



# Toolbox Guide

## Intercultural Learning Classroom Activities



OFAJ  
DFJW



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

This guide has been funded with support from the European Commission. The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



# Content of this guide

## [Introduction](#)

- The activities
- The effect of intercultural learning activities
- The Intercultural Learning for Pupils and Teachers Project

## [1: Intercultural competence](#)

- Intercultural competence defined
- The assumed concept of culture
- Intercultural situations
- Addressing aspects of intercultural learning

## [2: The Toolbox](#)

- Context, skills and objectives
  - The Toolbox
  - Objectives of the Toolbox
  - Pedagogical principles of the Toolbox
  - Competences
  - Classroom instructions
- Whole school approach
- Using the Toolbox
  - Selective activities
  - Searching for the intercultural learning activities
- Tools to be used within specific subjects
- Tools for a global and cross-curricular approach of intercultural education at school

## [3: The next steps](#)

- Training and consulting
- The next steps
- The community of ICL teachers

## [4: Examples of the Toolbox activities](#)

- Intercultural events
- The map is not the territory
- A Mosque in Sleepyville
- How diverse is your universe
- 2 visions for 1 reality

# Introduction

The consortium partners of the Intercultural Learning for Pupils and Teachers Project have published a number of intercultural learning activities on [www.intercultural-learning.eu](http://www.intercultural-learning.eu). The intercultural learning activities are collectively called the Toolbox. The Toolbox is aimed at supporting school heads, teachers and educators in including intercultural learning in any activity run at school.

This guide describes how and why the activities can be used in a classroom setting.

## **The activities**

The intercultural learning activities presented in the Toolbox are games, roleplays, debates, projects, energizers and simulations that are aimed at triggering reflection among the participants, i.e. the students, the teachers and the broader school community. The activities have been selected because they support the learning objective to develop the intercultural competence of participants.

The intercultural learning activities are suitable for people aged 14 and above. Some of them can be used with younger participants, whilst some might look too simple for an older age or too complex or far from their reality if the age gap is too high. But usually it only takes a couple of minor adjustments to make it suitable for a different audience.

## **The effect of the intercultural learning activities**

The Toolbox is aimed at supporting educators in including intercultural learning in any activity run in the school. All activities have been tested in several schools. As some of them are really successful with our audience, we decided to mark them as TOP activities.

It is always difficult to evaluate the progress after only one activity. Moreover, the published intercultural learning activities are not meant to be a collection of one-off activities but rather a tool to be used in the long run to effectively enhance the attitudes, knowledge and skills students need to interact successfully in an intercultural environment.

The learning comes from the experience triggered by the activity and the conscious reflection that happens afterwards. Some of the activities presented last a full year whereas others are very short. It is the combination of the different activities programmed in a more general framework that makes the learning and change of attitude noticeable.



### **The Intercultural Learning for Pupils and Teachers Project**

The Intercultural learning for Pupils and Teachers Project has been set up by The European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL), the European School Heads Association (ESHA), AFSVivre Sans Frontiere (France), AFS Programmes Interculturels (Belgium-Wallonia), InterCultur (Germany), Fondazione Intercultura (Italy), the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) Ecole internationale Le Verseau – ELCE (Belgium-Wallonia) and Lycée Gabriel Faure, Tournon-sur-Rhône (France) .

The aims of the project is to provide school heads, teachers and educators in a broader sense (eg. youth workers running activities in cooperation with schools) with new methods and tools to promote intercultural dialogue. The objective is to prepare pupils for living in diverse societies and working in a global labour market: this ranges from dealing with diversified groups of learners coming from different cultures to promoting and valuing learning mobility experiences.

The project focuses on the upper secondary students and on their teachers and educators, because at this age values and ideas on society are formed and the first learning mobility experiences take place. Our work addresses the lack of training on Intercultural Learning for teachers who therefore struggle to include this content in their lessons and in cross-curricular approaches and have no tools to assess it.

# Intercultural Competences

## Intercultural competence defined

Intercultural competence includes recognition and appreciation of one's own and others' multiplicities and how they come into play in different situations. They should not resume to prescriptive solutions for 'specific cultures' and instead focus on preparing for the unexpected, careful perception and dealing with uncertainty. They imply readiness to deal with difference in an ethno-relative manner (viewing values and behaviours of others from broader perspectives, and not seeing one's own as normal or superior). However they also need to avoid the mechanism of othering – seeing the world in categories us vs. them, where "them" are those who are different from me/us. Identifying and labeling "the other" tends to ascribe a fixed identity to them, where it may be difficult or impossible to contest the ascription (hence intercultural competence includes also issues of power and voice of interlocutors).

Intercultural competence is tightly linked to empathy, listening and observing, flexibility, conflict resolution skills and tolerance of ambiguity. They also go hand in hand with civic-mindedness, valuing democracy and human rights. Therefore intercultural competence is a set of different competences, interlinked to each other.

## The assumed concept of culture

The non-essentialist view of culture (Adrian Holliday, 2011) stresses the complexity and multiplicity of individual identities, going way beyond geographical or family backgrounds. People participate in different groups or cultures, which may be defined according to nationality, ethnicity, language, age, social class, gender, religion, political or sexual orientation, etc. Their sense of belonging is not only multiple, but it also shifts - increasing or diminishing in intensity - according to the context and purpose of their interactions, as well as their interlocutors. The cultural identity may be inconsistent, negotiated and co-constructed in different situations, and may depend on power and voice in a given relationship.

## Intercultural situations

Every interpersonal situation is potentially an intercultural situation. Often, when we encounter other people, we respond to them as individuals who have a range of attributes distinguishing them from other people. However, sometimes we respond to them instead in terms of their cultural affiliations, and when this occurs we group them together with other people who share these affiliations with them. There are several factors which prompt us to shift our frame of reference from the individual and interpersonal to the intercultural. These include, among others:

- the presence of salient cultural emblems or practices that invoke the cultural category in the mind of the perceiver,
- the frequent use of cultural categories to think about other people so that these categories are readily accessed when interacting with others,
- usefulness of a cultural category in helping to understand why another person is behaving in the way that they are.

Thus, intercultural situations arise when an individual perceives another person (or group of people) as being culturally different from themselves. Every human being is regularly exposed to intercultural situations, with or without direct interactions with others. (Competences for Democratic Culture, Council of Europe, p. 20)



### **Acquisition of intercultural competence**

Intercultural learning is a lifelong learning process, which brings best results through conscious, planned and facilitated experiential learning (Kolb, Experiential Learning Cycle). It is important to note that exposure and interaction with people of different cultural affiliations does not imply, let alone guarantee, intercultural learning (Y.Amir, Contact Hypothesis in Ethnic Relations). It is also worth noting that the non-formal education sector has so far the strongest experience in facilitating these educational processes.

Assessment of intercultural competence, just as with other attitude- and skill-based competences, is a complex task, which cannot be responded by standard quantitative testing procedures. Since intercultural learning is a life-long learning process, intercultural competence can never be fully achieved. Assessment should be qualitative and formative, voluntary, participatory, tailored and learner centered.

### **Addressing certain aspects of intercultural learning**

Intercultural learning implicitly refers to interaction between people. One of the cornerstones of the published intercultural learning activities in the Toolbox is the non-formal education methodology in which the learning is built by the participants upon concrete actions or activities and conscious reflection. Unlike the knowledge one might get from reading a book alone, the intercultural competence acquired through these activities is developed thanks to the interaction among participants.

The intercultural learning activities in the Toolbox are sorted so as to be selected according to the specific competence you want to address with your students. You can search the Toolbox by competence just using the search box or go directly here: <http://intercultural-learning.eu/toolbox-competences/> and you will see all the competences listed and categorised.

# The Toolbox

## Context and objectives

### The Toolbox

The Toolbox is meant to be used by educators within the secondary school system who would like to teach and develop intercultural competence at their schools. The intercultural learning activities are available to all interested educators at no costs. However, it is advised that interested educators will attend the teacher training 'Intercultural learning at school', which aims at developing intercultural competence of educators and empower them to use the Toolbox. The training is offered by the project partners.

The Toolbox is not meant to be an exhaustive tool: it promotes a method to include an intercultural dimension to the educating practices, and provides examples of activities to implement for this purpose.

### Objectives of the Toolbox

The objectives of the Toolbox are:

- Encourage school staff and educators to give an intercultural dimension to the educating practices
- Provide practical tools that will enable school staff and educators to give their lessons an intercultural dimension.
- Promote the existing educational resources related to intercultural learning.

### Pedagogical principles of the Toolbox

The pedagogical principles of the Toolbox are

- Promoting intercultural competence which is understood as the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant attitudes, skills and knowledge in order to interact effectively and appropriately in different intercultural situations. (D.K. Deardoff, The SAGE book of intercultural competence; CoE, Competences for democratic culture).

- Fostering the whole school approach, namely including intercultural learning in all aspects of the school life. This means that the activities of the Toolbox are meant to be conducted with the cooperation and involvement of all the stakeholders within the school and in the local community, e.g. teachers and students, parents, non-formal education organisations expert in intercultural learning and mobility. The activities are meant to be implemented as an overall pedagogical project and not as one-off activities, e.g. students in a class should develop their intercultural competence through a mix of learning mobility experiences, cross-curricular activities and subject specific activities.

- Implementing a culture of feedback between learners and teachers, therefore including evaluation at the end of each activity which is conducted. Suggestions on how to carry on visual evaluation with students is present in an annex to the Toolbox.

- Promoting active citizenship and volunteering, thus cooperating with out-of-school educational organisations promoting these principles

- Defining learning objectives and competences for each of the activities in order to match them with the secondary school curriculum of the country where they are implemented. This will allow teachers, headmasters and educators to better integrate the activities in their lessons and the school programme.





### Competences

In each activity description, the learning objectives as well as the competences are listed.

The competences we aim at developing through the activities are listed in the overall grid of competences which was based on the Competences for Democratic Culture edited by the Council of Europe. The competences are subdivided into 4 different groups: values, attitudes, skills and knowledge. The whole list of selected competences is published here: <http://intercultural-learning.eu/toolbox-competences/>

The set of competences that are needed to live more peacefully in a diverse society are addressed in the Toolbox Empathy, adaptability, skills of listening and observing, respect for other cultures are typically the kinds of competences we want to develop with the teachers and students through the use of the activities.

### Classroom instructions

Unlike algebra, chemistry or physical education, intercultural learning is not an academic subject in itself. Nonetheless, the competences developed are useful to any class and contribute to stimulate the learning.

The objectives met by many activities presented in the Toolbox are broader and supported by a more holistic approach than the regular subjects.

Some activities can be organised as icebreakers for example at the beginning of the school year. But some are also related to a subject in particular and are categorized in the subject-specific section. These subjects range from language arts to social studies, philosophy, citizenship, history, arts, geography.

The length and complexity of the activities differ: some are energizers or icebreakers and take no more than 5 minutes and some others are long-term projects which can take up to the whole school year.

## Whole school approach

The whole school approach is essential in using the Toolbox and we strongly believe that intercultural competence can essentially be developed if the stakeholders are all involved, if the will to change comes not only from one motivated teacher in the class but from all the personnel of the school, in cooperation with the local community and parents. Intercultural learning must be part of the school's identity and vision.

In order to support the schools to have a whole school approach to intercultural learning, the Toolbox offers a questionnaire to be used to assess your school's reality and needs regarding diversity. Thanks to this reflection on the current situation, educators can better plan which activities to implement to further improve the intercultural dimension of the school.

The idea is to go beyond one-off activities which would be nice to participate in but would not really develop a culture of intercultural understanding among the students and the school community. Instead, we strongly recommend to do at least 3 activities, preferably in different contexts (e.g. one during language class, another one during a special day dedicated to citizenship, and organise another one with math and geography teachers together). This is also why the teacher training provided by the project is particularly useful as it enables teachers to think of the whole picture when using the activities and really engage in a whole school approach.

More information about the whole school approach can be found here: <http://intercultural-learning.eu/toolbox-whole-school-approach>

## Using the Toolbox

### Selection of an activity

There are two different ways of selecting an activity depending on the approach: either one focuses on a competence, i.e. empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, multiperspectivity,... or one searches the Toolbox according to the setting and context one wants to use it in: are you preparing your students for mobility ? are you considering an activity to be used during History classes ? do you want to launch a school project ?

In total, there are 46 activities and tools listed in the Toolbox. Additionally, you can find evaluation samples and questionnaires to be used to assess your school's reality and needs regarding diversity.

Each section is composed of activity handouts that can be used independently. The objectives and competences it aims at developing are listed in the handout.

### Searching for the intercultural learning activities

In an effort to make the navigation in the Toolbox as easy as possible, we divided the Toolbox into 4 main sections.

## **Tools for a global and cross-curricular approach of intercultural education at school**

To create a culture of democracy and intercultural dialogue, the role of schools is essential in making the intercultural education a priority. This section aims at providing project ideas that can help students, teachers and the whole school community develop their intercultural competence. While working together on a common project, students and educators broaden their horizons and open up to the surrounding world. These projects often include the collaboration with local associations and non-formal education providers.

## **Tools to be used across the curriculum**

The second section features activities that are to be organised across the curriculum: teachers from different subjects can work together and/or with educators or the other school staff to enhance the group inclusiveness and bring values of respect, curiosity and empathy inside the classroom. The activities focus on living together peacefully with others and making the group more cohesive and respectful of the diversity represented.



### **Tools to be used within specific subjects**

In the 3rd section, educators will find activities that can enhance the students' intercultural competence as well as competences required for specific subjects such as foreign and native languages, history, geography, social sciences, arts and so on. As the handouts directly refer to parts of specific curricula, the teachers can integrate these activities as part of the lesson.

### **Tools to encourage and promote international mobility and intercultural encounters**

What can be done to encourage learning from class exchanges or individual mobility experiences? The 4th section prepares for mobility experience, whether individually or collectively. It gives teachers and schools the right tools to prepare the participants for class exchanges, for example but also helps to make sure the value of such an experience is recognized and beneficial not only to the participant but to their whole community.

# The Next Steps

## Training and consulting

The Toolbox is aimed at supporting educators in including intercultural learning in any activity run in the school. But whatever the activity, what is most important is the intercultural competence of teachers. To facilitate intercultural learning activities, we therefore strongly advise teachers to attend a training offered by the project partners. Plus, as the activities are part of a whole school approach, a training is useful to understand the general institutional framework in which they can be organised, reflect on the reasons why we would do these activities in class, how to assess and evaluate the competences developed, and also have the possibility to test them and reflect on which ones are most appropriate for the specific context of the classroom. As non-formal methods are used, it is always better to live the activities as participants before using them with the audience.

The list of all the available trainings can be found here: <http://intercultural-learning.eu/teacher> . Don't forget to subscribe to the newsletter if you want to be informed on the organisation of new trainings and new dates in your country or at international level.

## The next steps

The Toolbox is entirely free of use and some in-person trainings, depending on where they are organised, are also offered for free or require a small fee for logistics purpose. We strongly encourage teachers to use the Toolbox only when they are familiar with non formal education methods and have had some intercultural experiences before. The trainings are therefore necessary to use the Toolbox in an appropriate and effective way.

Please note that the training session outlines present online soon are only for teacher trainers.

Please contact the AFS organisation in your country or/and FYGO in Germany and France to have further information and discuss together how to cooperate. They can offer teacher trainings and provide guidance and support to implement the activities in the school.

## The community of Intercultural Learning (ICL) teachers

The consortium members encourage teachers who tested the activities with their students to leave their feedback directly on the website. This is also a nice way to exchange best practices as variations can also be offered or small changes advised. You will find any feedback on the bottom of each activity but also on the bottom of each section. Educators are encouraged to join the [Twinspace](#) of the project on Twinning to share lesson plans and allow students to interact and comment on the activities they have commonly experienced. Finally, you can always get in touch with the project team: they will do their best to facilitate the contacts and communication channels between practitioners. Please look at [our website](#) for the contact data

# Examples of Toolbox activities

The following activities are examples of intercultural learning activities that are published in the Toolbox of the Intercultural learning for Pupils and Teachers Project. The Toolbox and all activities are published at [www.intercultural-learning.eu](http://www.intercultural-learning.eu)

## Intercultural events

<http://intercultural-learning.eu/Portfolio-Item/intercultural-events-at-school/>

Description: Teachers run intercultural activities in their classroom during the school year and in set moments of the year, the outcomes of these activities are presented at the intercultural event(s) involving the whole school, parents and community. The activities to be organised by teachers during the year should celebrate diversity and challenge discrimination.

These kinds of activities in the classroom preferably also involve parents who are invited to share their stories, language, fashion, food, music, crafts and other cultural practices. Parents can tell their life story, and their story of migration which can be discussed alongside contemporary stories of migration from other perspectives. It is important to avoid suggestions that all people within a group had similar experiences or similar reasons for migrating to the country.

## The map is not the territory

<http://intercultural-learning.eu/Portfolio-Item/the-map-is-not-the-territory/>

Description: In a Sino-centric world map the United States are located in the east of China; In a US-centric world map Europe and Asia are separated on either side; In an Australian-centric world map South is at the top. The goal of the activity should be a clear awareness that the true world map of the world does not exist, there is our ability to see the world from different points of view and from there we can try to get closer and closer to the truth, which is nothing more than the sum of many different points of view.

## A Mosque in Sleepyville

<http://intercultural-learning.eu/Portfolio-Item/a-mosque-in-sleepyville/>

Description: all participants are citizens of Sleepyville and all are troubled by the problem of whether a new mosque (or temple, church etc.? ) should be built on a piece of derelict council land. Each participant selects a different role and is asked to play a role in a debate during the Council Meeting. Participants meet other students beforehand, prepare their point, give actual short speeches to convince their audience.



## How diverse is your universe

<http://intercultural-learning.eu/Portfolio-Item/how-diverse-is-your-universe/>

Description: Do you interact with people of different ethnicities/cultures/ backgrounds? Do you consider yourself an effective intercultural communicator? If so, why? If not, why not? Put beads (by colour) in plastic cups in the centre of the circle. Explain the colour chart (i.e. purple beads for Hispanic). Give everyone an empty cup. Tell participants that after each question is read they need to pick up a bead for the type person they come in contact with.

After the questions have been asked, reflect on what people's universe looks like. Is it a good thing? Is it dominated by one group of people? If yes, why? How can you change that? Why is it important to work with and live with a variety of people that are different from you?

## 2 visions for 1 reality

<http://intercultural-learning.eu/Portfolio-Item/2-visions-for-1-reality/>

Description: The educator explains the story of Xavier and Tabarlis: the first one lives on Planet Earth and went to visit another planet called Glorbuld, where he was hosted by Tabarlis. When Xavier is back home, he writes a letter to his friend Vincent to share his experience. On the other hand, Tabarlis writes a letter to his friend Verlias and explains what happened with the group of students from Planet Earth that they welcomed in Glorbuld.



For more information please contact [efil@afs.org](mailto:efil@afs.org)  
[www.intercultural-learning.eu](http://www.intercultural-learning.eu)