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# Youth Workers Beginner Guide on Cultural Literacy

Intellectual Output 1



## **Cultural Literacy for Youths**

Youths workers contribution to  
young people's Cultural Literacy  
in today's inclusive Europe

Project number 2019-3-UK01-KA205-077692

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CULTURAL LITERACY FOR YOUTHS

Youths workers contribution to young people's Cultural Literacy in today's inclusive  
Europe

Intellectual Output 1

# Youth Workers Beginner Guide on Cultural Literacy



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Website: <https://cultlit4youth.eu>

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# The CultLit4Youth project in a few words

**CultLit4Youth** project is a 24 Months Erasmus+ project focused on the role of Youth Workers/Trainers/Mentors in the promotion of Cultural Literacy of young people in Europe, including migrants and refugees. The project aims at upgrading Youth Workers' skills and giving them emphasis on cultural literacy issues to facilitate young people social inclusion in today's multicultural Europe.

**Becoming culturally literate, young people will acquire the knowledge and skills to understand and participate in a given culture and be smoothly integrated in the society of EU, personally and professionally.** Recent researches have shown the need and value of this project. Cultural literacy has the power to transform youths', especially vulnerable youths' lives through sharing knowledge, promoting **inclusion, dialogue, empathy, tolerance, and respect**; and contributing to social cohesion. It, also, prepares them to adapt to the host society and meet the needs of a diverse population without having to forego their own cultural identity. This project is an international synergy between 5 European organisations with a transnational character, having as target groups Youth Workers, Youth Centres and educational organisations, and young people, focusing on minority groups, as final beneficiaries. The project tends to develop a Methodology for Youth Workers on Cultural Literacy composed by:

- IO1: A Youth workers Beginner guide on Cultural Literacy (this document);
- IO2: A Youth workers training Curriculum on Cultural Literacy;
- IO3: A Pedagogical handbook on Cultural Literacy;
- IO4: An E-learning Platform to train Youth workers.





# The Beginner Guide in a few words

## Presentation

Prior to the development of this Beginner Guide all partners conducted a tracing research/analysis and approached relevant organisations. This first step was necessary to sufficiently explore the field of Cultural Literacy and its contribution to intercultural dialogue, and to understand how acceptance of diversity could increase of social inclusion of all young people.

Based on the tracing research, this Guide is destined,

- to create a clear image of the status quo in the partner countries,
- to be aware of each other's' strength and needs,
- to define what instruments can be identified as best innovative practices and how can these instruments be introduced in the different partner countries,
- to prepare and create content for Curriculum Development (IO2),
- to learn the situation locally at partner's country expectations/needs.

This Beginners Guide is written in a simple manner, in order to allow the readers (youth workers, trainers, mentors, relevant stakeholders) for a good understanding of the value of being culturally literate in a multicultural Europe. It is delivered in the languages of all partners for use in the contexts of each participating country, as well as in English for use by everyone across Europe and internationally. It should be noted that while IO1 constitutes an integral part of the comprehensive CultLit4Youth project, it will be designed and presented appropriately so as to be also a valuable educational resource on its own, ready to use not only by the youth workers and all interested parties, but also independently in other relevant contexts.

## What is in the Beginner Guide?

This short guide is composed by 4 parts to allow the reader a better understanding of Cultural Literacy and its benefits for youths.





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- **A conceptual foundation for Cultural Literacy in an intercultural dialogue**
- **Cultural Literacy for Youths: stakes and opportunities**
- **Presentation of the CultLit4Youth Methodology for Youth Workers**
- **Best practices and initiatives in Europe**

We hope this beginner guide will help you to enhance your knowledge of Cultural Literacy and that it will make you want to keep following the CultLit4Youth project and outcomes.

The tracing research report on which this Guide is based can be accessed on demand.

If you want to go further or contact us:

Website: <https://cultlit4youth.eu>





# A conceptual foundation for Cultural Literacy in an intercultural dialogue

## The Origin of Cultural Literacy

According to the Oxford online dictionary, cultural literacy refers to “**the ability to analyse and understand a particular society or culture; familiarity with the customs and characteristics of a culture**” (Lexico Oxford). However, the concept acquired a certain celebrity with the publication of the influential *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Hirsch, Kett, & Treffil, 1987) starting a 30-year stimulating debate in education, cultural and literacy studies. It resulted numerous reinterpretations and understandings of the notion with the emergence of different models not necessarily opposed.

Some models that emerged included the following approaches and they will be developed in the IO2 Youth Workers Curriculum on Cultural Literacy:

- **The traditional and monologic approach of Cultural Literacy** refers to the ability to fluently participate in a given culture by understanding its spoken and unspoken language, signs, symbols, and environment (Hirsch, Kett, & Treffil, 1987).
- **Cultural Literacy for cultural mindfulness** promotes an intercultural vision of cultural literacy, social inclusion, and considers the challenges of economic development and sustainability in our globalised world (Shliakhovchuk E. , 2019)
- **The Cultural Literacy as a Dialogic practice** “includes the attitudes and skills that people need to get along with each other in everyday living”, highlighting the role of empathy, the understanding of different cultural perspectives, values to facilitate collaboration and value diversity (DIALLS Project, 2019).
- **Cultural and digital Literacy** developing cultural knowledge, intercultural communication skills and intercultural competences combined with digital literacy to lead to transformative learning in our over-connected world (Shin, n.d).







## Cultural Literacy through an intercultural approach

Despite the rich debate there is a consensus in the fact that in our culturally diverse and globalised world, Cultural Literacy must be seen as a way to value diversity, interculturality and decrease prejudices (Shliakhovchuk E. , 2019), allowing “the understanding of cultural references, enabling cultural participation in society” (CHIEF Project).

The shared definition of “cultural literacy” that emerged from the tracing research can be summarised by the DIALLS project Team in the interview lead by the Cyprian partner. For them, **Cultural Literacy “includes the attitudes and skills that people need to get along with each other in everyday living. Empathy is key to being culturally literate, with a view to understanding and including differing perspectives and values that are reflected in people’s lives.”** (Interview Tracing research Cyprus).

In this way, Cultural Literacy through an intercultural approach can contribute to inclusivity, intercultural dialogue, and acceptance of diversity by addressing the knowledge gap and avoiding a monocultural vision of the society. Cultural Literacy can lead to a deeper understanding and exchange of diverse perspectives allowing communication to take place far more easily.

## Cultural Literacy for Youths: stakes and opportunities

This section summarises data collected during interviews led with youth workers in the framework of the tracing analysis. Interviewed people were relevant stakeholders and professionals from each partner country. The aim was to understand Youth workers’ perceptions and feelings, as well as, assessing challenges and opportunities on Cultural Literacy related topics from their perspective.





## The value of being culturally literate in our multicultural Europe

As Youth education takes place in numerous settings (schools, extra-curricular activities), the aim of this survey was to collect as many approaches as possible by interviewing a diversified range of stakeholders from different backgrounds, even though they were not especially familiar with the concept of cultural literacy. The aim was also to reach their understanding of cultural literacy related topics such as cultural and cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of cultures and so on. As mentioned before, **Cultural Literacy “includes the attitudes and skills that people need to get along with each other in everyday living. Empathy is key to being culturally literate, with a view to understanding and including differing perspectives and values that are reflected in people’s lives. Our Cultural Analysis Framework diagram reflects the key concepts for DIALLS regarding cultural literacy and making sense of Europe.”** (Interview Tracing research Cyprus).

They promote the use of **lessons based on cultural themes such as inclusion, tolerance and empathy, celebration of diversity, equality, and democracy, as well as human rights.** “Using wordless books and short films produced in Europe that inspire discussions relevant to these themes, our students engage in classroom, intracultural and intercultural dialogue which contribute to inclusivity and acceptance of diversity” (Interview Tracing research Cyprus).

## Challenges met by professionals working on Cultural Literacy

Barriers met by Youth Workers when working in intercultural context will be addressed during the development of the project outcomes. The identified barriers to be tackled have been summarised below:

- Needs of training for **promoting classroom dialogue involving sensitive issues** such as gender stereotypes, racism,





- Lack of training for teachers willing to gain **strategies on how to engage** immigrant students with limited knowledge of the hosting country language in classroom dialogues, **facing the language barrier**,
- **Finding support** to address these topics in terms of funding support and facing people who do not think it is important to develop this knowledge,
- **Being aware of the diversity of students' culture** and background,
- Finding **relevant teaching materials** and lack of resources.

## How to teach Cultural Literacy?

Cultural Literacy can be taught through numerous topics and subjects that may include **language** courses, **arts**, **history**, **health** education, **environmental** education, **media** and **social media** education, **digital literacy** and so on.

Key competences that can be promoted through various topics Cultural literacy related topics include the following:

- **Multiculturalism** and the importance of diversity, cross cultural awareness, to value diverse cultural expressions, and identities,
- The Cultural dimension of **Empathy, Tolerance, and Inclusion** to be able to **value diversity**,
- **Critical thinking skills** to foster **democracy**,
- Skills of **dialogue and argumentation** as a part of a dialogic approach of education to improve **communication**,
- **Cooperation** and **active participation** to improve social and **civic competences**,
- **Valuing cultural heritages** through developing a sense of belongingness among all learners.

## What resources and references for Cultural Literacy?

The use of **Contemporary cultural references** provides immediate insights and understanding into the idiosyncrasies of a culture. Art exhibitions, music, writers, and poets are also recognised as stimulating resources to address culture issues and dialogue. It was for instance the topic of the discussion with an English as a second





language teacher (ESOL) working in a centre to prevent homelessness of young refugees helping young people coming to the UK by giving them the first inputs before going to College. In this way, she tries to **consider culture when teaching language** highlighting that even if she was not always thinking conscientiously about cultural awareness in her courses, she was trying to use subjects that refers to a socio-cultural context they are interested in, and to highlight the social and cultural diversity. For instance, she was using a video about the life of the footballer Gabriel Jesus, as well as music videos who contains cultural and language aspects that are relevant. Professionals also generally highlighted how, historical events through storytelling, art drawings from galleries, news articles, visiting museums, local monuments.



# Presentation of the CultLit4Youth Methodology for Youth Workers

In this part, we make a presentation of the methodology on which the CultLit4Youth is founded. This methodology is the base of the project outcomes; the Youth Workers Curriculum on Cultural Literacy (IO2), the Youth Workers Pedagogical handbook (IO3) and the E-learning Platform (IO4). By methodology, we mean the “system of ways of doing, teaching, or studying something” (Cambridge Dictionary).

It is composed by:

- the learning units and competences to be developed among learners,
- the description of the target group that will be able to use the outcomes,
- the teaching methods that will be detailed in the following project steps.

## Learning units

To promote Cultural Literacy through an intercultural approach, learning objectives of the next projects outcomes will develop the following competences. Each **learning unit** is composed by a **theoretical part** and practical activities. They will be developed so that each unit will be delivered both in a face to face or online dynamic seminar (eg. Zoom, Google meets, Facebook classroom) modality, where a teacher/tutor will be moderating the session, but also online- without a tutor. The learning units will be developed and defined in the IO2 Youth Workers Curriculum.

List of learning units:

- **Inclusion, tolerance, and empathy,**
- **Social responsibility** (social and civic competence, citizenship,
- **Cooperation,**
- **Active participation,**
- **Sustainable development,** and climate change)
- **Celebration of diversity,**
- **Equality and democracy,**
- **Human rights,**
- **Dialogue and argumentation skills,**





These modules are based on the competences highlighted in the model of Cultural Literacy implemented in the framework of the DIALLS project (2018).

## Target Groups

Mostly concerned target groups the Curriculum should address are the following:

- **Direct target groups:** teachers (and local language as a second language), educators, youth workers working with children or young people who are immigrants/come from a different background/ do not speak the local language;
- **Indirect target groups:** Young people including young migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, or with fewer opportunities (especially those with limited local language knowledge).

## Methods and techniques to be included.

The following teaching methods will be the base of learning activities to allow stakeholders to undertake Cultural Literacy topics on a creative way. They will be defined in the IO2 Youth Worker Curriculum:

- **Journal writing**
- **Cooperative Learning**
- **Educational Software**
- **Creative Arts** (includes drama, art, dance& movement, music)
- **Case Studies**
- **Stories**
- **Role Playing and scenarios**
- **Experiential Learning**
- **Workshops** (Problem Solving activities & exercises etc.)
- **Group discussions in a circle**
- **Evidence-based coaching** (use of coaching to support the transfer of training).
- **Practical research**
- **Picture books and short films used as discussion stimulus**
- **Differentiation of instruction.**





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## Best practices and initiatives

If many organisations work on cultural literacy related topics, they do not always use the concept, and the understanding of the concept widely moved since it was theorised by Hirsch. However, if organisations work in fields related to cultural literacy, they are not always recognizable under these terms and it can be difficult to identify them formally. This is a non-exhaustive presentation of relevant organisations and initiatives related to cultural literacy topics. It aims at giving an overview of relevant stakeholders in partner countries and at the EU level.

If you want to go further, the outcomes of the presented initiatives are open to access and complementary to the CultLit4Youth project. They are available through the project websites linked below.

### Initiatives at the EU level

The initiatives presented below are European projects that offer different visions and discourses on Cultural Literacy and related topics. They also offer a significant expertise, reflecting the wide diversity of professionals working on the topic across Europe. If you want to go further, the initiatives' outcomes are reachable via the websites linked below.

#### The DIALLS Project

 <https://dialls2020.eu/>

**Dialogue & Argumentation for Cultural Literacy Learning in Schools (DIALLS)** – is a Research project “working with schools to understand and develop how children and young people make sense of Europe and its differing cultures”. The project is coordinated by the University of Cambridge (UK) and includes partner universities or Research Institutions from numerous countries, France, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Lithuania, Finland, Cyprus, and Israel. It involves researches, teachers, and educators to develop a Cultural Literacy Learning programme (CLLP) to improve young people communication by giving them dialogue and argumentation skills (DIALLS , 2018).







The DIALLS project falls into the “**Cultural Literacy of young generations in Europe**” **Research Call**, in the framework of the EU programme Horizon 2020.

## The CHIEF Project

🔗 <http://chiefproject.eu/>

**CHIEF** (Cultural Heritage and Identities of Europe’s Future) aims to “build an effective dialogue between young people, education practitioners, civil society activists, community leaders and policymakers in order to facilitate a future of Europe based on more inclusive notions of cultural heritage and cultural identity”. It is coordinated by the Aston University with university partners from Slovakia, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Spain, India, Latvia, Turkey, Germany and the UK project (CHIEF Project, n.d.). The CHIEF project developed a wide range of studies regarding the diverse understandings of the concept of culture through several key concepts (Cultural Reference, Cultural Heritage, etc.). In this framework, they studied Cultural Literacy as a key concept referring to the “competence and understanding of cultural references, enabling active cultural participation in society” (CHIEF Project). These research projects outcomes included diverse publications such as:

- National and European policy reviews report and National Curriculum review reports,
- Resources for stakeholders to increase their cooperation,
- Resources for educators to be used with young people,
- Journal Articles.

The CHIEF project falls into the “**Cultural Literacy of young generations in Europe**” **Research Call**, in the framework of the EU programme Horizon 2020.

## The IntegrateME Project

🔗 <http://integrate-me.eu/>

The **IntegrateME** project is the older brother of CultLit4Youth. It is focused on the role of VET Trainers/Teachers/Mentors in the promotion of cultural literacy of immigrants and refugees towards their smooth integration in the EU diverse society. Being culturally literate, could improve their everyday personal and professional reality in





their “new” socio-cultural environment, in which they will collectively work for the economic growth and social welfare of Europe. The purpose of **IntegrateME** project is to contribute to the development of a VET Open Educational Resource on Cultural Literacy aiming at training VET Trainers/Teachers/Mentors, who in chain will train immigrants and refugees towards their smooth integration in the diverse society of EU according to the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development focus on “leaving no one behind”.

**IntegrateME** is a Strategic Partnership project co-funded by Erasmus+ the EU Programme of the European Commission.

## Other Cultural Literacy related projects

- **Youths’ RE.S.P.E.C.T. of Solidarity, Peace, Equality, Citizenship and Tolerance through creativity:** an Erasmus+ project aiming at developing a culture of diversity in order to facilitate the social inclusion of young people belonging to cultural minorities.

🔗 <https://youths-respect.eu/>

- **Move Beyond:** an Erasmus+ project looking forward to facing the discrimination and social inclusion issues particularly in schools, with the help of teachers, who are one of the main sources of information children have.

🔗 <http://youthvolunteers.eu/>

## A European Repertoire for cultural literacy and inclusion

This section aims at providing useful info and links to relevant organisations and Institutions in partner’s countries. For further details, please visit their webpages or our Tracing Research report on Cultural Literacy in the EU. This list is of course non exhaustive.

### Cyprus

- **Adult Education Centres**, Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth:  
<http://www.moec.gov.cy/epimorfotika/en/index.html>





- **The Be Aware Campaign:** <https://cyprusaware.eu/en/>
- **University of Nicosia**, through the **DIALLS** project (Dialogue and Argumentation for cultural Literacy Learning in Schools): <https://www.unic.ac.cy/>
- **The Key** – Innovation in Culture Education and Youth (NGO): <https://www.key-ngo.com/>

## United Kingdom

- **Aston University** through the CHIEF project (Cultural Heritage and Identities of Europe's Future): <https://www.aston.ac.uk/>
- **University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education** through the DIALLS project: <https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/>
- **Core Knowledge UK:** <http://www.coreknowledge.org.uk/activities.php>

## Austria

- **Central European Training Institution (CETI)**
- **KulturKontakt Austria:** [www.kulturkontakt.or.at](http://www.kulturkontakt.or.at)
- **Austrian Association of Inclusive Society:** <http://inclusivesociety.at/>

## Romania

- **Integrated assistance and services for asylum seekers in Romania:** <http://www.aidrom.ro/proiecte/asistentia-solicitanti-de-azil/>
- **Integration NOW II - Complex and unitary approaches for migrants:** <http://www.aidrom.ro/proiecte-in-derulare/>
- **SIM\_CIS - Integrated Services for Migrants - intercultural and solidarity communities:** <http://ladoxuj.ro/sim-cis-servicii-integrate-pentru-migranti-comunitati-interculturale-si-solidare/>

## Greece

- **UNHCR/ Greece** (The UN Refugee Agency): <https://www.unhcr.org/gr/>
- **Za'atar NGO:** <https://zaatarngo.org/>





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