



Culture and development

Culture and development can be understood in two different ways.

1. Cultural activities

Cultural activities are often successfully realised in youth projects to reach complex project objectives in a playful and relaxed way. In a workshop or a discussion it is sometimes difficult, if not virtually impossible, to directly address certain issues; especially in the initial stages the youth might close up and refuse to work on the topic in question. Inter-ethnic communication is one example of such a delicate issue, others can be promotion of intercultural skills, racism, gender issues, dealing with the past, conflict management, HIV/Aids.

- In such situations an indirect approach will help addressing delicate issues in a more playful manner and from a different perspective. Some examples:
- Drama: Through role play, the youth can take on a different role and thus experience and learn to understand different realities and positions (opposite sex, different social position, etc.).
- Music and dance: These activities have a unifying effect and stimulate a sense of community. Example: International Youth Summer Camp, Summercamp Sombor.
- Film: Making films helps looking at events from a more distant perspective, to document and process them. Example: Exchange project Zurich-Sarajevo Youth Club Borough 4 and Maxim Theatre.
- Painting, handicraft: These methods are most appropriate when working with children.

↳ Link:

- imagine international, Terre des Hommes Switzerland (*in German or French*)
http://www.terredeshommes.ch/projekte_schweiz/jugend_entwicklung/imagine_international/
- East Project, projects that have been supported since 2008
<http://www.y4d.ch/ost/projekte-2011/>



2. Links between culture and Development Cooperation

Culture matters is a ground rule in development cooperation - and thus also in youth projects in developing countries; it is based on the principle that integrating the culture of a country, region or ethnic group can make the difference between success or failure of a project.

Culture - a society's values, traditions, customs, etc.- is an added value that should be considered in the different stages of a project: planning, realisation and evaluation. In order to incorporate cultural realities into a project, it should be developed and realised with the involvement of the local youth organisation, since the local youth are those who know their culture best. They know the local taboos that should not be violated; they know which methods can be implemented successfully for cultural reasons. A project approach that successfully works in Tanzania can lead to complete failure in Bangladesh. The same is true for villages A and B in Bolivia.

Incorporating cultural values and tradition as well as the participation of the local youth during the complete project cycle will also considerably root the project in the local community, thus guaranteeing the sustainability of a project.

Realising projects in other countries always means addressing one's own culture and values. It is important to know one's own culture well, while at the same time being open for other cultures and values. The intercultural dialogue allows you to profoundly know other cultures. There is one ground rule: do not judge. Foreign cultures and values are neither better nor worse than ours, they are simply and truthfully different.

When planning a project you can ask yourselves following questions:

- Does our project respect the local values and customs? Did we check together with our local partner organisations?
 - How will our project influence the local youth culture?
 - Can the local customs be reconciled with our own values?
 - Have we gathered enough information about the local culture?
-> Partner organisations, literature, films, etc.
 - Are we clear that some of the difficulties that may arise in cooperating with our partner organisation could be based on cultural differences?
-> Do not judge!
 - Can we include minorities in our project and enable an intercultural exchange?
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Field: **Specific topics**

Subject: **05 Culture and development**



 Links:

- DEZA: Culture is not one of life's luxuries. It is life itself. Principles of SDC Cultural Policy
http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_185235.pdf
- Glossary Culture and Development:
<http://www.gtz.de/en/themen/wirtschaft-beschaeftigung/privatwirtschaft/3572.htm>