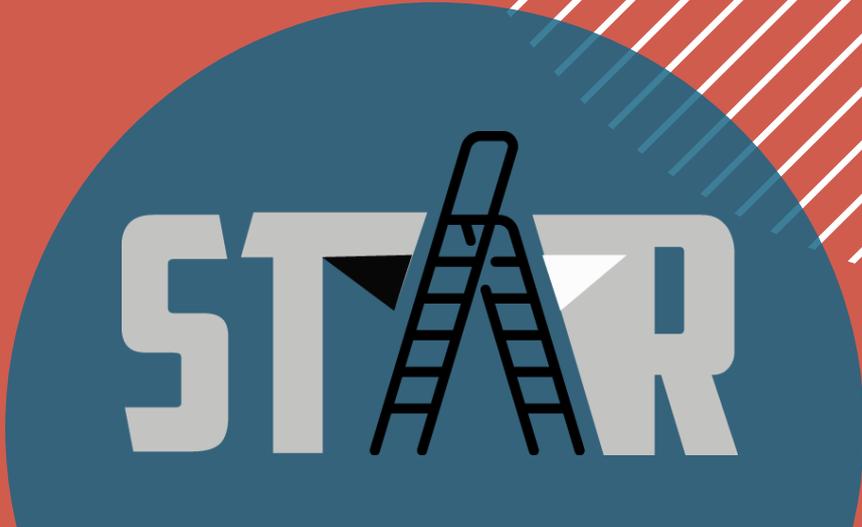


RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCEPTUAL RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
ON THE TOPIC OF RACISM IN EUROPE
STAND TOGETHER AGAINST RACISM

[HTTPS://WWW.INVISIBLE-RACISM.EU/](https://www.invisible-racism.eu/)



STAR

CONTEXT

The STAR project, Stand Together Against Racism, was a 3 year collaboration among 4 partners from Spain, Italy, Bulgaria and Poland, with the aim to counter invisible racism and other form of intolerance in the every day lives of young people, as well the ones online, through preventive measures, youth work and non formal education. These recommendations have been developed by the partnership of the project and are inspired by 3 years of direct work on this topic of racism and invisible racism with young people, observations of reality, learning a lot and producing materials.

These recommendations are developed by a group of people who are not subjected to racism, and are mainly directed to other people without the direct experience with racial oppression, who work with youth, meaning the wide majority of all the youth work professionals in Europe.

Project was divided into 3 work packaged. After the first one where partners could share, evaluate and adapt the practices, in the second they were these practices were tested by implementation of ToTs, workshop at schools, community meetings and summer camps. This direct work helped to developed the recommendations.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We should talk openly about race and racism

There is this tendency for people to avoid talking about race and racism for different reasons. It is often connected with trying to be “politically correct”, as people (especially from privileged majorities) don’t know what language to use, might fear to say something that should not be said, or fear they might hurt someone. This all leads to an avoidance of the topic and replacing it with general concepts like equality or anti-discrimination. But not talking about racism (and other types of oppression) does not mean that there is no problem. By not talking openly about the racism we make this issue less and less visible.

2. We need to be clear what racism really is

The history of how we understand race and racism is quite long and can be confusing. In the 18th century, race was widely used to justify slavery and to create the myth of black inferiority. The XXth century brought research saying that biologically there is only one race - a human race. And institutional racism was only defined in 1999. In educational activities (and in life in general) people are still using arguments that don’t belong to the XXI century, mixing concepts that belong to the different centuries and disciplines. What needs to be stressed out in educational activities is that biologically there is only one race, but there are many socially constructed races. Otherwise, we risk sending the message that since there are no races, there is no racism. And this is not true.

3. When we talk with young people about racism, we need to talk about systemic racism

There are no clear instructions on how to work with young people on the topic of racism, and educational activities often focus on developing empathy, promoting equality and human rights. Those are very important competences, but they alone won’t contribute to the eradication of systemic racism. There is still a common understanding that if a person is not proactively and consciously doing something harmful to minorities, then this person is not racist. And this is not true, since everyone who is not anti-racist contributes to the maintenance of systemic racism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. We should educate young people to be anti-racist

There is quite a big difference between not being a racist and being anti-racist. "Anti-racism is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably." - NAC International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity. When we run educational processes we want young people to understand and be motivated to be proactive in eliminating racism.

5. People from majorities need to educate themselves about racism and oppressions

There is a tendency for people from majorities not think of themselves through the lense of their privileged group, as they take it for granted. For example, white people don't see themselves from the perspective of race (as "white" is "default") and because of this many might think that racism is not their issue. All of this creates dynamics in which white people are functioning in a racist system, contributing to it, often unconsciously, and they are not doing anything to change it, since they believe it is not their problem, while they also benefit from it. On the other hand, for people from minorities educating majorities about racism is a constant fight, accompanied by facing rejection, minimization of consequences and denial. We need to make sure every person understands their role in a racist system and strives to educate themselves and find their way to fight against racism.

6. The role of majorities is to be allies and educate others on racism

There are two main ways in which people from privileged majorities can take a meaningful role in the fight against racism. The first one is being allies. Black Lives Matter has created A guide to ally-ship with recommendations on how to support the case, for example, to listen to Black people very carefully, let the Black community lead the conversation, or challenge and educate your family and communities.

The second one is to educate other people from their group about racism and oppression. Taking into consideration that the European Youth Work field is in general very white, it is very important that we as youth work practitioners talk more often about racism. Especially because there is a strange dynamic that white people tend to listen more to other white people.

Read more: [A guide to ally-ship](#) from Black Lives Matter

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. We need to address emotional awareness

Often discussing racism triggers defensive behaviours and negative emotions like anger, fear, and guilt. This is somewhat normal, and is one of the reasons why this is a difficult topic. While doing educational activities on racism with young people, we need to work on emotional awareness so young people will be better prepared to manage their emotions.

8. Working with young people on power relations and white privilege

The concept of privilege is usually difficult to understand for people who have it, and easy to understand for people who don't. Privilege can be defined as an absence of challenges and barriers in navigating our lives, due to certain characteristics, for example, race. In media, any representation of humans is based on white people's norms and images which gives the privilege to white people to identify themselves in mass media. Having privilege means as well, having more access to power. Privilege and power are essential to understanding racism and other oppressions.

9. Use the power of personal actions

Understanding and talking about racism is not enough to fight systematic racism. One possible line of action and a strategy we recommend is the so-called P-Action which is short for 'personal action' and is rooted in the famous feminist concept that personal is political. The concept is not new and is as simple as it sounds – start from yourself, make a small change in your daily life and immediate environment, and then be open about it, so you can be an example. In an educational setting, this can take the form of being open with the learners about your own racism, and acknowledging your mistakes. This is much more brave and powerful than talking about what racism is in general terms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. We should understand empowerment as sharing power and empower people from marginalized communities

Empowerment is mainly associated with training young people. But empowerment is not only this, since power is not only knowledge and competencies. When we talk about empowerment we should also talk about spaces, visibility, resources, and much more. In an educational setting, empowering could be bringing minority representative into your training team, or simple things such as having better visibility of marginalized groups within the materials you produce

If you want to read more, here we have an article on this go [HERE](#)

11. Investing in the visibility of racism

Although the fight against racism is on the political agenda for a long time, there are many aspects of racism that stay untackled. Racism is still mainly understood as some act of conscious intolerance on an individual level, which is only one of its manifestations. White supremacy is not always visible, microaggressions are not visible, the role of each and every person in the support of systemic racism is not visible, white privilege is not visible. And it is like this because we (people with privilege) either don't feel comfortable for us to see it, because we don't have enough tools to see it, or because the system works in this way to hide it from us. We need to understand racism as a socially constructed concept and shed light on those aspects of racism that are not visible.