

European Charter

"Educating the European Youth to Non-Violent Conflict Resolution"

This Charter was written by European youth workers, from France, Spain, Italy and Romania, who met in October 2015 to discuss methods and tools in "Educating youth to non-violent conflict resolution", a project supported by the Erasmus + programme.

Preamble :

Europeans came together at the end of the Second World War and went on to create the European Union with in mind the idea of a "society of citizens" that would put an end to wars on our continent.

As youth workers and young "leaders", we are convinced we have an important role to play in enabling a generation of citizens to believe in peace, to act accordingly to the principles of non-violence and to solve a conflict in a non-violent way.

Even though we believe some conflicts can be healthy and help children grow, being able to solve them in a non-violent way will improve their well-being and feeling of "belonging". It is therefore an investment in the future and for a more inclusive and peaceful society.

We believe it is an education that will allow the development of cognitive, emotional & behavioural skills, allowing our children and youth to recognize differences and to respect them, making the European Union's intercultural and diverse identity stronger.

To be able to prevent violence, when in a conflict, means finding creative ways of communicating that will help reaching a common goal. An education to non-violent conflict resolution can, then, also be described as a tool to improve youth participation and expression. This is why non-formal education and youth workers play a vital role: education to non-violent conflict resolution needs to be lived and experimented.

With this charter, we aim to highlight the necessity to recognize, at European, national and local level, the important input made by youth work in creating a peaceful society, and the need to include this contribution in the various trainings and professional courses for youth workers (and youth projects' leaders).

Charter

Educating Youth

We are convinced that an education to non-violent conflict resolution can only work according to the active and participatory methods. It is therefore essential for the accompanying adult to “let go”, letting the group of children/youth take centre stage in order for them to be able to make their own decisions, while being aware of their consequences.

Educating to non-violent conflict resolution is based on cooperation between peers and the choice made by children/youth to actively participate.

Learning to solve conflicts in a non-violent way, is

- learning by oneself:

- Being able to choose what you're learning
- Being actively involved in the learning process
- A non-compulsory learning activity
- Sharing what you've learning
- Being able to adapt yourself and the activity to the group

- Learning by experimenting

- Being allowed to make mistakes
- Learning by creating (choosing the activity, creating your own workshop...)

- Learning by being yourself and interacting with others

- Discovering your own needs and emotions
- Expressing them
- collaborating within a group
- showing empathy
- actively listening
- negotiating

Youth workers (and young leaders), while educating to non-violent conflict resolution, should help children and youth build up their own “emotional intelligence”, which means :

- Self-knowledge :
 - Recognizing your own emotions and needs.
 - Being able to manage your own emotions (how to not be overwhelmed by emotions and to be able to choose how to behave).
 - Being able to have self-esteem.
 - Having some problem-solving abilities (developing creative and innovative thinking).

- Knowledge of others:
 - Being able to show empathy
 - Understanding differences & similarities.
 - Recognizing your own prejudices

- Communication skills:
 - Active listening
 - Positive and effective communication.

Training youth workers and young “leaders”

If an education to non-violent conflict resolution is one that has to be lived, we are convinced it is more than necessary to create and organize trainings for youth workers enabling them to help children and youth recognize and deal with their emotional needs, improve their communication abilities and their intercultural competences.

Those trainings should also give youth workers tools to accompany a non-violent conflict resolution process based on peer cooperation and youth-led initiatives.

Our informal European network is committed to create, organize and work for better recognition of training modules for youth workers and young leaders on the principles of an education to non-violent conflict resolution. Those training modules should focus on:

- Active listening.
- Group dynamics.
- Theoretical knowledge about non-violence, focusing on the sociological and pedagogical aspects
- Non-formal education and active methods.
- Emotional intelligence: how to recognize and manage emotions and conflicts.

So that youth workers can adapt their posture and be :

- Empathetic
- Able to understand children/youth’s deeper needs and their non-verbal communication
- Able to create a secure atmosphere
- Able to let go and stimulate children/youth’s sense of responsibility
- Able to bring about youth/children’s initiatives, creative thinking and solution finding process

In Paris,
the 10th of October 2015.

La Fédération des Aroéven



Ilewasi



Associazione Joint



Il Mosaico



Asociatia DALI



Asociația pentru cultura și educație - Dalii