Title	Cultural Diversity		
Learning unit number	6	Duration	1 hour
General objective	Recognising the benefits of cultural diversity		
Specific objectives	1. Learners will be able to explain what cultural diversity is. 2. Learners will be able to name the reasons why cultural diversity is important. 3. Learners will be able to describe different ways of supporting cultural diversity 4. Learners will be able to list seven important actions involved in the definition of multiculturalism		
Learning outcomes: Knowledge, Skills, Responsibility and Autonomy	**Knowledge:** 1. Learners show basic factual and theoretical knowledge around cultural diversity (level 2) 2. Learners describe different ways of embracing diversity **Skills:** 1. Learners illustrate practical examples of cultural diversity 2. Learners explore their reactions when faced with characteristics and behaviours from other cultures **Responsibility and Autonomy:** 1. Learners demonstrate the ability to interact with individuals from different cultural groups 2. Learners demonstrate the ability to intervene in an appropriate manner when they observe others engaging in behaviors that show cultural insensitivity, bias, or prejudice.		

Learning unit summary (abstract – half a page)

Culture is what shapes us; it shapes not only our identity, our "way of being" but also affects our behavior. Culture refers to the shared language, beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, and material objects that are passed down from one generation to the next. Groups of people that share the same culture, religion, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, class, gender, age, disability, health differences, geographic location and lots of other things are reffered to as **"cultural groups". Cultural Diversity** is the existence of a variety of cultural groups within a society.

To sum up, The importance of cultural diversity can be interpreted on the basis of these related actions:

- Recognising that multiple cultures, different to our own, exist
- Respecting each other's differences and recognising that differences are beneficial and not harmful
- Acknowledging that all cultural expressions are valid
- Valuing each culture's contributions
- Empowering diverse groups to contribute
- Celebrating differences, instead of just tolerating them

Cultural Diversity: Introduction (10min)

Culture is what shapes us; it shapes not only our identity, our "way of being" but also affects our behavior.

Culture refers to the shared language, beliefs, values, norms, rituals, behaviors, arts, food and drink and material objects that are passed down from one generation to the next.[i] (see The Culture Wheel below).

Groups of people that share the same culture, religion, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, class, gender, age, disability, health differences, geographic location and lots of other things are referred to as **"cultural groups".**

Cultural Diversity is the existence of a variety of cultural groups within a society. When thinking about diversity, most people think about external characteristics, such as behaviours, race and gender. The "invisible" characteristics, however, such as beliefs, values, intellectual ability, social class, language(s) spoken at home, sexual orientation etc. equally contribute to the diversity of different societies.[ii]
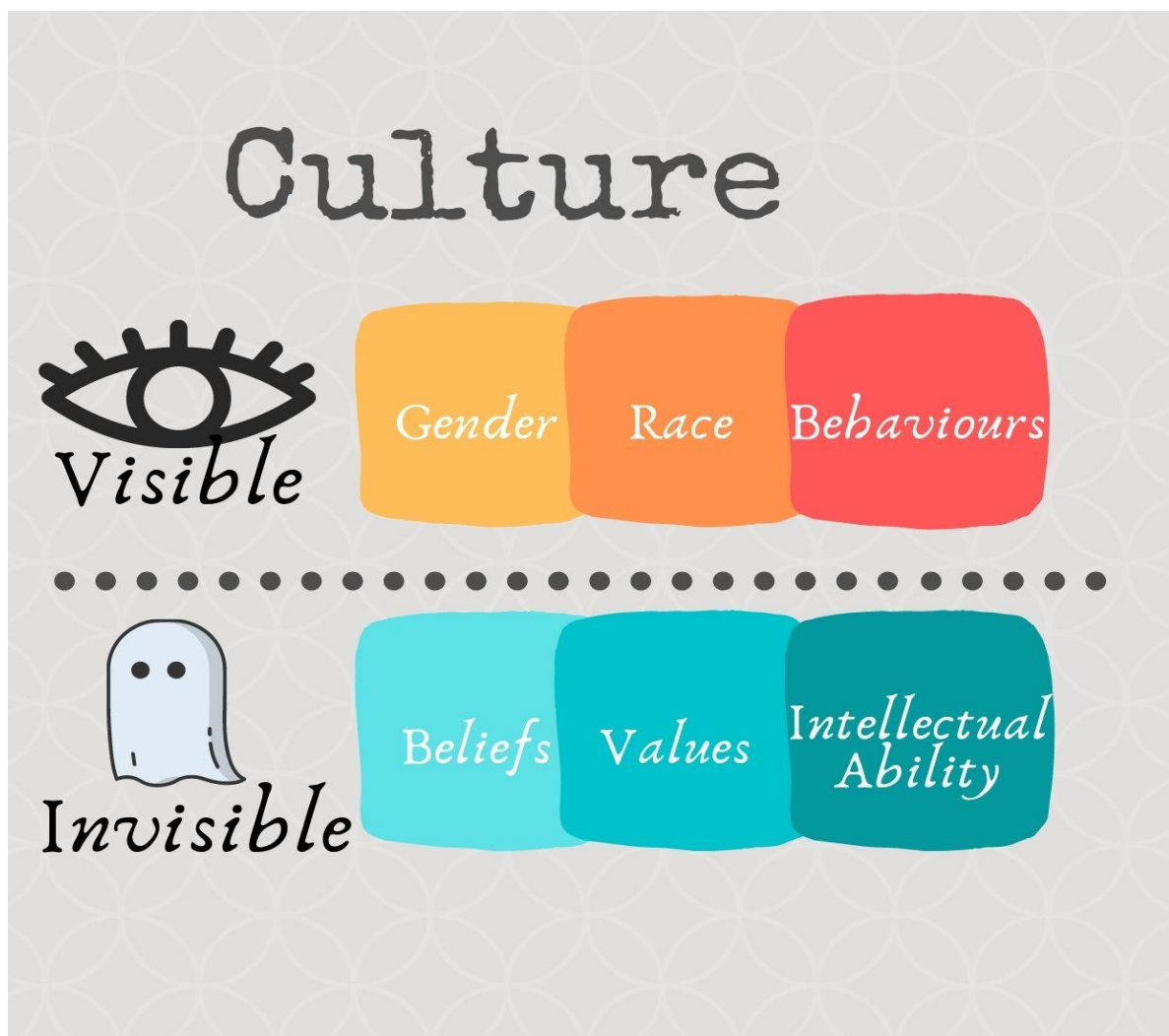
Therefore, **Cultural diversity** generally refers to a reality of coexistence of diverse knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, religions, languages, abilities and disabilities, genders, ethnicities, races, nationalities, sexual orientations, etc., of human beings. It could extend to the way people react to this reality and the way people choose to live together with this reality [iii]

The term "culturally diverse" is often used interchangeably with the concept of "**multiculturalism**." Multiculturalism is defined as:

"…a system of beliefs and behaviours that **recognizes and respects** the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, **acknowledges and values** their socio-cultural differences, and **encourages** and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which **empowers** all within the organization or society.[iv]

Diversity and **inclusion** are two terms that are often confused. In a multicultural society, like the European, it is of paramount importance to not only foster people's inclusion but also strengthen the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to fully accept, support and promote the differences in the society. In other words, **inclusion** means making sure everyone

takes part and **celebrating diversity** means making sure everyone takes part on their own terms.

Chapter 1: Different Approaches towards Cultural Diversity

As mentioned above, the definition of cultural diversity could extend to the way people react to this reality and the way people choose to live together with this reality [v] , so it seems necessary to summarise the current approaches people use towards cultural diversity and the best ways of living together with cultural diversity.

### Recognising Cultural Diversity

In order to live with dignity in societies where cultural diversity is a fact, rather than something one can choose to believe in or not[vi] recognition of each other's cultural diversity is key. In this sense, recognition is about how people should treat each other[vii]. This approach considers the recognition of different cultures and identities, as the first step to teaching about cultural diversity.

In multicultural societies, it is crucial to provide everyone with a sense of belonging, and recognising a culture is an indispensable element for cultivating a sense of belonging[viii], however, recognition is not a concept that can be well defined. This approach, nonetheless, argues for political recognition, social recognition, curricular recognition, and personal recognition (at individual and psychological levels).

Treating People with Different Cultures Equally
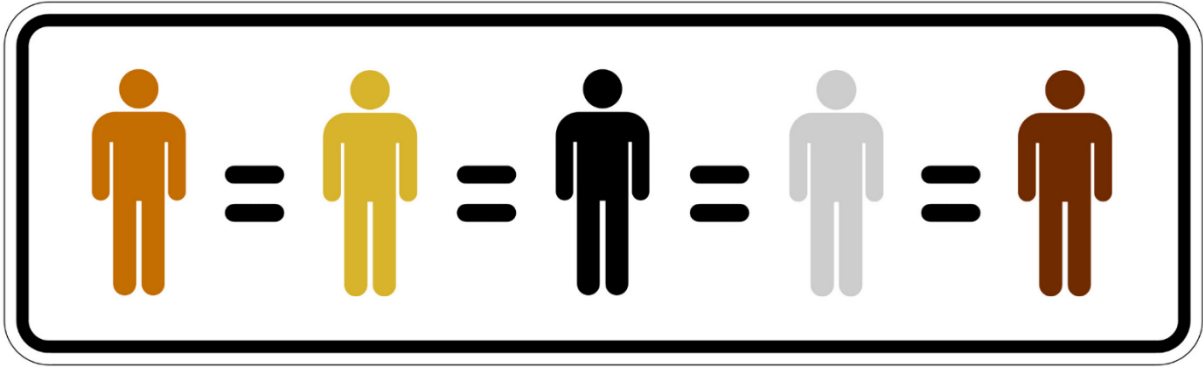
Taking into consideration that many concepts such as culture, ethnicity, race, and nation are human-made constructs to divide people and feed stereotypes and hatred, this approach stresses that treating people from other cultures differently by adopting these artificial concepts can be problematic.

No one should be discriminated against or exempted from anything based on their differences and accidents of birth and everyone should be entitled to participate equally in decision-making processes, especially when they can determine whether or not a minority group could be granted exemptions [ix]
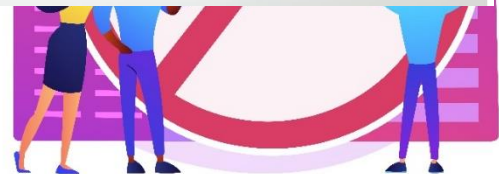
Treating all people equally encompasses the following three conditions: (1) everyone's basic rights are protected, (2) no one is forced to adopt the values the majority of people share, and (3) both in theory and in practice, the decision-makers are accountable [x]

Protecting Minority People and Their Cultures

The protection of diverse cultures is as crucial to humankind as the protection of diverse species and ecosystems is to nature[xi]

Unfortunately, many minorities are on the margins of society because of the historical injustice, therefore policymakers and educators need to take this into account and enact different polices that protect minorities.The idea of protecting group identity started from the fact that many societies had or are still excluding particular (usually minority) cultures and groups, and also the fact that social norms and values are defined by the majority[xii]. Therefore, external preservations, protecting one's identity from outsiders' destruction, and elimination of internal constraints which aim to perpetuate the group's crucial features are necessary[xiii]

However, protecting cultures should not be an excuse for violating basic values or human rights. For instance, some cultures (e.g., religious fundamentalists) reject some basic values of a society, such as the idea of inclusiveness and gender equality. Protecting such cultures would destroy the society's foundation, therefore these groups' cultures should not be protected. [xiv]

Teaching
About Cultural Diversity by Dialogue

By arguing that dialogue is essential to teach about cultural diversity, this approach points out that diverse cultures should be seen as a treasure and a tool for human beings to have a more complete and comprehensive view of this world and preserve human culture. All people should be included in the process of dialogue to attain cooperation. [xv]

In a fully diverse world, dialogue from the standpoint of people's diverse cultures is necessary to explore what human beings have in common[xvi]. No culture or person can claim holding the whole truth or all valuable things of human beings. Welcoming different thoughts and views can be a remedy to people's narrow-mindedness, as otherness reminds people that the value of a culture is independent of whether outsiders like it or not[xvii]
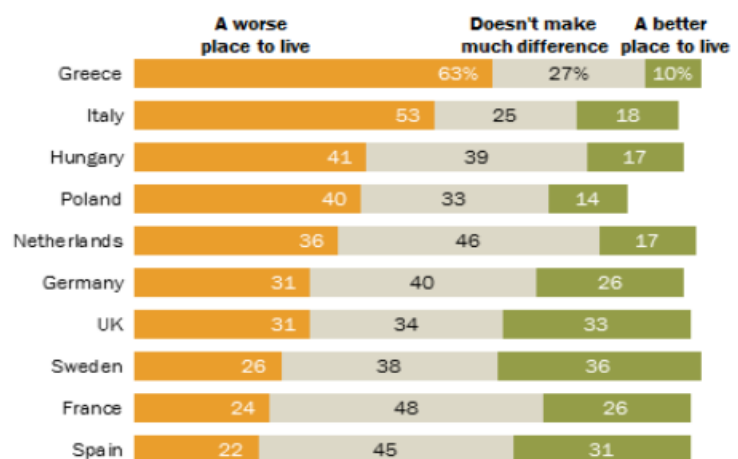
Chapter 2: Cultural Diversity in Europe
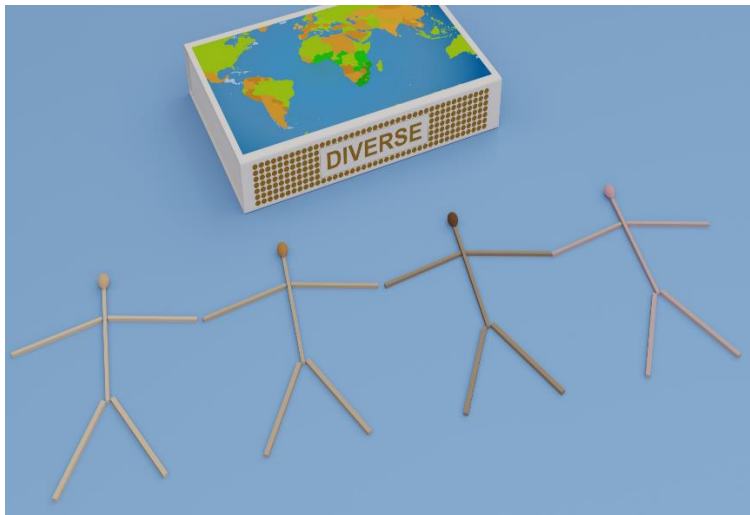
Europe is increasingly becoming a place of cultural diversity and citizens born in foreign countries. The share of immigrants is rising in some countries, mostly due to the large number of asylum seekers entering Europe in the past year.

According to a recent Pew Research Center analysis (2016), across the 10 EU nations surveyed, the median share of immigrants in the population is 12.2%, ranging from as high as 18.3% in Sweden to as low as 1.6% in Poland.

In the same survey, people were asked if they see cultural diversity affecting their society in a positive, negative or neutral way. In none of the participating nations did the majority say increasing diversity is a positive for their country.

Few say growing diversity makes their country a better place to live

Overall, do you think having an increasing number of people of many different races, ethnic groups and nationalities in our country makes this country a better place to live, a worse place to live or doesn't make much difference either way?

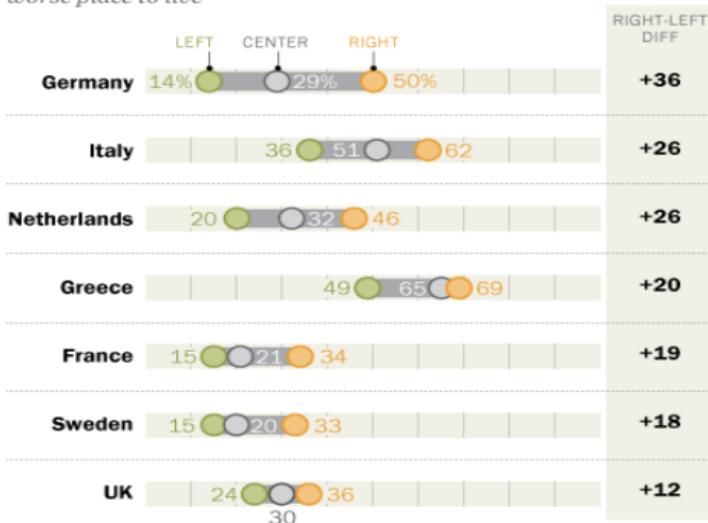|	A worse place to live	Doesn't make much difference	A better place to live
Greece	63%	27%	10%
Italy	53	25	18
Hungary	41	39	17
Poland	40	33	14
Netherlands	36	46	17
Germany	31	40	26
UK	31	34	33
Sweden	26	38	36
France	24	48	26
Spain	22	45	31

Source: Source Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q44.

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People on the right more likely than those on the left to say increasing diversity makes life worse

An increasing number of people of many different races, ethnic groups and nationalities in our country makes this country a worse place to live

	LEFT	CENTER	RIGHT	RIGHT-LEFT DIFF
Germany	14%	29%	50%	+36
Italy	36	51	62	+26
Netherlands	20	32	46	+26
Greece	49	65	69	+20
France	15	21	34	+19
Sweden	15	20	33	+18
UK	24	30	36	+12

Note: Only statistically significant differences shown.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q44.

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The research also revealed that people on the right of the ideological spectrum are remarkably more likely than those on the left to say that growing diversity is detrimental to their country.

Chapter 3: Why is cultural diversity important?

We view the world around us through our "cultural lenses". In other words, we judge what is normal or not using our own culture as a standard; thus, coming into contact with a completely different cultural group can throw someone off and cause them to experience a cultural shock. Essentially, we tend to fear what we do not understand, which can result in people discriminating against others whose "way of being" is different to their own.

Unfortunately, in the history of mankind discrimination based on cultural differences has occurred many times, often resulting in people dying or being denied their fundamental rights. Physical damages have also occurred due to lack of understanding. Sadly, some of these occurrences take place even today, and are perpetuated by people who fail to understand the importance of the uniqueness of each culture, our cultural diversity.

Cultural diversity is important for several reasons. First of all, nowadays, fundamental changes in time and technology have made it almost impossible for different cultural groups to live without interacting with each

other. For example, more and more people of different cultural and geographical backgrounds, communicate with each other through digital means or meet in international conferences, education exchange programs, sports, etc.

Furthermore, the number of different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups living in Europe is increasing day by day. Therefore, as European citizens, we are therefore left with no choice other than to embrace our diversity. We need to teach our youngsters how to live and respect people who are different from them in some way so that the future generations live in a more peaceful world.

Collaboration and cooperation between various cultural groups can be facilitated simply by learning and understanding about each other. This can also help us view the world we live in through different perspectives, dispelling this way negative stereotypes and personal biases about different groups.

Another reason why cultural diversity is important, is that recognising and respecting different cultures, facilitates interaction with others and therefore fosters trust, respect and understanding across cultures.

Additionally, diversity opens up new market opportunities and boosts economic growth, as we see several entrepreneurs reaching new markets. Several multinational companies set up their offices in different parts of the world, something that would not be possible without embracing diversity. As a result, more employment opportunities are created for people in those parts of the world.

Finally, cultural diversity is what makes Europe so unique and an interesting place to live in, as people from diverse cultures contribute language skills, new ways of thinking, new knowledge, and different experiences.

Chapter 4: How can you support cultural diversity?

According to sociologist Dr. Caleb Rosado, specialising in diversity and multiculturalism, there are seven important actions involved in the definition of multiculturalism:

1. **Recognition** of the abundant diversity of cultures;
2. **Respect** for the differences;
3. **Acknowledging** the validity of different cultural expressions and contributions;
4. **Valuing** what other cultures offer;
5. **Encouraging** the contribution of diverse groups;

6. **Empowering** people to strengthen themselves and others to achieve their maximum potential by being critical of their own biases; and
7. **Celebrating** rather than just tolerating the differences in order to bring about unity through diversity.

As individuals, there are several things we can do to celebrate and support cultural diversity. We can start by **increasing our level of understanding** about other cultures simply by **interacting** with people from different cultural backgrounds. You can also read literature and learn from different cultures, absorb media and art from around the world, learn a new language, travel around the world and take part in local festivals and celebrations, try out local food and drinks. However, when interacting with people who may not be proficient in our own mother tongue or English, we should **recognise that their language limitations do not reflect their level of intellectual functioning**.

We should **never inflict our own values on others** as they may conflict with values of their cultures, and we should understand that family values, gender roles, spirituality and emotional well-being, can **present fundamental differences among cultures** and influence behaviour accordingly. Thus, don't force your beliefs on people with opposing views.

Other things someone can do to embrace diversity in specific settings such as the workplace or in an educational setting, is to **advocate for the use of materials that are representative of the various cultural groups** found in that setting. Or advocate to hire people or work with people who are not within your same culture.

Intervene in an appropriate manner when you observe others engaging in behaviours that show cultural insensitivity, bias, or prejudice.

Finally**, be open-minded** to listen and let go of judgment. Accept, and welcome people and ideas that are different from your own. Accept that **differences are beneficial** and not harmful.

Cultural diversity supports the idea that every person can make a unique and positive contribution to the larger society because of, rather than in spite of, their differences.

What does cultural literacy look like in practice?

At the workplace, cultural diversity could be fostered through a multilingual team, or by having a diverse range of ages working together, or having policies that are vocally against discrimination, etc.

In A School Setting, it would look like having a class with student from all over the world, being accepting of all religious practices and traditions that students part take in, supporting students to share their cultures with one another, etc.

Summary and questions (10 min)

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