth participation in programmes of formal and informal education[3].

Even though here we focus on peer education by, with and for young people, it is worth noting that it can be used with many populations and age groups for various goals.

Peer education can take place in any setting where young people or colleagues feel comfortable: in schools and universities, clubs, churches, community centres, workplaces, on the street, on the Internet... It can happen in small groups or just between two people.

Peer education can be as simple and informal as when your friend is teaching you how to use makeup, how to juggle, how to play an instrument, how to fix your radiator… It can also be more "formalised". Here are some examples of youth peer education activities:

- Within schools: training a group of peer trainers who could raise the awareness of other youngsters on specific topics (for instance by organising a 2-hour workshop in a classroom, by participating in a thematic week/day in the school, by contributing to an external activity with classmates…); training fellow teachers on the use of new methods for active learning/teaching, for (self)evaluation or any other pedagogical approach or instrument.
- Within youth organisations/youth centres: training a group of peer trainers who could organise specific activities for the other members (for instance through workshops, sport, exhibitions, music, drama, street education…).
- Within youth movements: scouts, guides and others have been using peer education for years. Some of them could be trained on issues they would like to address and discuss with others (for instance how to deal with cultural diversities when organising camps abroad).

3 Council of Europe (1996). DOmino. A manual to use peer group education as a means to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance.

- Within institutions for young offenders: training a group of peer trainers who could support new-comers (for instance by negotiating the ground rules, by raising awareness on stereotypes, by being more aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens…).
- Within the media: training young journalists on how to support and mentor colleagues in dealing with sensitive issues, on how to use specific techniques and materials...
- Within political groups, within a group of volunteers, within a community centre, within a health-care institution, within a group of students, in your neighbourhood, with your friends and family, with your fitness club…

WHAT IS PEER TRAINING?

The method of peer training is based on the belief that people deliver a message to their peers that is often more credible and efficient than when it is delivered by authority figures. In contrast to formal education settings where the transmission of knowledge is vertical (typically: a lecture delivered by a teacher to its pupils), peer training is a horizontal process where peers educate each other in a spirit of mutual learning. It assumes that all individuals are both learners and teachers and that the knowledge of a group is necessarily greater than the knowledge of one individual.

Peer training methods have been used by many over the years, from upholding the theories of Aristotle to joint educational systems, which were very popular in Europe in the 18th century.

Peer training is now an increasingly important form of non-formal education in the youth sector too, providing opportunities for youth empowerment through the development of self-awareness, social consciousness, special skills or talents, intercultural competencies and community-based projects.

It requires a pedagogical reflection about how to support young people in the long term to develop competences such as a growth mindset, self-awareness, self-confidence, communication skills, teamwork skills, public speaking skills, facilitation skills, leadership skills, etc. Therefore, it entails designing training processes for young people, defining learning outcomes, and creating mechanisms to support youth in assessing, improving and transferring their competences in their personal and professional lives constantly.

Furthermore, peer training is, as an independent process, a political action that facilitates people's participation in society. Through training, people experience intercultural microcosms, learn to articulate values and concerns, gain valuable skills, and can be motivated to take social or political action. Whether they are conscious social or political actors, or merely getting through life, people have influence in a variety of sectors. The great potential they have to make positive contributions to society with consciousness and intention has not been fully tapped.

Educating and supporting people as change agents of any kind can ultimately inspire a general evolution in the culture at large. Adults, organizations, and institutions can consider people's perspectives and needs when making decisions. If the general culture has an intercultural consciousness and demonstrates new competences to succeed in a diverse world, many other sectors in society will follow.

UNIT 2: PLANNING THE WORKSHOP

Planning the workshop is as important as the delivery. There are almost always unexpected factors that can affect a workshop: timing, material, expectations of the participants, group dynamic… Thorough planning will help in ensuring an effective and valuable workshop for everyone involved.

ELEMENTS OF GOOD PLANNING:

1. Identify the audience
2. Set date, time, location
3. Identify the Trainers' Team
4. Design the Agenda
5. Allocate tasks
6. Individual and team preparation
7. Deliver the programme
8. Evaluation and feedback

01 IDENTIFY THE AUDIENCE

Who is the audience for the workshop? Peer trainers may be working with many types of groups composed of adults, or youth, or both. What type of group is it? Have there been any special problems or are there any specific objectives? Try to conduct as thorough a needs' assessment as possible, so that the trainers can be well prepared.

Before setting the agenda, try to understand clearly what the participants expect from the workshop. What do they want to achieve? What do they need from the workshop?

People want peer training workshops for any number of reasons, such as:

- They want to improve their social competence
- They want to learn about mechanisms of peer training
- They want to raise their awareness of others' experiences and/or to be more sensitive to others' needs
- They want to improve intercultural, international relations in their environment…

It is important that the participants understand clearly what the workshop can provide. Be careful not to promise unrealistic objectives in the time-frame of the workshop.

Training agenda for each of the above possible goals will, of course, be somewhat different. A careful needs' assessment will help peer trainers to understand what the participants hope to gain, learn and accomplish by attending the training.

There are two main ways to conduct the needs assessment:

- Informal or formal interviews, in person or on the phone
- Written questionnaires or surveys.

Some of the questions you would want to know answer to before setting the agenda are:

- What the participants would want to accomplish; what their goals and objectives are
- What prompted the participants to want to come to the training?
- How many people will realistically come to the workshop?
- Has there been any previous training or experience dealing with social education or any other related subject?
- Is there any other information you think you need to have?

Once the goals of the workshop/training and needs of the participants have been established, an agenda can be developed that includes the methods and activities that will help to achieve the goals and expectations.

When designing a training agenda, review the training manual/toolkit activities (rationale, objectives, expected learning outcomes…) to determine which ones would assist the participants to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes they seek. The learning objectives of each activity need to be consistent with the workshop/training objectives which you have established in the beginning.

02 SET DATE, TIME, LOCATION

When determining the dates, time and location, it is very important to know the availability of the participants. Inconvenient timing (too late for the participants to return to their homes, or too early for them when they work or go to school) could affect the participants' level of cooperation, willingness to actively participate or arrival/departure on time.

You also have to allow enough time for breaks and meals. If the schedule is a bit tight, you might consider one break as a "working break", but make sure that enough time is given for both "technical break" and the "working part of the break".

Find out if lunch, coffee, etc. will be provided for the participants and for the peer trainers. If not, find out if there is a convenient place for people to go for food. It is important that the meals accommodate the various diets of participants: vegetarian, kosher, no pork, etc. If you don't know the dietary needs of the group, always have vegetarian options.

The room where you plan to have the workshop should have movable chairs and enough room for different groupings (work in pairs, groups of three, four people or all of the participants lined up). Whenever possible, the initial set up should be a simple circle of chairs including those where the trainers will sit. If possible, a few desks or tables can be helpful too. Think about the space where the participants can also get out in the fresh air at breaks.

The location should be convenient for both the participants and peer trainers. If anyone is not familiar with the location, make sure to get and send directions to everyone ahead of time. You can prepare and send the directions in the confirmation mail or info-pack.

03 IDENTIY THE TRAINERS' TEAM

One peer trainer can make a great peer training, but a trainers' team of two is always preferable for many reasons. Starting with the discussion on the best Agenda for a particular group of peers, two people can bring in more ideas, consultation, better tailored agenda to the identified needs and expectations of the group. When the peer training begins, two people see better and capture better learnings, ensure better that all voices are heard in the group and can help those who need extra attention. Different people have different personal energies, so to manage the group energy, so swapping the co-trainers, can create variety, increase engagement, but also provides the opportunity to give one trainer a break while the other steps in. Similarly, delivery styles and personalities in a trainers' team can enhance the learning outcomes. Having a co-trainer also helps in challenging situations providing a back-up and support. It is important for peer trainers to support each other by training in teams. Each peer trainer can become an expert on certain activities and topics, contributing to a well-rounded knowledgeable team.

However, it is important to know the challenges which working in pair can bring about. We all have different leadership styles – some are more autocratic, prioritising following the tasks and planned activities, some are more democratic, focussing more on team building and involving everyone in decisions. And some are more laissez-faire, preferring to take a back seat and letting the group direct itself. If the trainers in the trainers' team do not know their personal style, do not discuss it and do not agree on how to combine their leadership styles, the way they work together can become a challenge both for them and the group. Difference in experience, position, power can also lead to one dominant, overpowering member of the trainers' team and the other one staying in a shadow, or even worse, in one co-trainer continually contradicting the other, putting him/her down. This, in turn, gives a message to the group that there is no safe space for voicing an opinion, making a mistake or taking a risk.

When defining your partner for trainers' team, if possible, pair people who have good communication, have similar levels of experience and possibility to grow together as trainers' team. All the differences in the type of personal energy, leadership style and position, or power can be very beneficial, provided they are discussed during the planning process, an agreement is made on who does what, when and how and both members of the trainers' team tryly respect each other and all the participants in all their diversity.

04 DESIGN THE AGENDA

Designing the agenda is crucial. If peer trainers know the rationale for the workshop, then choosing the appropriate exercises becomes evident. Once peer trainers know the "why" for each exercise, it is possible to construct the agenda to achieve the goals, whether it will be a single workshop or a series of workshops.

Agenda Guidelines

a) State the goals and the objectives of the workshop
b) State the benefits of the programme for the participants
c) Provide for knowledge, skills and attitude development
d) Describe an activity in terms of skills development
e) Provide for the practice of new skills
f) Provide simulations and role-play in which participants can apply new skills to real problems of their own
g) Provide time for discussion and processing information. One good exercise is better than three rushed ones!
h) Remember always to consider:
    - Total time, space, materials and other resources required;
    - A variety of training methods;
    - The flow of activities (which ones build rapport, establish a climate for trust and discussion, require increased preparation and processing);
    - The kind of activities the participants feel most comfortable with;
    - Whether the workshop is mandatory or voluntary;
    - The kind of activities that would be new, interesting, challenging, and/or fun;
    - The activities the peer trainers leading the workshop feel most comfortable facilitating.

05 ALLOCATE TASKS

When allocating tasks, it is good to look at the strengths of each trainer to capitalise on such strengths and to challenge each other to improve weak areas. The more workshop elements that each peer trainer is familiar with, the more backup the team has in case of illness or other problems.

06 INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM PREPARATION

The team of peer trainers leading the workshop needs to be familiar and comfortable with the agenda, and with each other prior to the workshop. Ideally, the training team meets one or two weeks before the workshop to prepare themselves and the materials. Talk on the phone at least one or two weeks in advance, and meet a couple of hours earlier on the day of the workshop.

During the preparation time, review the agenda and determine your roles in implementing it. Coordinate introductions and discuss your levels of comfort with different activities or topics, support each other and determine who might take the lead on each part of the agenda.

It is important to determine in advance who is responsible for gathering and preparing the materials needed for the workshop.

06 EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Evaluation

It can be difficult to measure how well each participant has recognised, confronted, or understood a particular topic in the workshop. The evaluation forms, workshop discussions, and verbal feedback are the only clues to the success or failure of a particular training component or workshop. Evaluation also helps improve the abilities of the peer trainers and improve the activities for the future.

When?

Feedback and evaluation should be done informally on an on-going basis. Take into account the participants' comments at all the times. The peer training team should also be in constant communication with each other about how things are going.

Before closing the workshop, an evaluation form should be distributed to participants and collected. If the workshop lasts for several days, a daily evaluation can be done at the end of each day.

A couple of weeks after the workshop is complete, an evaluation can be done by telephone with the person who invited the peer trainers to conduct the workshop.

In addition, the peer trainers should find a chance to talk to each other once the workshop is over to discuss their teamwork and individual effectiveness.

How?

There are several evaluation forms available for participants and for trainers. You can also make up your own forms.

Index cards are useful to gain feedback from the participants mid-way through a programme. Give them two questions to use for the feedback, one question for each side of the index card (i.e., What have you learned? What question do you still have?)

Evaluation can also be done informally or formally through conversation.

Self-reflection should not be overlooked as an extremely important part of the evaluation process.

Take time with co-facilitators to have a focused feedback process.

Feedback Process

This simple feedback process will allow you to look at and evaluate yourself and your peer training team within a supportive environment. Use this feedback process during practice sessions and following actual workshops and programmes. The feedback process is an important tool for identifying strengths and skills that need additional development.

When providing feedback to other peer trainers, it is helpful to follow a certain number of guidelines. You can introduce those feedback "rules" to the participants before beginning the facilitation practice.

What is feedback?

Feedback is an information about reactions to a person's performance of a task, etc., used as a basis for improvement.

It is also the modification or control of a process or system by its results or effects.

It can (and should!) be positive and negative. Feedback is a gift that can help us learn and improve ourselves through constructive observations that we get from others.

How to GIVE feedback?

In order to make feedback useful, it needs to be:

- Immediate: as soon as possible after the event or situation takes place
- Wished: feedback does not help anyone if it's forced, if the person who is supposed to receive it cannot, or doesn't want to hear it
- Descriptive: without interpretations and judgments, without urging the other person to justify him/herself
- Specific: without generalising but in direct relation to a precise situation or talk

- Useful: what's been criticized should not be unrealistic to change, indications and advices must be achievable
- Adapted to the person to which you're giving feedback and to the situation in which you're giving it. The needs of the feedback receiver are also to be taken into account, not only the needs of the one giving it
- Subjective: using « I » statements. "I" statements are important for avoiding generalisations and for keeping comments and suggestions focused on your own personal experiences, rather than speaking from what you believe others think. "I think your presentation would have been more effective if you had explained all the directions before you told people to form small discussion groups."
- Balanced: both positive and negative (instead of "negative", it is better to refer to "constructive criticism"). We tend to only see what has not functioned, but it is also important to observe what has been properly done and not to consider that all that works is obvious or "normal". In providing helpful feedback to one another, begin by clearly articulating those areas of strength you observed. Then, address in a constructive way area in need of improvement. Avoid providing positive feedback as an introduction or add-on to your constructive feedback. For example, avoid saying, "I thought you were well prepared, BUT..." Remember, although peer trainers learn from constructive feedback, the positive comments are equally important in building confidence and affirming existing strengths. Begin by clearly describing what was done well. "Your group was well prepared. I appreciated that you knew the activity and you all seemed to work well together." "I liked the way Robert wrote the responses on the chart paper while Nela generated responses from the group. The story you told was a great addition, too." After this positive feedback, you can add any suggestions that might make the presentation even better. "I was sitting in the back and I had a little trouble hearing your voice when you asked some of the discussion questions...."

How to RECEIVE feedback?

- Be open: it's better to say if one is not at ease to receive feedback... and when will be the right moment
- Actively listen: don't reply with explanations, justifications, arguments but really focus first on what is being said and try to understand it well: it is about putting oneself in the other's shoes! Don't hesitate to repeat or reformulate what the other has said to check if you have understood correctly and if necessary, ask the other to clarify some aspects
- Do not argue or defend yourself: there is also feedback with which you cannot do anything even though you actively listened and understood well. You can decide if you take it into account or not. (Just like gifts: we generally accept all of them even though there are some that we will never use.)
- Be thankful: because feedback is first and foremost a helping hand that another offers you

After each facilitation team has finished their activity, you can initiate the feedback process using these questions:

- What did I/we/you do well?
- What could I/we/you have done differently?
- Other comments?

UNIT 3: HOW TO WORK WITH PEOPLE

Working with people is never easy. This unit is devised to help peer trainers develop skills as facilitators and to help equipping them to deal with difficult or potentially difficult situations.

In this respect we are talking about:

1. Considerations for effective presentations
2. Considerations for workshops with young people
3. Considerations about room arrangements
4. Considerations about dividing groups
5. Common problems in leading group discussions
6. Considerations for ensuring participation
7. Considerations for facilitating discussions on controversial issues
8. Considerations on conflict resolutions
9. Co-facilitation considerations

01 CONSIDERATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

Prepare yourself mentally

- Arrive early and take time to collect your thoughts before the workshop
- Think about what you want to accomplish during the workshop
- Re-check activity assignments with co-facilitator

Avoid distracting behaviours

- Acknowledge diversions and distractions
- Before the workshop, write information on chart paper that you will be using during the workshop
- In speaking, avoid “ummmsss” and “ouhsss”
- Pay attention to your gestures

Communication: speaking, listening and body language

- Speak in a manner that encourages people to listen
- Listen attentively: give the workshop your full attention
- Don’t talk into the chart paper or board
- Choose pace and speed of your words that allow participants to keep up with you

- Don't read directly from your notes
- Don't talk while participants are reading or writing
- Use humour, if you can do it comfortably
- Smile and have fun!

Enhance the learning process and avoid confusion

- Use examples, stories and pictures as much as possible
- Give clear directions and review them as necessary
- Try to separate existing participants' cliques
- Repeat the questions from the group to ensure that everyone has heard the question
- Keep checking for understanding
- Summarise the key learning points as the workshop progresses
- Let participants know when they don't need to take notes
- Give a warning signal when the time is almost up for completing a task
- Challenge the participants by not giving them everything, the more they discover on their own, the more they will remember
- Before asking for a volunteer to do something, explain what the person will be expected to do
- Review goals at the end of the workshop to highlight accomplishments

Affirm participants to increase workshop success

- Try to connect with participants before the programme begins
- Call people by name; use the name tags if needed
- Make eye contact as a way of encouraging and engaging participants
- Listen in a manner that encourages people to talk
- When writing responses on chart paper, be sure what you are writing is accurate, use participants' words as much as possible, write everyone's responses
- Be open to all participants and ideas, even those difficult for you to hear
- Be aware of "hot buttons" and "warm spots" and handle them with sensitivity
- ASK participants to do things, don't TELL them
- Understand adult learning processes and employ them
- Make yourself part of the learning process, but not the focus of the workshop

02 WORKSHOP CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Setting the tone

Workshops for young people require extra energy and enthusiasm. Peer trainers must display enjoyment and confidence when working with their peers. Be sure all peer trainers are comfortable with the many roles they must play when working with young people. Peer trainers should model respect for their peers at all times. Young people will return what they experience.

Establishing the ground rules is critical. Ground rules should always be elicited from the participants. Getting their "buy-in" helps deter discipline problems. Facilitators should make maintaining respect for everyone the responsibility of the entire group.

When setting the agenda, be sure to keep in mind the age of the participants, and adapt the language, approach and choice of examples and questions to best meet the needs of the participants. Blank stares and quizzical looks may indicate to the peer trainers that they need to adjust the approach. Try to establish a conversational and mature communication style from the outset.

Peer trainers should have information on the trainees' backgrounds and concerns. Information relating to intercultural issues in the school, including recent demographic shifts, is crucial to the peer trainers' workshop preparation, and helps to set the appropriate agenda and tone for the workshop. Knowing the audience is essential.

Group management

Peer training workshops for young people, especially for those between 13 and 15 years of age, may happen in a way that schools insist on having a staff person present. There are both positive and negative aspects to having school staff at the workshop. Discipline and control issues are definitely lessened by the presence of a school-based staff person; however, the young people may be inhibited in their participation. They may fear repercussions if they criticise school policies or staff. If a school staff person is going to be present, the peer trainers should clarify the role this person will play. Typically, school staff members are asked to merely observe the workshop and intervene only if necessary. They should not take notes or grade papers during the workshop. They should listen and be attentive to the workshop and young people, but not play an active or vocal role. Peer trainers should also clarify with the school's contact person how they should handle discipline problems with their peers. Should problem youngster be asked to leave? Where do they go? Who can the peer trainers seek out for support if necessary? This information is crucial for peer trainers.

Dynamics of workshops for young people

ACTION

Young people need to be active. Asking them to sit and be the recipients of information for extended periods of time will ensure that most will probably "tuneout." Young people need active and experimental processing of activities to keep them connected, motivated, and learning. However, all people do not learn the same way. Peer trainers should be prepared to use physical, visual, audio, and mixed learning methods. Role plays are particularly effective with young people.

RELEVANCE

Young people tend to be more present than future oriented. They need to see how this discussion and these activities will have an impact on their lives. Discussions, examples, and questions should be relevant to their current experiences.

BRAINSTORMING

Peer trainers should review the concept of brainstorming with young people and use this technique whenever appropriate. This process allows youngsters to share ideas and thoughts freely without prejudice of judgment.

PRACTICE

Providing youngsters with the opportunity to develop responses and strategies to situations creates a sense of group ownership and fosters positive group interaction. It also helps provide a skill that students can take away from the workshop.

HONESTY

Typically, young people are very honest. Peer trainers should respond to them with similar directness and honesty. It is important to remember that the focus of the workshop should remain with the young people and their interactions with one another. Young people also have a strong desire to see justice and fairness prevail. (It's part of their developmental growth).

EMPATHY AND CHANGE

Peer trainers should empathise with their peers' struggles and frustrations, but also try to help challenge them to identify ways in which they can take control and change their lives and the lives of others. Many youngsters express feeling "stuck" or "hopeless" about their ability to affect positive change. The peer trainers should help them identify concrete ways to address this. Keep in mind that there may be situations in the youngsters' lives that are very complicated and not easily resolved. Peer trainers must respond appropriately and be sensitive to obstacles that youngsters may be facing.

DISTANCE

Some young people may be uncomfortable or unaccustomed to discussing personal feelings or values with peers or adults. The peer trainers may want to use discussion launching points that focus on other young people's experiences or relevant illustrations from television or movies. This technique may help youngsters feel more comfortable revealing their own personal experience or opinions.

FLEXIBILITY

Facilitators should always have back-up activities ready to use. Young people are often unpredictable in the amount of time they might want or need to spend processing a particular activity. Facilitators need to be aware of the students' energy and involvement, and they should be ready to be flexible about moving on to a new or different activity if interest seems to be lagging.

FUN

Having fun is allowed! While the topics discussed in the workshop are difficult and sensitive, it does not preclude the facilitator and peers from also having fun and laughing during their time together. Laughter is a great icebreaker and can bond a group quickly. Facilitators should always ensure that humour is not at the expense of anyone in the room.

03 CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

When presenting workshops, one of the most important dynamics is the physical learning environment. Facilitators should understand the potential impact of certain room arrangements.

Most frequently, facilitators request that a meeting room be arranged in an open circle style, without tables. Often when facilitators arrive on site, they find the training room in a lecture or classroom style format. Facilitators typically recommend changing this arrangement. if possible. However, facilitators should also be sensitive to size limitations and the cultural climate of an organisation. When working with a circle format, facilitators should be careful never to put their backs to anyone. The facilitator always needs enough open space to move easily around the materials and equipment without tripping over participants.

Some options for seating arrangements and their potential impact are:

LECTURE OR CLASSROOM STYLE

Typically, this choice of seating sends a message to participants that the person at the front of the room is the expert and the participants will be the recipients of knowledge, skills, and information. This style is likely to create an atmosphere where participants feel little or no responsibility for their learning and are less likely to be active participants. For participants who do not want to be engaged or are resistant to the content, this allows for easier anonymity and withdrawal. For the person wishing to be actively engaged, he/she may feel participation is difficult or unwelcome.

U OR V-WITH TABLES, WITH FACILITATOR AT OPEN END

This style allows for more opportunities for participation by learners. However, the emphasis is still primarily on the facilitator. Additionally, the tables can create artificial barriers between participants and the facilitator, allowing for group members to more easily "check-out." However, participants will likely feel more responsibility for their learning and see opportunities to communicate directly with others around them than in the lecture or classroom format.

SEVERAL GROUPS OF SMALL TABLES

This style creates a highly participatory atmosphere, with the facilitator acting as a resource and motivator. This arrangement shows that the facilitator values peer learning and high participant involvement. Participants will likely feel highly engaged and a part of the learning process. One disadvantage of this arrangement is that participants at different tables often are not able to see or hear each other.

ONE LARGE ROUND/SQUARE TABLE, WITH FACILITATOR WITH THE GROUP

This arrangement allows the facilitator to de-emphasise his/her "expert" status and communicate to the group that he/she is a participating member. This arrangement quickly conveys that the responsibility for the learning and growth of the group is equally divided among the group members. One disadvantage of this type of arrangement is that it is limited to a very small number of participants.

OPEN CIRCLE OF CHAIRS - NO TABLES

This arrangement creates an environment where it is evident that the learning depends on involvement and peer relationships of group members. The facilitator in this arrangement can stand and address the group, but also sit with them as appropriate and necessary. It also allows for easy dividing into smaller groups. Participants are likely to feel very engaged in the learning process and can easily communicate and see all the other group members. It can also create anxiety for some group members who feel a need or desire to have a desk or table in front of them.

Regardless of the room arrangement, facilitators must remember that while they are a part of the learning process, they are also there to manage the day. Creating a sense of collaborative learning is important, but participants must also feel that the facilitators know where the workshop is going. This is where the variety of roles must be remembered and balanced. Facilitators must always remember that they are not participants. The workshop is not about them or their needs and beliefs.

04 CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT DIVIDING GROUPS

Dividing participants into small groups or pairs can be much more meaningful than counting off numbers.

- It can be FUN.
- It can get new people or specific people talking together.
- It can help equalise group relations and make a positive group dynamic.

It can also be strategic to give the group more autonomy and allow them to pick their own partners. Here are some creative suggestions for dividing groups:

Use stickers, such as different coloured dots, to divide people into pre- selected groups. If you want to ensure that the group is mixed in a particular way, this will require some thought and preparation from the trainers. Otherwise, it can also be done randomly. Ask everyone to close their eyes, and inform them that you will be putting something on their heads. Place one sticker on the forehead of each person. When they open their eyes, they have to find the people who have the same sticker. Without talking!

Ask participants to do a line-up (also without talking!), based on a particular criterion: birthday (not year), shoe size, amount of time in the organisation, etc. Once they have lined up, verify that they achieved the task correctly by going down the line having everyone answer verbally. Once this is over, you can divide the group by cluster. The first four people, the second four people, the third four people, etc., go together in small groups.

To divide into pairs, cut pieces of string or rope, about one meter long for each piece. Hold all the pieces together, fold them in half, and hold the folded middle in your hand so that all the ends hang down. Ask each participant to grab an end of the rope. Tell them that when you let go, they should hang onto their piece of rope (without pulling!). Then they will each find their partner on the other end of the rope.

05 COMMON PROBLEMS IN LEADING GROUP DISC

The following are suggestions to help ensure successful and productive discussions. Included are responses to some "what if's" facilitators might encounter. Remember, facilitators are not expected to have all the answers. The combined wisdom of the whole group is always greater than the wisdom of any one person.

What if…

A. One person wants to do all the talking?

- Establish goals at the beginning of the session. State that one of the goals of the programme is to provide an opportunity for everyone to talk and listen.
- You may have to interrupt. You can say: "Thank you, I am going to stop here so we have time for other responses."
- Suggest a time limit for talking and ask for agreement from the group.
- Humour sometimes helps, but be careful not to use humour at the expense of another person.

B. People aren't participating?

- Use 3 x 5 note cards: There are a number of advantages to having participants respond to a question in writing first: (1) the cards serve as a "crib sheet" and dispel the what-will-I-say anxieties; (2) you as the group leader can collect the cards and read the responses anonymously.

- Share in pairs: Ask the participants to find a partner they may not know well and respond to questions in pairs. It is much easier to say something to one person than it is to a large group, and it warms participants up for large-group discussion.

- Share in groups: You can create triads, quads, or other small groups to discuss questions and/or issues. Small groups can be less intimidating than the whole group, and give participants the opportunity to interact more closely with one another.

- Model responses: Sometimes it helps people share if they hear an example from you. Your sharing also makes you a part of the learning process.

- Wait time: Give people time to think. If you interrupt a period of silence, you may convey nervousness that might be contagious. Remember: there are no quick answers to most of the questions asked.

- Ask for clarification: Encourage people to talk by asking for more information.

- Create a "safe" environment: Participants may not want to share if they feel their ideas or opinions will be attacked. Be respectful of everyone and establish the ground rule that only one person talks at a time.

C. Only one point of view is brought out?

- Ask: "Does everyone agree with that statement?" Then ask others who seem to be disagreeing with the point of view what they think.

- You can provide other information by saying "Let me introduce a different point of view; what would you think if...?"

- Stand ups or hand raising: Say: "Raise your hand if you agree with the last statement." Then you will have identified a group of people who didn't raise their hands whose opinions you can seek.

D. Misinformation is presented?

- Ask: "Does anyone think differently?" or "Does everyone agree with that statement?" If no one from the group contributes another opinion, it is up to you to present another view. Don't let misinformation stand; it implies you agree with it. If you don't know the facts, say so, and try to find out the correct information for future sessions.

- Ask the participant: "Where did you get your information?" Do so non-judgmentally or critically. Preserve the dignity of the person who provided that misinformation.

E. Conflict occurs?

- Expect conflict and be prepared for it. Some of these issues bring up gut-level responses.

- Recognise the possibility that you may be hesitant about confronting some bigoted remarks.

- It is the facilitators' job to "manage the traffic." Sometimes "freezing" the moment, literally stopping all conversation, helps people to step back and look at what's happening. This method can have the effect of removing the burden from two people engaged in a conflict, and offers an opportunity for the whole group to problem solve the situation. You can say: “Freeze! What’s happening here? What triggered this? What different opinions are being debated?”

- Sometimes a conflict between two people has to be mediated privately. Whatever the outcome, it is important for the participants who witnessed the conflict to hear about the resolution, keeping in mind, however, that some things may have been shared in confidence and can’t be made public.

- Remind the group to stay focused on the subject at hand. Don’t hesitate to say, “That’s interesting, however, the question was...,” or, “That’s another important point, but let me remind you of what we were originally discussing.”

- An open conflict provides a perfect opportunity to talk about “baggage” that we all bring to these situations. It is our job to lighten the load that comes from carrying around prejudicial thinking.

F. The group doesn’t seem to understand a response?

- It helps to summarise or restate comments. Try to listen carefully. How well you facilitate will depend to some extent on how well you can hear (translate) what is being said and also “hear” (recognise) what is not being said.

- Writing participants’ responses on a chart paper helps make the information public. It enhances learning by adding visual cues to the auditory learning experience. Make sure you write everyone’s responses; if you write selectively, people whose comments are not included might feel that their contributions are not valuable, or that they are being left out intentionally. Write everyone’s responses as close to verbatim as possible, or ask for permission to edit and/ or paraphrase.

- If you are unable to restate a complicated response, you can ask, “Did everyone understand that?” If other people express confusion, you can ask the person who made the comment to restate. If that person gets stuck, ask if someone else in the group would like to attempt restating the idea.

- Listening carefully is a key to successful facilitation.

G. Discussion stops suddenly, or never takes off?

- Acknowledge that it is occurring. You can ask “What’s happening here?” Sometimes a local issue that you may not be aware of is so pressing and immediate it prevents participants from being able to focus on any other topic.

- Sometimes having multiple populations in a workshop can be intimidating. For example, the presence of an administrator may make teachers, other school staff, or students feel they cannot be candid in front of “the boss.” If this occurs continue to keep conversation on target and encourage multiple perspectives from various members of your group. You can also create small discussion groups, which may be less threatening to the intimidated participants.

Note: It is very valuable to conduct workshops in training teams. Depending on an individual's "race", age, religion, gender, ethnicity, etc., he/she may respond differently to situations presented. A second person may see opportunities for exploration and discussion that passed you by.

H. It's time to move on to another topic and people seem engaged in a lively discussion?

- Try to be flexible about time. If something good is happening, assess the value of leaving that discussion or activity in favour of completing your established agenda.
- Give a "two-minute warning" or "just two more comments" in preparation for wrapping up the discussion.
- Acknowledge at the beginning of the session that time will be a factor, and that some people might feel uncomfortable about leaving unfinished business. Then you can use this as a point of reference for closing a discussion. (You can say: "Remember when I said it might be hard to stop a discussion, this is what I meant; however, in order to...").
- Summarise the content of the discussion or ask a participant to do so for the purpose of making logical transitions between the various segments of the workshop.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of leaving a good discussion and use it as a reason for scheduling additional workshop sessions. These are ongoing issues and human relations learning is part of the lifelong human agenda.
- Create a "parking lot," a piece of newsprint posted in the room at the beginning of the workshop, on which is recorded unfinished issues to be "parked" are recorded and labelled momentarily and addressed either later in the workshop or at a future session.

I. Some people in the room carry on side conversations rather than participating in the workshop discussion?

- Try to discover reasons why participants are engaging in side conversations. Some reasons may be: participants are generating a new idea; they want to talk to someone they know; they are confused about some aspect of the workshop; they have unfinished business; they cannot see/hear the presenter; the information does not apply to them; they are bored; they disagree or agree strongly with the presenter.
- If a large percentage of the participants are engaging in side talking, offer the group five minutes to talk to with a neighbour about any unfinished business or ask if there are any unanswered questions.
- Sometimes standing next to such participants causes them to stop their side conversation.
- Try to be creative about drawing all participants into the group; ask: "What do you think about that last point?"
- If the side conversation is disruptive to you and others it is a mistake to let it continue. Address it directly, as politely as you can: "It's hard to focus with the distraction of several voices talking at the same time - let's have one person talking at a time."

- Refer to the ground rules established at the beginning of the workshop.

J. A workshop participant offends you personally?

- Try to keep in mind: you are there to help the participants address their issues. Find another time and place to deal with your feelings.
- Do not directly challenge the participant. Under no circumstances should you establish an adversarial position with a participant. If you do, you will destroy the learning environment by letting all of the participants see that it's not okay to disagree with you.
- If you sense others are also offended by a comment of a particular participant, solicit feedback from the group rather than confronting the statement yourself.
- Know your own sensitivities and exercise control when you are responsible for facilitating a workshop and after a workshop.

06 CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENSURING PARTICIPATION

Peer education project is a path, a cycle in which young people can grow and develop their unique potential. To be meaningful, it requires the active commitment of participants throughout the process. Of course, this commitment depends first on each participant's willingness to engage. However, there are ways to strengthen it and useful factors that can help us sustain participation in our training.

Participation is more than just being present in the same room with other people. To participate means to be involved actively.

In an ideal world, every peer education project should be co-designed by your target group and participation should always be voluntary. There are, however, some situations where participants are only partially involved in the work. This may happen when your project is initiated by an external body (i.e. an NGO, school, municipality...). A classic example is delivering educational programmes without any prior consultation with the local community as to what skills, knowledge and format they would prefer.

Levels of participation

The ladder of participation is a model originally developed by the sociologist Roger Hart, which proposes 8 levels of young people's participation in a project and can be used as a tool to measure their participation in your own peer education project.

1. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MANIPULATED

The project is run by adults while young people are forced to attend or used. This reflects adultism.

2. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DECORATION

The project is run by adults while young people are present without any active involvement. This reflects adultism.

3. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TOKENISED

The project is run by adults while it looks like young people are given a voice. In fact, they have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate. This reflects adultism.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE ASSIGNED AND INFORMED

The project is run by adults while young people are given a specific role knowing the 'how' and 'why' of it. This rung of the ladder can be embodied by community youth boards.

5. YOUNG PEOPLE CONSULTED AND INFORMED

The project is run by adults while young people bring inputs and are told of adults' decisions. This can be embodied by youth advisory councils.

6. ADULT-INITIATED, SHARED DECISIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The project is initiated by adults who share decision-making with young people. This can be embodied by participatory action research.

7. YOUNG PEOPLE LEAD AND INITIATE ACTION

The project is initiated and directed by young people while adults can be involved in a supportive role. This can be embodied by youth-led activism.

8. YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS SHARE DECISION-MAKING

The project is initiated by young people while decision-making is shared with adults. This creates empowerment and learning and can be embodied by youth-adult partnerships.

It is important to note that the ultimate goal of a peer education project is not necessarily to achieve the rung 8 at each stage of its implementation. Even if this rung is considered ideal in terms of youth participation, other rungs might be more efficient and/or convenient at specific stages of the implementation. This model is mostly introduced here as a reflection tool on the meaning of participation in the field of youth projects.

Seven steps to participation

In order to achieve consistent participation of your target group in your peer education process, there are several aspects you can address. We propose to you a method using 7 steps:

Step 1: People know where they are and why

Be transparent about your project' s aim, objectives and activities as well as the roles of the people involved.

Step 2: People get a chance to be involved

Acknowledge and welcome people differences. Use different kind of learning activities to make sure that everybody's tastes are catered for.

Step 3: People are given a choice

Give the participants a chance to take part in a way that is right for them.

Step 4: People feel valued

Consider the participants as experts on issues that concern them. Value their opinions and make use of their feedback.

Step 5: People receive support

Make sure the participants get to express their opinions. Take their questions and answer them honestly.

Step 6: People work together

Make sure the learning process is a 2-way one. The participants learn from you, you learn from the participants.

Step 7: People keep in touch

Agree with participants on how the follow-up of the project will be done.

07 CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATING DISCUSSIONS ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

A. There is no right way

Each person brings his or her strengths to the facilitation and you should always remember that there are many ways to lead a discussion on a controversial issue.

B. You do not have all the answers

Recognise the importance of everyone's contributions to the discussion. You don't have to be a "prejudice expert." The combined wisdom of the whole group will always be greater than the wisdom of any one facilitator.

C. Anticipate conflict

These are complicated gut-level issues for which there are no easy answers. Establish ground rules for the discussion with group and ensure that everyone abides by them.

D. Try to listen carefully

How well you facilitate the discussion will depend, to some extent, on how well you can hear and translate what is being said; this also includes what is not said.

E. Be a good role model

Do not allow a prejudiced remark to go unaddressed. If a bigoted remark is made, you might ask the group, "does everyone agree with that last statement?" or "how do others feel about that?".

F. Don't be afraid of silence

Give people time to think. A pause in the discussion does not have to be filled immediately with another question.

G. Acknowledge your own humanity

The facilitator is part of the self-examination process, too. Be willing to be introspective and self-critical. You are part of the learning process.

H. Be flexible

Things don't always work out the way they are planned. Try to accommodate the interests of the group.

08 CONSIDERATIONS ON CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS

Conflict

Conflict can occur among people who have different values, beliefs, and understandings about how the world works and what is important. Unfortunately, many people see only the negative aspects of conflict. Conflicts evidenced by differences of opinion, attacking statements, denial and controversy are frequently a part of the workshop experience for facilitators. If personal experiences and observations have left the impression that conflict is bad, emotionally challenging and stressful, then resolving conflict will be difficult. On the other hand, when conflict is seen as a problem that can be resolved through discussion, cooperation, and collaboration, then conflict can be a catalyst for new and creative ways to interact. Conflict resolution that is based upon respect and understanding enhances and affirms cultural diversity and anti-bias education. This section is designed to provide information for facilitators that will assist them in responding with confidence and skill to conflict situations.

When a conflict arises during a workshop either between participants or between a participant and facilitator, someone is perceiving a threat to something she/he believes, values, or needs. The people involved in the conflict may view their differences as being compatible. There are also times when the people in conflict will see themselves as being "right" and the other party as being "wrong." When people take these positions, they create an impasse to conflict resolution until they determine (either through new information and/or discussion) that conciliation is possible.

Emotions

Depending on the conflict, people may experience emotions ranging from curiosity to anger. Some people will respond to conflict by asking questions and wanting to know how they might be able to resolve the situation to everyone's benefit. Other people will feel threatened, anxious or angry, particularly if they are afraid that they are under attack or that their needs will not be met. When a person feels threatened, muscles tense, the heartbeat accelerates and the body prepares for combat. During this time, emotions run high and rational thinking is very limited, if it exists at all. Emotional responses to conflict are far quicker than the rational mind (Goleman, 1995) and the mind cannot react both emotionally and rationally at the same time.

Behaviour

Depending on the conflict, some people withdraw, some use humour or some may verbally attack the person perceived to be the source of discomfort. The workshop facilitator can become the target of participant's anger because a participant is anxious or fearful about the workshop topic. Typical responses to conflict are: competing (I win/you lose); collaborating (working together to solve the problem); compromising (giving up some things in order to gain others); avoiding (withdrawing from the situation); and accommodating (smoothing things over).

Negative reaction in the workshop

While some participants value discussion, confronting views exchange and are open to changing their attitudes based on new arguments, others do not want to participate for fear that their personal beliefs, values, and position in society will be attacked because they are part of any particular group.

If participants have formulated a world view that is based upon a sense of personal moral/financial superiority, stereotyping, scapegoating, denial, and blaming others for any of their underachievement, they will often cling to these ideas because to change them is tantamount to admitting that their lives are based on harmful ways of being for their own benefit. This realisation is a threat to their sense of self-esteem, belonging, safety, and sense of security. In order to protect themselves, they lash out at the person whom they see as the source of their discomfort, the facilitator.

People who are members of groups that have been targets of discrimination can also react negatively to the content of a workshop. Their anger and/or frustration may stem from a perception that there will be a lot of talk, but little action. Typical comments might be: "Nothing's going to change", "I'm sick of all this talk, when are we going to do something about it?", "Some people don't get it, because they don't want to get it." These comments are largely based upon their perception that their needs will not be met in the workshop. This group may lack trust in the process, workshop content and/or the organisational commitment to follow through with concrete strategies for improving an oppressive situation.

Strategies for resolving conflict during group discussions

Ground rules

Establish ground rules or discussion guidelines at the start of the workshop. In general, people will manage their own behaviour to meet the expectations of the group. If the discussion becomes heated, a reference to the ground rules can be a tactful way to remind people of the behavioural expectations everyone in the room has agreed to.

Communication skills

- Listen for content and tone. Try to determine if the participants are angry, combative, or genuinely seeking answers. If a participant is angry, the facilitator will have to create an opportunity for the participants to move from an emotional to a rational state.

- Do not interrupt the participant. Listen to what he/she has to say before responding.

- Let the participant know that you are aware of how he/she feels about the subject by acknowledging what you have seen and heard for example, "Michel, you seem very angry about this"...the participant will either confirm or correct the facilitator's observation. If the participant is angry ask him/her to give more information e.g., "Please tell me what happened that led to your being angry" (when the participant provides this information, it will present an opportunity for others to determine what might help to resolve the conflict. For example, the participant may be angry because of a misconception, wrong information, or miscommunication).

- Separate the person from the problem. Respond to the issue(s) being raised without attacking the person who is presenting the issue.

This can be done by summarising what the person has said, e.g.: "Stefan, if I understood you correctly, you have a concern about discussing sexual orientation in the workplace." Then reframe the issue(s) as a statement or question for others to respond to, e.g.: "Does anyone see a relationship between sexual orientation and organisational policies/benefits?".

Allow for responses from the group. Clarify misunderstandings, terminology, or misconceptions. Sometimes conflict occurs because people are working with inaccurate information and perceptions.

By exploring the participant's definition and understanding of a situation, the facilitator may be able to offer (or ask the group to offer) additional insights and perspectives.

- The facilitator can clarify a situation by interpreting ideas, rephrasing statements to check content, or providing information to clear confusion. For example, "Sergio, I want to make sure that I understand your point of view... It is important to you that everyone you work with speaks English... The last U.S. Census indicates that over 90% of people who are born with a first language other than English try to learn English as soon as possible. It can take as long as seven years to achieve fluency. What are ways in which staff can assist an English learner...?".
- Terminology can be a source of conflict because people will have different understandings of what a word means or use a word as a code phrase. The statement "We are all French" is a good example. Ask participants what "French" means to them (try to elicit many different opinions). Explore common understandings and differences. Discuss whether or not it is important to come to an agreement on the term.

Ask for more information. Use open-ended questions to explore ideas and concerns about a subject. Look for areas of common agreement or understanding. Solicit ideas initially from participants who appear comfortable in the workshop. If the discussion is becoming heated, ask the participants to take a moment to write down their thoughts; then ask them to think about whether or not it is possible to resolve the issue in a way that is mutually agreeable. If not, they may need to agree to disagree.

Techniques

- Take a break. Offer to continue individual conversations with participants during the break or later in the day.
- If a participant is having difficulty with the workshop, meet with him/her individually to determine if other options (e.g. taking a time out, leaving) would be useful. Be sure to let the participant know that you trust his/her decision.
- Whenever possible, address people by name. It can assist the facilitator in establishing rapport with the participants.
- Count to ten (silently) before responding to a "hot button" issue.
- Elicit other opinions from the group.
- Try to understand the perspective of the participant. Try to identify what fears/concerns, interests are behind his/her statement.
- Relax. Take a deep breath. Examine the conflict: "What would create greater harmony?".
- Create opportunities for people to change their mind and save face.
- Avoid argumentative responses.
- If appropriate, reframe disagreements into problems to be solved by the group.

Some simple steps

Sometimes a conflict can appear suddenly, interrupting the workshop process. As facilitators, you may have a first reaction like: "What am I going to do now?".

One of the first and key steps in conflict resolution is to clarify perceptions and agree on the facts. The sooner this is done, the easier it is to prevent misunderstandings. The simplest way to clarify perceptions is to ask participants; "What did you observe?" or "What happened?" Be sure to avoid interpretations at this point, and just get the different pieces of the story.

After clarifying perceptions, focus on:

- Expressing emotions and identifying needs
- Understanding the meaning or lessons of the conflict for the group
- Making requests and decisions for the future

Planning ahead

It would be wise to assume that conflict will arise during any workshop in which differences are explored. It is also likely that any related event that is a "hot topic" in the community will also be a "hot topic" in the workshop. For example, if positive discrimination is being discussed in the media (new policies, election time, etc.), the issue will be raised during a workshop on diversity issues. Facilitators can plan ways to manage controversy by doing the following:

- Exploring their own reactions to the topic. If a facilitator feels strongly about an issue, he/she can ask a co-facilitator to respond to that issue.

- Knowing and understanding their own responses to conflict. Self-examination and skill development (through reading, role playing and course work) can assist facilitators in developing responses suitable to the facilitator role.

- Conducting a "what if" brainstorm. A "what if" plan is used to pre-plan responses to potential situations. Facilitators can ask themselves what could I do if this happens or if this question is asked? What should I do if I receive this response? By exploring issues ahead of time, facilitators may realise if they need more information, or clarification about an issue.

- Planning a workshop environment that fosters communication and cooperation. It is important to establish shared goals and purpose at the beginning of every workshop, to create a safe trusting atmosphere, to promote honest communication, to gain commitment to the workshop process and the greater good of the group (ground rules), to encourage democratic sharing of power and to free participants from outside pressures and concerns whenever possible.

- Modelling respect for different opinions, values, beliefs, and attitudes. Facilitators do not have to agree with every participant, but it is important to remain impartial and to exhibit behaviours that are respectful.

- Remembering their role. The role of the facilitator is to assist the members of the group to have a productive and positive dialogue about workshop issues. Facilitators should try not to take verbal attacks personally by remembering that participants may be lashing out because of their discomfort with the topic. On the other hand, facilitators should also recognise their own human frailties and should recognise when they have failed to maintain respect and safety in the workshop for everyone.

09 CO-FACILITATION CONSIDERATIONS

Establishing an effective facilitation team

There is no one right way to co-facilitate. Like any good partnership, co-facilitation takes time, patience, and practice to work effectively.

However, it does require a few basic conditions to be fulfilled:

I. Both people in the partnership must be committed to bring in introspective and honest attitude. Hurting a training partner sometimes happens inadvertently, and, when this does happen, both facilitators need to examine their role in the conflict or it will likely recur.

II. Facilitators should be prepared to discuss in advance of a workshop their likes and dislikes in a training partner. It is crucial to be very concrete and specific. If a co-facilitator says, for example, “I'm really flexible,” ask for clarification about what that means in specific terms. Be direct: ask questions like, “How do you feel about being interrupted if you're talking and I think you have omitted an important point?” or by saying, “I don't mind if you add something to what I'm saying, but I would prefer it if you would wait until I'm through.”

III. Co-facilitators should always discuss the agenda with one another prior to the workshop to establish roles and responsibilities, even if they have worked together many times. Communication prior to the workshop will clarify goals, and will help make the partnership successful.

IV. Co-facilitators should plan to spend time de-briefing after a workshop for the purpose of providing positive and negative feedback. Trial and error, combined with honest evaluation, helps to establish an effective training team.

V. Unresolved or ongoing conflicts with a co-facilitator should be shared with a responsible person in the organisation within which you are acting as peer trainers. He/she might be able to help mediate a resolution, and, in any event, should be kept in the information loop. This information can be shared confidentially over the phone or in writing through facilitators' evaluation forms.

Working in a diverse facilitation team

It is very good to work in a diverse facilitation team. There are many reasons to conduct workshops in such teams.

Perspective

People who are different from each other in terms of their background, sexual orientation, gender, religion, age, socio-economic class, etc. often see ideas and events from different perspectives. That is not to say that two people with similar backgrounds will see situations similarly, but rather to acknowledge that diversity in a training team increases the likelihood that the maximum number of people participating in a workshop will be reached. This dynamic can be seen in several ways. Sometimes, a participant might identify with a trainer who seems similar to him/herself, and that identification is an important component for that participant's "buy in" to the workshop. In addition, two diverse facilitators can provide surprises to participants, as when a facilitator who is not from a particular targeted group becomes the spokesperson on the training team against that particular "ism." Experienced trainers have shared that they can see participants' acceptance of a concept increase when participants feel a connection to the facilitator presenting the idea.

Power Dynamics

It is important to address the reality of power differentials in training partners. While diverse training teams are recommended, in general, not all diverse facilitation teams are equal, and it is crucial to acknowledge these differences. For example, an older female and a young man as co-facilitators do not represent the same dynamic as a training team composed of an older male and a young female. In the first case, each partner in the team belongs to a dominant group; in the second team, most of the power lies with the male member of the team. This power imbalance is not an impediment to being a good facilitation team, however, the issue must be addressed by the trainers themselves before the workshop, and they should be aware of the impact these dynamics have on the workshop participants.

Peer training is emotionally draining work. It is important to acknowledge the reality that for facilitators from traditionally marginalised groups there is an additional emotional toll because the power dynamics being discussed in the workshop follow them outside the workshop. No one can check his/her cultural experiences or backgrounds at the workshop door. Co-facilitators need to be sensitive to this dynamic in order to be maximally useful to each other.

Modelling

Training partners have a unique opportunity to model effective collaboration, cooperation, and communication across racial, ethnic, gender, etc. lines. However, if the facilitators have not explored their own power dynamics, they may inadvertently reinforce existing stereotypes, for example, if a male training partner does all the talking while the female partner always serves in a subordinate role.

Energy

It is hard to sustain a high level of creative energy throughout a long workshop. Co-facilitators can stand in for each other, allowing for thinking and "off air" times to recuperate during a workshop. This is especially true when a conflict arises and one facilitator becomes the target of a participant's anger. This does not mean, however, that one facilitator can "check out" while the other is on. Both facilitators must be mentally alert throughout the entire workshop, in order to be maximally useful to each other.

Methods of co-facilitation

A. Up and down: In this method, one facilitator stands up while the other joins the circle of participants. If the sitting trainer adds a comment, he/she remains seated until the entire segment of the workshop is completed, allowing it to be clearly noted that the other person is in charge during this portion of the workshop.

B. Side-by-side: Both facilitators stand or sit together in the circle; neither assumes dominance. This method of co-facilitation can only occur when two people know each other so well, that they "know" what the other person is trying to say. It is particularly effective in breaking down stereotypes about power relationships, especially in terms of gender and age.

C. In and out: In this training method one person from the training team actually absents him/herself from the room. Sometimes this is a necessity, particularly if the workshop participants consistently look to only one person on the team as the legitimate source of information and knowledge. This method also has the advantage of allowing one person from the training team to be "off stage" (out of view of participants) for relaxation, preparing for a later segment of the workshop, etc. However, this method should be used with caution since both facilitators need to be aware and alert to the workshop dynamics and participants' interactions.

D. Divide by two: In this method two facilitators divide a large group in half, and each facilitator becomes a leader for half the group. Groups should be far enough apart so that they won't disturb each other.

E. Front and back: In this model one facilitator leads the workshop in the front of the room while a second trainer stands in the back. This is particularly useful if there are participants engaged in side conversations; the presence of a second facilitator in the back of the room is usually enough to inhibit such distracting conversations. In addition, a second facilitator in the back of the room can see the workshop dynamics from the perspective of the participants. Sometimes this perspective reveals that the writing on the chart paper is too small or the audio on the VCR is not loud enough.

Ten tips to improve co-facilitation:

1. "My facilitation style is…"

Know that one's facilitation style has the power to captivate or alienate a group. One style will probably not reach everyone, but between the two facilitators, most of the group should be reached. Don't be surprised if some participants resist the message, but don't let a particular facilitation style get in the way of them hearing it.

2. "I can easily take the lead!"

Taking the lead is one thing but marginalising a co-facilitator is another. Facilitators should always make a place for a co-facilitator to share his/her perspective. A facilitator should never have to fight to be heard by the group. Even if one facilitator is taking the lead on an exercise, the other facilitator should not be completely left out of the experience.

3. "I've seen Marija facilitate before. I'm sure I'll work well with her!"

Don't take anything for granted. Make no assumptions about what to expect from a co-facilitator. Define any and every issue that might lead to misunderstanding.

4. "I've never met Sara. What is she like?"

Always make contact with a co-facilitator before the workshop. Take time to get to know each other and establish a rapport outside of the workshop. Difficulties are easier to address and overcome when facilitators are dealing with someone they know.

5. "What happens if I disagree with a co-facilitator?"

Establish discussion guidelines. Don't do battle in front of the group. Decide in advance how disagreements will be resolved.

6. "We don't have scripts for everything. What happens when the unexpected comes up?"

Group discussions often lead to the unexpected which may lead to conflict. Have a joint plan to deal with and defuse conflict that may erupt within the group.

7. "Am I out here alone?"

Do not abandon a co-facilitator. The group needs to trust the TEAM, not just one member of it.

8. "I need a co-facilitator to support me!"

That seems simple enough, but support means different things to different people. Each facilitator should define what type of support he/she needs in order to feel comfortable. (Should a partner stand in close proximity? Is eye contact very important? Facilitators should try to be specific about what support means to them.)

9. “A partner is being verbally attacked; how can I help?”

Whatever the case, facilitators should not distance themselves from one another; during a conflict, their partners may need them more than ever. Sometimes just a subtle nod of agreement after a partner responds to the problem participant will show solidarity. Remember, a training partner may not need or want to be rescued, but simply supported.

10. “It’s important that a partner ‘checks-in’ with me before moving forward!”

“Checking-in” may mean eye contact, or simply asking “Would you like to add anything?” Define what “checking-in” means for each member of the training team before the workshop.

Unit 4: HOW TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE

A peer education can be seen as a living system. No matter how well you will have planned everything, a lot of parameters (such as your participants and the different people involved) will require you to be flexible. Spending too much energy in sticking to your initial plan might reduce the quality of your training and prevent you to go with the flow creatively. Here, you will find more about what you can do to adapt your plans according to the project's development, your participants' needs and your objectives. This also addresses a major stage of any project: the evaluation.

01 MONITORING

When you work with other people, you are responsible not just for getting things done but also for taking care of your team, your audience, your deliverables and your progress. Monitoring allows you to routinely and systematically gather information on different aspects of your training and use that information to decide about your next steps. In other words, monitoring "takes place throughout the training and consists of checking whether the action plan still reflects reality and whether the planned activities, objectives and aims are still consistent with the needs, context, target group and available resources, with a view to modifying them where necessary."

02 EVALUATION

Evaluation is usually the final phase of the project, even though intermediate evaluations can be carried out. The final evaluation is the process of collecting information and set up criteria to:

- Assess what has been achieved
- Explain how it happened
- Better plan future projects.

Therefore, it should include:

- The results achieved
- The objectives reached

- The financial management
- The impact on the target group, organisation and community/environment
- The process.

Even though the evaluation comes at the end of a project, it is still to be planned in advance as everything else. It should be clear from the beginning how it will be done and who will do it.

Monitoring vs. evaluation

Most people think of monitoring and evaluation as the same thing, but in fact they are two distinct processes. While evaluation typically takes place at the end of a project, monitoring, on the other hand, is an ongoing process. There are occasions when it's not practical to both monitor and evaluate, for instance if your engagement with the participants is very brief. However, a better way to see monitoring is as your friend. Just like any good friend would point out things you may have not thought of, monitoring allows you to see a bigger picture and make proactive decisions about your work.

At this stage you may even be asking yourself: why should I spend time monitoring and evaluating? The reason is that monitoring and evaluation are incredibly useful when it comes to ensuring your progress and performance as they can alert you to any changes you need to make. It has to be said that gathering information may initially feel like an extra activity, but if managed well, it will save you much time in the long run and help you achieve better results. Also, neither monitoring nor evaluation have to be complex. Sometimes the only monitoring you wish to use is to ask participants about their energy levels so that you can decide when a good time to take a break is. And likewise, for your evaluation – you should only evaluate as much as you can reflect on and be mindful of people's time.

Understandably there will be times when the information you receive isn't exactly what you were hoping to hear. For instance, you may find out that your workshop was only enjoyed by 50% of your audience or that someone didn't find the project very appealing. But don't let this discourage you! Gathering feedback is there for a reason – to help you improve what's not working too well and to create a better match between your intentions and the real world.

Feedback as a monitoring and evaluation tool

Feedback is information about reactions to a person's performance of a task, used as a basis for improvement. Feedback is a gift that can help us learn and improve ourselves through constructive observations that we get from others.

Asking someone for their feedback means seeking their opinion. This implies that you have the power to do whatever you want with the information you receive. You will encounter occasions when someone gives you feedback you find irrelevant. Again, think about it as a gift: when someone gives you a gift you don't want, accept it and then decide what to do with it later.

If well managed, feedback can be a very helpful tool for identifying strengths and aspects that need additional development. That's why it is important to follow a certain number of guidelines when receiving as well as providing feedback to others. These are the ones we listed in the Unit 2.

Feedback can be collected during all stages of your training. You may start by asking your participants about their general feedback and then follow up with more detailed questions based on their answer. Another option is to ask a few specific questions first. For instance, if you are planning a new workshop, you may want to check with your participants what needs they have, what support already exists, what gaps they see, how your training appeals to them. If your training is already under way, you will be more interested in the current state, which is why using a humble 'how are you' can sometimes tell you lots about people's views on your training. It is also helpful to collect feedback at the end of the event to see what went and didn't go well. You can find more examples of feedback questions below:

Before

- What support is already available to you?
- What would you like to see happening?
- How do you feel about taking part in the training on gender equality and prevention of peer gender-based violence?
- Do you have any comments or questions?

During

- How are you finding the activity so far?
- How are you getting on with the task?
- Do you need any help?

After

- What did you enjoy / not enjoy about the activity?
- Is there anything that could have been done differently?
- Do you have any comments or questions?

Me/my team/my participants

Feedback, monitoring and evaluation can range from a single question to a lengthy survey. The easiest way to decide what process is best for you and your training is to ask yourself what you want to get out of it. Perhaps you want to know more about your team or the workshop you have delivered. Or maybe you wish to find out what gaps or other projects are already out there. Perhaps you want to learn about what matters to people so that your work aligns with the needs of your community. As you can see, there are many different reasons why.

Me:

- How do I feel about this topic / training / team?

- What worked well today?
- Is there anything I didn't enjoy?
- How was my contribution?
- What could I do differently to better fulfil my role?
- What resources do I need?
- How much time / energy am I able to commit to this training?

My team:

- What was our aim?
- How are we doing as a team?
- What went well?
- What didn't go well?
- What are the key lessons for us today?
- Based on what happened today, is there anything we need to do differently in the future?

My participants:

- How did you find today's event?
- What did you most like about today?
- Is there anything you didn't like?
- What are you taking away from the event?
- Would you recommend this workshop to your friends?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with us today?

03 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOL

Once you clarify the scope of your evaluation (i.e. what do you want to know more about), the next step is to choose the right tool. The following is a non-exhaustive list of some monitoring and evaluation tools:

Checklist

A list of things to be checked or done.

Check-in

An activity or a round of the feather opening a training session and aiming at gathering participants' feelings, thoughts and state. It can be either directed with some specific questions or free depending on the outcomes you want to get from it.

Doodle/Mentimeter poll

An online tool through which you can make a group decision. Create your poll, enter the different proposals and send the link / code to each member of your team who will select what seems more relevant to them.

Questionnaire

A list of questions for your participants to provide you with useful information on the upcoming training.

Barometer

An activity in which the participants are asked to formulate their mood in a creative way (e.g. like a horoscope, a weather forecast, using non - verbal language, with key words, by drawing etc.)

Process check

An activity or a round of the feather during a working day, a training session or a meeting and aiming at gathering participants' feelings, thoughts and states regarding where they are in the process.

Chat

An informal or non-guided conversation.

Journal

A personal written reflection either free or using guiding questions.

Debriefing

A discussion aiming at exchanging impressions about a specific experience, analysing its process and identifying its learning outcomes. Debriefing is a major step in non-formal/experiential learning.

Post-it notes

An interactive way to anonymously gather participants' expectations and fears before an activity or feedbacks afterwards.

Check-out

An activity or a round of the feather at the end of a working day, a training session or a meeting and aiming at gathering participants' feelings, thoughts and states regarding what they have experienced.

Evaluation form

A list of questions for your participants to provide you with their feedbacks and evaluation on the training.

Useful tips

To maximise the richness of the information you receive it's always best to talk to people face to face.

However, if you want to gather as much information as possible in a short amount of time, it might be more practical to communicate indirectly, such as through a questionnaire.

Indirect feedback / evaluation tools could also work better for measuring your performance (how did you find today) and people's preferences (would you like to stay informed about our work?)

UNIT 5: HOW TO SUSTAIN LEARNING

What distinguishes peer education from other teaching methods is that learning doesn't happen in isolation; it is a mutual process based on a peer factor. Peer factor is a magnet which brings people together, be it a similar characteristic such as age, background, gender or culture or as shared perspective, such as an interest, concern or even identity. Here, you will get a chance to reflect on peer education methodology in your own work.

01 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

When you deliver peer education activities, you are responsible for creating an environment where people can learn from each other. In addition to choosing a convenient venue in terms of space and accessibility, this includes the following aspects:

Competent facilitation

Choosing the right facilitator(s) is important. This means finding someone who can connect with the participants and is able to demonstrate the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to manage the group process. Good facilitation helps everyone feel valued and understood and encourages participants to be involved in their own ways. The role of the facilitator is to keep the group focused on the task, to remain as neutral as possible, to involve and encourage everyone in the group, to listen and contribute and to remind the group what has been discussed.

Safe and supportive environment

Creating a safe space for participants to connect and get to know each other is a first and essential step in peer education activities. A supportive environment encourages learners to take responsibility for the activities they are involved in. If you and/or your participants haven't met before, including one or several "getting to know each other" and/or "icebreaker" activities is the right way to go. You may also start with an energizer to pump up the good energy in the room.

Common ground

Despite sharing a peer factor, your participants are essentially a group of individuals with their unique personality traits, experiences and values. It is important to bear this in mind when working with others and be open to individual differences. Instead of relying on hidden expectations, allow your participants to create a set of guiding principles for their work and find common ground. When people own the rules, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership. Establishing ground rules may also come handy should the group run into conflict.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning is the process of "learning through experience", or "learning through reflection on doing". It is an approach that involves all aspects of the person, and focuses on the learning process for the individual. It is distinct from didactic learning in which the learner is more passive. It means using methods that give people the opportunity to live meaningful experiences on a specific issue, topic or situation. When participants experience these aspects themselves, they are more likely to empathize and relate.

Inner diversity and learning patterns

How do you like to learn? Do you need to experiment in order to understand? Do you plan everything in advance? How do you measure progress? What about creativity? Awareness of your own way of learning is called metacognitive ability. In peer education settings, it is extremely important to raise such awareness on metacognitive abilities and take into account the diverse learning patterns of the participants. People who learn how to recognise and embrace their own approach to learning – those who develop metacognitive abilities – can identify what makes learning meaningful for them resulting in a profound sense of empowerment and improved engagement with your activity. It is not always easy to propose such a frame for people to fully explore their 'inner diversity' (the way one learns, communicates and processes information), but it is recommended that you diversify as much as possible the formats of the activities, so that everyone truly connects at one point or another. So, try alternating classic presentations, small group discussions, creative exercises (drawing, collage...), role plays, visualisations, meditation, activities involving movement (warm-ups, dance, mime...), use of digital media, etc.

Flexibility

In peer education it is essential to leave space for participants' ideas and to be responsive to the group's needs. Sometimes, a planned activity doesn't work the way it was supposed to because the group is not in the "right mood" to engage with it, or because the format is not adapted to the learning patterns of the participants. This means you have to be flexible with your agenda. You can exchange or skip activities to keep people focused without losing sight of your goals. You can be transparent about it and have a direct conversation with the group, asking them what they would like to change in the process to be able to contribute better.

02 LEARNING OUTCOMES

Over the course of a peer education process, young people develop many competences that they can transfer and utilize in their personal and professional life. It has been demonstrated that peer education, and non-formal education in general, enables youth to develop a wide range of competences, such as a growth mindset, self-awareness, self-confidence, communication skills, teamwork skills, public speaking skills, facilitation skills, leadership skills, etc.

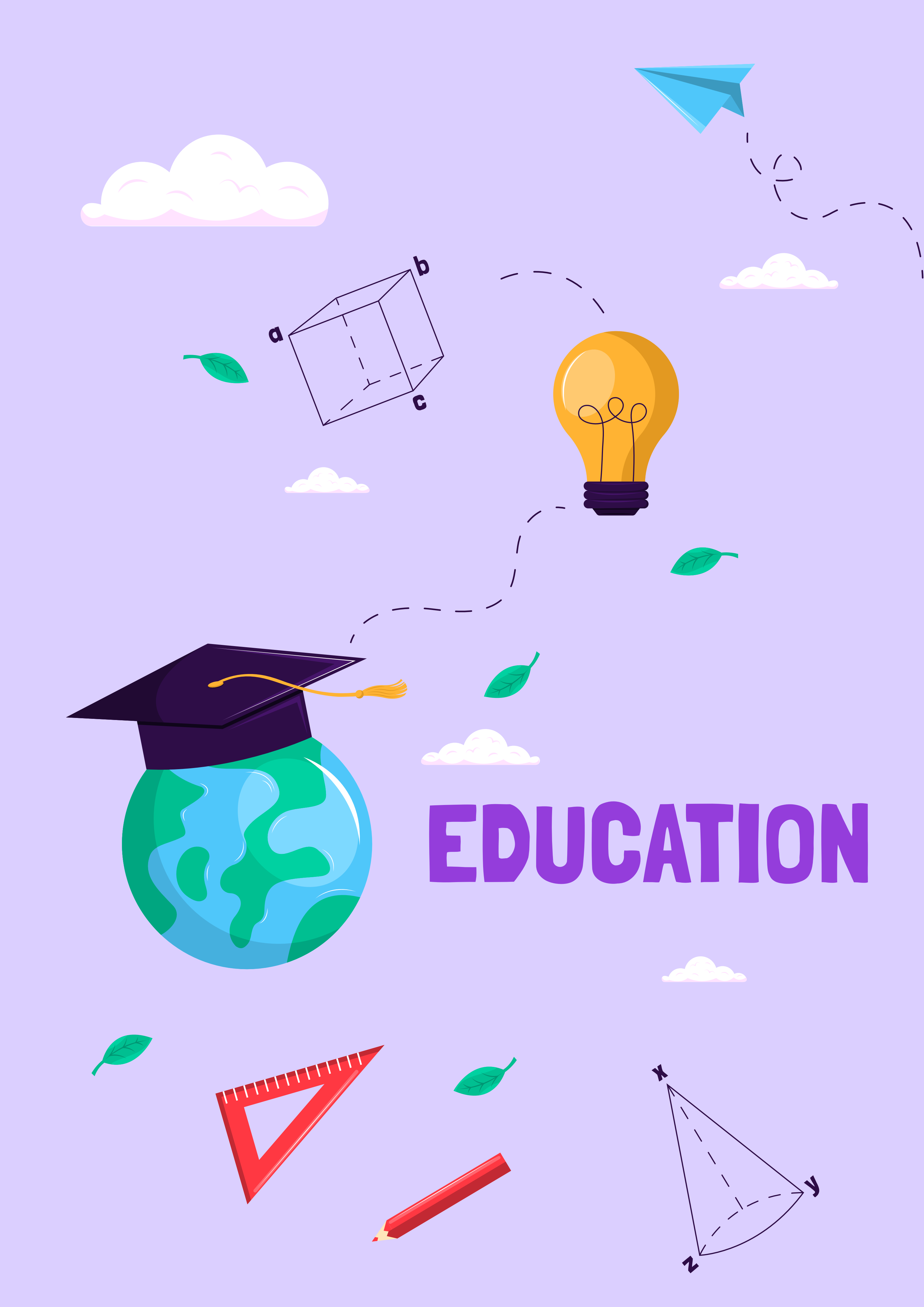
So, designing and implementing a qualitative peer education training requires making such learning outcomes explicit and sustaining it with young people involved. For each peer education training, you can develop a competence framework, i.e. a grid listing all the competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) you expect young people to develop. Such frameworks already exist at the European level, notably the ETS competence model for trainers in the youth field to work at international level, from which you can draw inspiration.

Defining such learning outcomes of your peer education project requires taking into consideration where young people start from (BEFORE), what they will actually learn (DURING), how they will transfer their learning (AFTER) and how they will continue learning (LATER). At each stage, it is important to think about ways to help young people become aware of and/or demonstrate their competences.

When	Before	During	After	Later
What	Previous experiences and competences of participants related to the topics addressed by the training	Development and assessment of competences throughout the project	Transfer of competences in personal and professional lives	Improvement of competences / lifelong learning
How	• Interviews • Focus groups • Application forms	• Self-assessment questionnaire • Peer review • Mentoring system	• Certification process • Recognition tools and systems: Youth Pass, Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio...	• Evidences of practice (reports, agenda samples...) • Additional trainings and curricula

Useful tips

- Peer education is not the same as working with young people. It's a method which values diversity and enables people to connect and learn from each other.
- Sustaining the learning of your target group requires providing good facilitation, creating an environment where their needs, aspirations and inner patterns are genuinely taken into account, as well as defining competence-based outcomes and lifelong learning strategies.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