

YOUNG
Friends of
the Earth
Europe

INTER
SECTION-
ALITY

Toolkit

FOR INTERSECTIONAL
MOVEMENT BUILDING

YOUNG Friends of the Earth Europe



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Toolkit

FOR INTERSECTIONAL
MOVEMENT BUILDING

Foreword

How can you build a stronger, more inclusive climate justice youth movement? And why should you bother?

This toolkit, written and assembled by volunteers from across the Young Friends of the Earth Europe network, brings together intersectionality and climate justice with a series of practical tips, workshops and more.

Young Friends of the Earth Europe is a grassroots network of young people and youth organisations working collectively for social and environmental justice on a local, national and European level. We organise events and inspire young people to take action on issues ranging from climate change, food and agriculture and education for sustainability – to ensure the voices of young people are heard in Europe and beyond.

We dedicate this kit:

We dedicate this kit to the people active in the network, to the people who used to be active in the network, the ones that cannot be active, and the ones who never heard of us. We dedicate this kit to people fighting, dreaming, wishing, starting to work for social and climate justice and system changes.

We dedicate this kit to people aware of the terms used in the kit, and to those who have never heard of them before.

We dedicate this kit to curiosity, interest, passion, and all of the emotions and thoughts that guided the reader toward this kit.

We dedicate this kit to people who struggle with oppressions in their everyday lives.

We dedicate this kit to people who understand their complex identities, people who are on the journey to discover them, and those who haven't started and who are confused.

We dedicate this kit to the groups who have organised actions and workshops around intersectionality, and to those who are reading about them.

We dedicate this kit to the precious people who wrote down their thoughts, visions and work and we dedicate this kit to the valuable people who will receive these gifts.

We dedicate this kit to the agent of change in all of us, regardless and because of your age, race, gender, sexual orientation, class background, and other identities that you identify with.

Intro

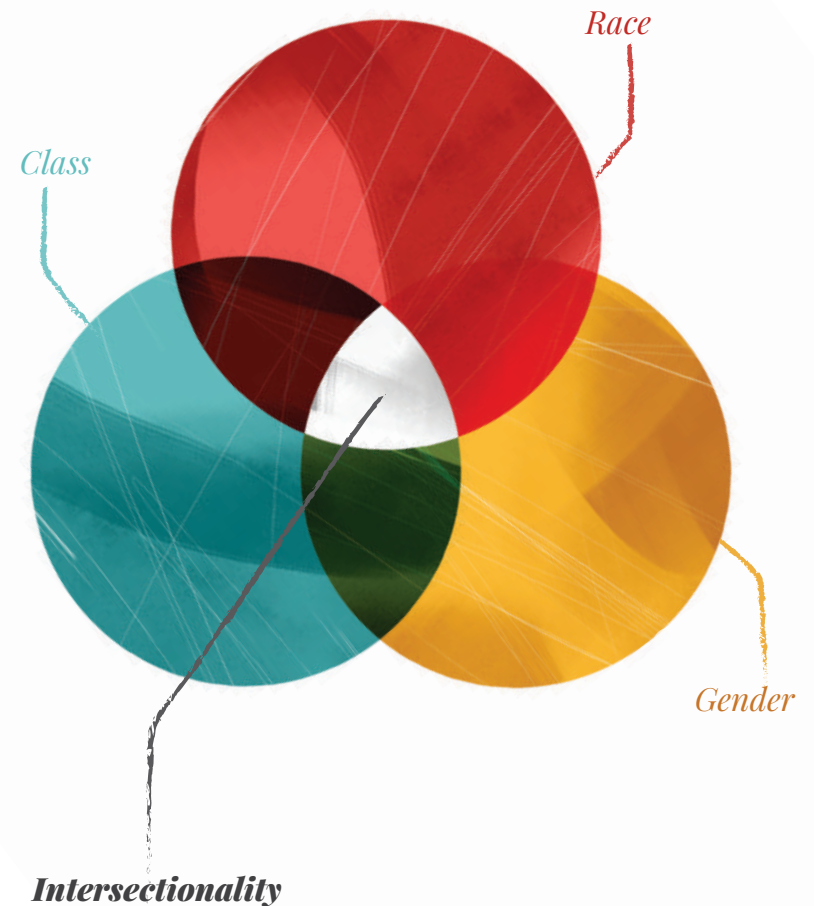
Intersectionality

Intersectionality is used as a framework to describe how power structures emerge and interact. According to Davis, intersectionality is defined as 'the interaction between gender, race and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power'. (Davis, K., 2008. *Intersectionality as buzzword: a sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory useful*, p.68)

The concept of intersectionality came from legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, an African-American feminist, in 1989, who explained how different forms of power and systematic oppression interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels. This study of overlapping identities, used in critical theories to understand social inequalities and describe the ways in which oppressive institutions such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, ageism and others are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another (YFoEE *Manifesto for Equality & Interculturalism*).

Intersectionality enriches the understanding of how norms are constructed and power relations interact. Therefore, the effects of discrimination and oppression of normalised and homogenous groups are important to be tackled.

Intersectionality is important for two reasons. Firstly, it helps us to analyse how systemic oppression affects groups differently, so that we can better understand its mechanisms. Secondly, intersectionality can help us to see how many different struggles for justice are interconnected and require solidarity between movements.



Why is intersectionality relevant to climate justice?

Climate change is the greatest threat of our time to human rights, social justice, and eco-systems. It is driving an escalation in environmental injustices that disproportionately affect already marginalised communities around the world. In the current unjust and unsustainable system, the most oppressed communities, who have contributed least to causing climate change, are being hit the hardest. This reality is acknowledged as environmental racism.

Several studies show people of colour have higher chances of living near industrial areas, major roads, mines, power plants and dumps. Both in the North and South, people of colour have higher rates of illnesses due to air, water and soil pollution. It also acknowledges that these

communities are often denied the right to a healthy and good quality living space and amenities such as parks and have the least access to resources and power to challenge this injustice (Kajiser, A. & Kronsell, A., 2014, *Climate change through the lens of intersectionality, Environmental Politics*, 23:3, p. 417-433). (There is a danger that this framing patronises these communities – we must avoid this and acknowledged them as communities in resistance, full of wisdom and lived experiences which challenge the powers-that-be. Whilst they are struggling, they are also promoting genuine solutions on the ground which we have to amplify and support.)

Building an intersectional environmental movement means understanding the climate crisis and other environmental battles in relation to other social struggles, against racism, sexism, neoliberalism and neocolonialism.

*Article written by:
Joseph, YFoE Cyprus/Netherlands.*

Young Friends of the Earth Europe's journey

TOWARDS BECOMING A STRONG AND INTERSECTIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE YOUTH MOVEMENT

The first steps towards an intersectional approach to our work began in 2015, when YFoEE activists identified several barriers to active engagement with our network and with wider social movements, including financial, unemployment, labels, racism, patriarchal practices. The new vision of YFoEE was born then - a vision of a local and international movement without barriers to engage young people with physical and invisible disabilities, young people regardless of their gender and social class identities and regardless of their skin colour, sexuality, and geographical limitations and so on... We wanted to burst out of the typical, privileged European student bubble and learn how to use our privileges to empower others, as we understood that we won't be the first ones to suffer from the consequences of climate change. Taking first steps at our interna-

tional events was hugely challenging and even upsetting for some of the people we have been engaging with. To deal with varying expectations of what this will mean to us, the same year the network decided to develop a Manifesto for Equality & Interculturalism outlining the values that we stand for. After two years of development a couple of generations of activists contributing, many YFoEE events to collect input from all over Europe, it was adopted by the whole network in 2017.

But our journey didn't stop there. There was a common understanding that implementing these values will not end with adopting the manifesto, of which a substantial part was the theory of intersectionality. We understood intersectionality as a framework to fit in all the other terms defined within the manifesto, and from our

perspective to look more specifically at how different environmental injustices interact with different identities of people. With this our member groups have started exploring how anglophone-derived terms within the manifesto (such as sexism, social class, etc.) would apply in the contexts of their countries, where some of these terms might not exist (yet) or have different meanings. There was also a substantial need to define concrete practical actions and new ways of working in each country to use the knowledge of the manifesto.

Discussions moved on at the 2017 Summer Camp in the Netherlands YFoEE volunteers and activists Europe and Africa identified dominant powers in their countries, and the varying obstacles of building intersectional and inclusive youth groups at the local level.

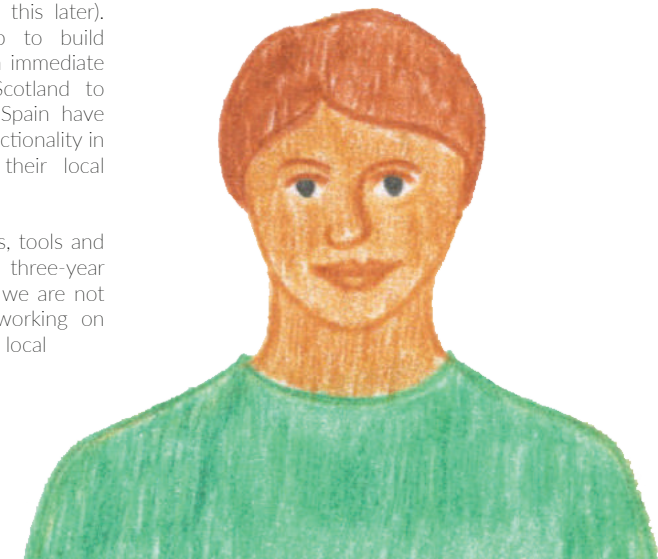
Another enormous step towards the direction we are going as a network was in early 2018, when YFoEE organised 'Training for Trainers for Intersectionality' event in Norway. Young people from 20 member groups of YFoEE joined a training in which they planned how to implement intersectional thinking in the activities and campaigns they run (more on this later). This was a great first step to build confidence in our groups, with immediate results. YFoE groups from Scotland to Cyprus and from Finland to Spain have since run workshops on intersectionality in their countries, adapted to their local contexts.

This toolkit is full of articles, tools and case studies coming from the three-year journey YFoEE has taken. But we are not stopping here, and are still working on building inclusive and impactful local

environmental justice campaigns which serve the most impacted.

We would also like to also thank to 'LABO' and 'Tripod' training collectives as well as all other trainers/speakers/activists who have supported us throughout the 3 years journey towards intersectional and strong environmental justice youth movement.

Article written by:
Živilė, YFoEE/Belgium/Lithuania



Power & Privilege

Theory and introduction to the main terms used in the toolkit

During the 'Training for Trainers for Intersectionality' in Norway, we spent four days understanding the concept of intersectionality and its connection with climate justice so that we could then lead training workshops in our national groups. The first step of the training was to dive into considering structural privilege and oppression in groups. – i.e. how a dominant group is considered 'the norm' (the mainstream) and will knowingly or unknowingly silence other groups (the margins).

"I find intersectional thinking revolutionary, in the sense that it requires that civil society, NGOs and individuals join forces to tackle the root causes of oppression, instead of addressing its consequences one-by-one.

If an organisation is asking for justice, justice should be then demanded for everyone, for communities on the margins and silenced voices. Because if we believe in justice, what is the point of achieving it for one group, while leaving others behind? This kind of work does not challenge dominant power structures and can lead to a previously marginalised group becoming an oppressor,

such as white feminism silencing and ignoring women of colour."

– Léa, YFoE Scotland/France

We all carry different identities that are overlapping and that create dynamics of privilege and oppression: Privilege is any unearned benefit, opportunity or advantage given to someone because of their identity.

We believe it's important to acknowledge them within the movement and to begin work on preventing structures of oppression from being recreated in our spaces and ensure everyone can participate. Being aware of your privilege is also important for those who work as allies. Power and privilege can be uncomfortable to explore when it relates to your own advantages. This is natural and if you stick with the challenge at hand, the feeling can become something more positive.



Why are we talking about this?

A SHARPER VIEW OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE WILL HELP US SPOT INJUSTICES

WE ARE PART OF AN UNFAIR SYSTEM AND IT TAKES ACTIVE WORK TO NOT REPLICATE IT

RECOGNISING INJUSTICES OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE IS AN ONGOING PROCESS

WE OFTEN FOCUS ON WHAT'S WRONG OUTSIDE OUR CAMPAIGNS AND GROUPS. THIS MEANS PROBLEMATIC POWER STRUCTURES IN OUR OWN MOVEMENTS CAN GO UNSCRUTINISED

What is Power?

It's the ability/capacity to do something or act in a particular way and the ability/capacity to direct or influence the behaviour of others or course of events. Power is neutral but important to recognise and seek to understand your own power or lack thereof to create inclusive communities.

What is Privilege?

The collective advantages that a person can inherit from birth and/or accumulate over the course of time. They are constructed by the society we live in and can be seen where power is normalised, for instance public institutions. There are many skills and practices to address privilege which you should take responsibility to educate yourself on. Some examples are active listening, facilitating, reflective practice, stepping back and being an ally.

What is Racism. Sexism. Homophobia. Classism. Ableism. Climate change?

All of these power structures and so much more are addressed in our society as single issues. One organisation for one '-ism'. For a long time, we thought we had to choose between women's rights, human rights or climate change actions. However, intersectionality is the understanding that the roots of each power structure intersects and emerge from the same structural, dominative structures.

Where does Capitalism. Patriarchy. Colonisation come in?

All of us have the potential to be oppressors and victims at the same time. In the training, we addressed first the fact that we needed to be aware of who we were as a group and as individuals and grasp our inner complexity. The conversation that happened was not about blaming and shaming individuals, but about understanding systemic patterns of oppressors-oppressed that we all grew up in (capitalism, patriarchy and colonisation), and are carefully taught to replicate over and over.

What is an "Ally" or "Allyship"?

An ally isn't just something you become - it's something you do! If you actively challenge oppressive behaviour towards marginalised groups that you don't identify with, you're practicing allyship. So listening to someone who describes being marginalised is allyship. Educating yourself on structural oppression is allyship. Stepping back from opportunities in order to make way for underrepresented people is allyship.

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY:
LÉA AND LOUISE, YFOE SCOTLAND

Climate change and [identity] articles

If climate change has taught us anything, it's that we don't live in homogenous societies. When climate-induced catastrophes strike, all of the social and systemic injustices that persist in our societies are revealed. These extracts are from articles written by members of our network and from recent YFoEE 'Summer Camp for Intersectionality' sessions, examine how climate change disproportionately impacts people based on their race, gender, age, social class, and geographical placement.



Gender

In many countries, sexist social structures produce gender roles and certain expectations for women that put them in greater risk when disasters hit. In general, women tend to have less opportunity to access education and technology, and obtain income, land, and livestock. These cultural and traditional norms make women more dependent and less able to respond to natural hazards.

Women usually take on the role of the caregiver and this role is increased during crises. In many cases, women and girls are directly responsible for taking care of the household, children, sick and elderly. They are often in charge of securing water, food, fuel and other resources. In times of climate crisis, women's workload, house chores and responsibilities increase, sometimes dramatically.

Climate disasters, like any type of natural disasters, disrupt daily routines and the existing social order. In these times women and children are more vulnerable to abuse, rape, trafficking and child marriage. Furthermore, disease transmission, like STDs including HIV, malaria and dengue fever is higher, especially for women. This is usually due to malnourishment that often accompanies climate crisis and other factors like reduced access to contraceptives. When they are forced to migrate in response, women are exposed to higher risks of gender-based violence, sexual violence and trafficking.

Apart from the uneven access to education and mobility, as mentioned above, an underlying general issue women face today

all around the world is an unequal access to decision-making processes. Women are usually underrepresented in local politics. While women in rural areas statistically suffer greater losses during and after environmental disasters, they are usually not represented in climate change decision-making or adaptive and mitigative processes.

Women though can, and continuously do, play a vital role in effectively responding to climate change. It's imperative that we listen to what women across the world have to say. In all the discussions about climate and communities there needs to be a space for women to articulate their point of view, propose solutions and lead.

Climate change is not a single-issue struggle, we need to address all the power relations it reflects accordingly. When talking about gender, the need for empowering women and achieving gender equality is indisputable. Adapting to climate change and creating sustainable and just futures will not be possible without it.

Article written by:
Dora, YFoE Croatia

Age

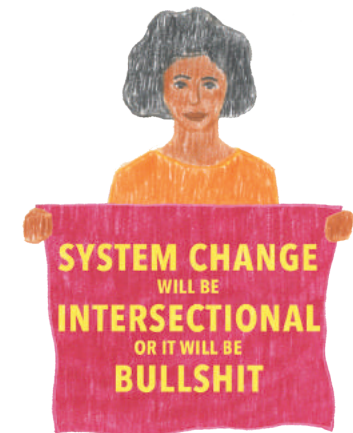
"Young people and future generations are burdened by decades of inaction on climate change. Our leaders and decision makers have failed to act realistically in the face of climate crisis. By upholding the status quo of economic growth, excessive consumption and capitalism, generations to come will have to survive on an unstable planet." - Louise, YFoE Scotland

When we talk about intergenerational justice, as a youth group we focus on advocating for youth voices. However, age discriminates another group of people: the elderly. In our neo-liberal system, once you reach the age of retirement, you are literally retired from society as you cannot bring any concrete wealth and do 'not serve the purpose of the current system'. Older people become vulnerable. Disabilities, visible or invisible, can arise - from the loss of mobility to dementia. A person who have been privileged all their life, can become extremely vulnerable simply due to the ageing process.

But within the population of the elderly there are even more vulnerable individuals in the face of extreme-weather events or the environmental racism - those who have accumulated already discriminative identities throughout their lives, and that have never been supported by the society: for instance, LGBTQI+ people, people of colour, women, working-class people, disabled people. These are the growing number of older people barely able to pay their bills or to even have a roof over their head.

Assisting other generations is also part of a society where solidarity and inclusive community practices are implemented. In the West, the media picture of family dynamic increasingly excludes these individuals that not only require emotional and physical support, but that have valuable knowledge and experience and that deserve to be treated as such.

Article written by:
Léa, YFoE Scotland/France



Race

Climate change is a global issue, yet its impact will be felt disproportionately by brown and black communities. It is invisible and yet so obvious, especially when environmental disasters strike the community of colour: in the aftermaths of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, racist and colonial attitudes persisted in relief efforts strongly. The discrimination was further exacerbated with the gender and social classes across the affected communities.

In the US, a study conducted during the Obama administration found a strong correlation between high racial resentment and climate change denial. Moreover, the study showed strong decline in public concern about climate change among white Americans after Obama was elected. According to the author of the study, this can be interpreted as climate change becoming associated with race, and white Americans protesting the upheaval of the racial status quo by the election of a black president (*Salil D. Benegal., The spillover of race and racial attitudes into public opinion about climate change.*)

Land and water rights intersect with environmental racism, especially when it comes to indigenous communities, such as the protests at Standing Rock. The original proposals for the pipeline would have negatively affected the municipal water systems of Bismarck, a city in North Dakota, where 92.4% of the population is white (2010 census). The plans were then redirected such that the pipeline went under part of Lake Oahe near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Even though this would have posed major risks to the tribe's water supply and their religious sites, the pipeline was approved for construction.

The term environmental racism was coined by Dr Benjamin Chavis, an American civil-rights leader, who defined it as "racial discrimination in environmental policy making, the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of colour for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and the history of excluding people of colour from leadership of the ecology movements".

**Article written by:
Afrida, UK**

Social Class

Be Classy Not Classist

To understand the complexity of climate change and to have the resources to fight for systemic change and justice, requires time to educate oneself, time to be involved in social justice groups, personal financial stability to make the 'right' individual choices (buy organic products, live in the centre of cities to use public transport, etc.). Most of these conditions require a privileged life, and the social class that you grew up in or are moving into can allow or prevent access to education, resources, resilience, time, and money.

To understand the complexity of climate change and to have the resources to fight for systemic change and justice, requires time to educate oneself, time to be involved in social justice groups, personal financial stability to make the 'right' individual choices (buy organic products, live in the centre of cities to use public transport, etc.). Most of these conditions require a privileged life, and the social class that you grew up in or are moving into can allow or prevent access to education, resources, resilience, time, and money. Following this, it is also not a surprise that people who need financial security often won't consider new costly policies (possibly raising taxes) of governments trying to prevent climate change and this is well reflected in the current political landscape.

Nevertheless, class will not only determine how effectively you are able to engage in important political issues such as climate change but also in how you will be affected by them. It is no secret that through health issues, food and water shortages, agriculture, climate change will firstly and mostly hit those with lower incomes and less job security. As such, these injustices will be further exacerbated

by other factors which directly intersect with social class - race, age, gender, etc. (IPCC report on Climate Change: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability 2014)

In recent years YFoEE has come to understand that in Europe, 'class' is perceived differently across countries with such diverse historical backgrounds. A workshop on climate change and social class at the 2018 YFoEE summer camp revealed that many regions had a somewhat similar understanding of the social class (with the exception of countries that were part of the soviet bloc - more on that later), however the structure was different, with more or less classes, in some regions being very apparent, and not recognised at all in others. This becomes a challenge when talking about how environmental injustices intersect with climate change in Europe and looking for concrete solutions. Thus the first step is to unpack the different understandings of what is social class on a national/regional level.

The view from the West ...

“Coming from a white, French, upper-middle class background, I understand class as a set of cultures, values and behaviours coming from a group of individuals from the same educational, financial background and therefore professional background. But instead of recognising the strengths of the different culture and values to work together to challenge neo-liberalism and build resilience against climate change, class is established with oppressors and oppressed, where specific privileged classes oppress the others, by enforcing their own culture, values and behaviour over the “lower” classes and by making the rest invisible and considered worthless.

The French “Republic” is built on the myth that the French Revolution overthrew the monarchy, therefore challenging the hierarchised class system where one class (monarchy and aristocracy) dominated the rest. The overthrow of monarchy was then replaced by the bourgeoisie, merchants, and the upper middle-class, who took over the national institutions. In the 19th and 20th centuries, especially with the emerging “implementation” of communism, the urban working class in France tried to challenge and overthrow the upper-middle class currently in place, which is still mixed with the unrecognised remnant of the aristocracy.

Now the current dominating class claims that in the Republic everybody has their chance to climb up the social ladder and be whoever they want to be, which is clearly a misrepresentation of reality hiding the abusive and oppressive system put in place, as well as the importance of class recognition.”

– Léa, YFoE Scotland/France

... and from the East

“In Eastern Europe there is a completely different understanding of social class and its importance (especially in countries with historical post-communist ties.) I come from Lithuania where the concept of social class can only be found in a few research attempts to define the current society but has very low importance in public and political debate. Of course we understand the difference between being poor and wealthy, but more often we understand this, not in the frameworks of social class, but in identities (a person who is homeless, a person from a rural community, a person with or without university education, a business(wo)man, a politician, etc.). This does not come together under one systemic concept that would allow us to see the hierarchies within our society.

In older Lithuanian history (as in France) class was very prevalent and society was divided into nobility, peasantry, intellectuals and workers, however with the forced idea of ‘everyone is equal’ during Soviet times, such divisions were completely wiped out from peoples’ minds, not considering that some ‘were more equal than others’. With such history we currently can only recognise the classes of so called ‘Soviet nomenclature’ and the libertarian and conservative intellectuals (the independence activists) which both come from the upper class (politicians). The invisibility and the ignorance of social classes in Lithuania does not help to fuel discussions and common understanding on how different identities will be affected by environmental injustices, and furthermore on how to dismantle such class systems for equity. So, to bring social class into our discussions, we need to start almost from zero...”

– Živilė, YFoEE/Lithuania/Belgium

During the workshop we did not conclude on how to address social class throughout Europe when talking about climate change, but it was clear that addressing such issues will need to start at a local level. Different YFoEE groups need to start working with the people who are more likely to be affected by natural disasters (e.g. flooding), who have fewer opportunities to leave, whose livelihoods depend on climate (e.g. farmers) and who are more prone to exploitation by higher classes (such as land grabs for tourist infrastructure), as well as with refugees and migrants affected by climate and economic issues.

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY:
LÉA AND ŽIVILÉ

CLIMATE CHANGE AND
(IDENTITY) ARTICLES:
NEOCOLONIALISM

Neocolonialism

#ClimateJusticeNow

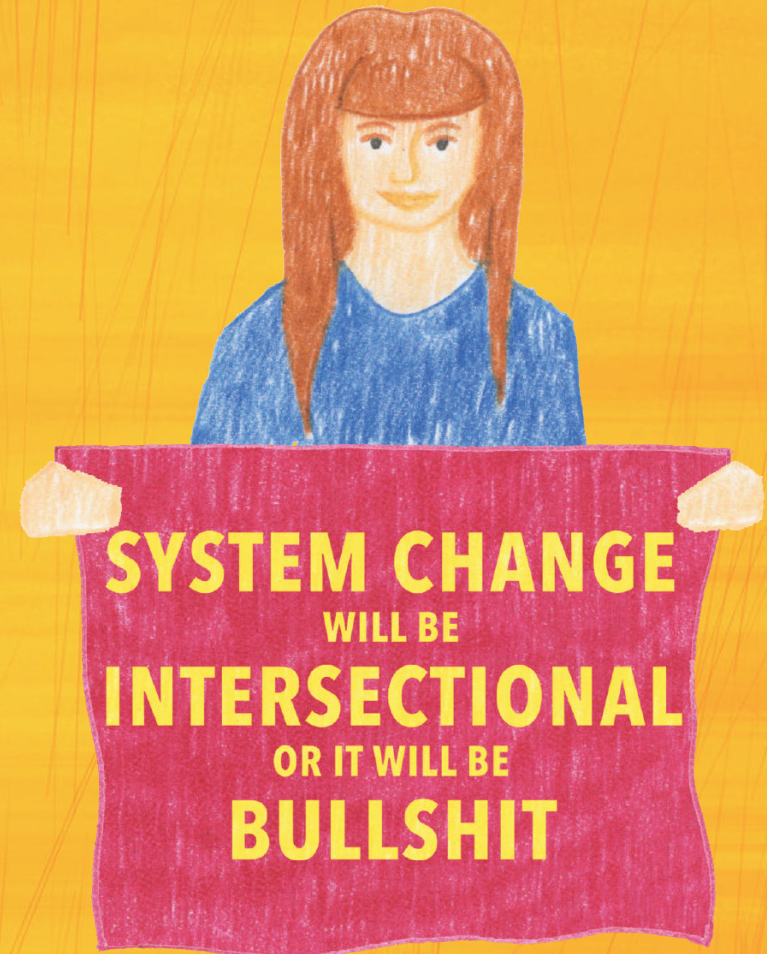
The context of political environmental policies proves the injustice of international climate treaties towards the developing countries (the Global South). The continuation of colonial mindsets within our societies is obvious when examining international policy such as climate change agreements. Neo-colonialism is most obvious in terms of the geopolitics within the Kyoto agreement and carbon trading systems. When we focus on both agreements we find the same division between the global north countries and the global south while in reality the biggest contributors to environmental pollution are the industrial and post-industrial countries of the global north. Our question is how these treaties are based on power systems while they should be based on the work of each country to develop solutions to environmental problems.

By dividing and labelling nations based on their economic wealth and develop-

ment, a power disparity is created between the well-developed nations of the Global North and the developing nations of Global South. Nowhere is this inequality more evident than when examining carbon trading and Clean Development Mechanisms, in which nations in the Global North are allowed to profit from the low emissions of the developing world. Meanwhile, as in the times of colonialism, international corporations from the developed world keep profiting from our lands and resources bringing the wealth back to the Global North.

We must know that without changes in the system but also without radical changes in the global climate change agreements (that are so celebrated by the governments and big NGOs), we will never be able to win our fight against climate change.

*Article written by:
Dina, Egypt*



Intersectionality in context

Intersectionality and anglophone origins

The YFoEE network is made up of over 20 national groups and involves individuals in over 30 countries across Europe. Participants from Africa and sometimes other regions also regularly attend our events. Therefore, as soon as we started talking about 'intersectionality' in our events it became extremely clear that although the issues are universal, the popularised language, approach and majority of existing resources stem from an American and British context.

This created a few issues for us as a European network. First, there was disagreement around what words actually mean and debates around definitions. It became clear that words like 'sexism' have a variety of connotations and meanings in different languages and contexts.

"In Lithuanian, the word sexism doesn't take into account underlying oppressions. It generally means discrimination against gender (whether it's a male, female, non-binary, etc.) Thus the English definition of sexism doesn't generally work in the Lithuanian context, however even if the definitions don't match it is important that in our thinking and work we do we understand and take into account the prejudices that are behind it"
- Živilė, Lithuania/Belgium

In many languages there are no direct translations for much of the terminology. Intersectionality itself doesn't have a translation in many countries and in some languages, it is hard to use gender neutral pronouns and language.

"We translated the manifesto into Macedonian, to share with our local group, but ended up having to make up some of the words

because they don't yet exist in our language"
- Ena, Macedonia

The context also varies significantly across Europe and the world: the position in society of women, LGBTQ+ people and people of colour as well as everyone else is different everywhere (although within the same global power structures). The dominant frameworks are based on largely American and British contexts and therefore clearly miss important aspects from other places.

We have tried to develop a truly international understanding of this topic through ensuring regional balance in our events, both for participants and trainers, as well as creating spaces for people to discuss such concepts within their region and in their language, to then share with the international group. In this booklet you now see reflections on the challenges of applying an intersectional framework in Latvia, as well as the international challenges of using concepts like 'class'.

Article written by:
Kate, YFoEE/Scotland

Scotland

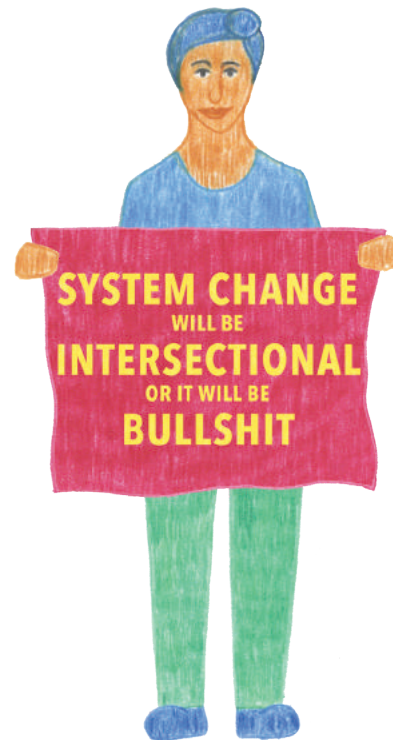
Intersectionality in context:

In Scotland, when we talk about Just Transition, this may mean for example, that the process of planning the shift away from fossil fuels to sustainable jobs should include oil and gas workers. It should consider that within this community, people will have other needs and wishes, beyond what another group in power assume this community needs, as if they are just one homogeneous group. One cannot simply demand the closing of oil rigs without providing a system that will help the communities who currently rely on the jobs of the oil rigs. We don't want to see it being environmentalists versus workers, it should be communities working together to find long term solutions.

Just transition within an intersectional perspective is an opportunity for Scotland to create jobs and opportunities that will fit the needs of workers and address wider societal issues. The conversation and its implementation should happen with every level of civil society. It should be a just transition, for rural areas, for people marginalised by society and that struggle to find work and integration due to numerous reasons.

An intersectional approach in Scotland means that if the just transition only applies to white men in a specific area of Scotland, then we cannot honestly call it just, nor sustainable.

Article written by:
Léa, YFoE Scotland/France



Latvia

Intersectionality in context:

As a new activist in Latvia (but a seasoned activist at heart!), the discovery of not only the concept of intersectionality but also groups of people interested in coming up with guidelines and resources for practical implementation of intersectional ways of working in their local groups as well as the wider network, was an exciting thought. I took to the YFoEE Manifesto full of excitement and motivation, however upon reading it and discussing it with several people in my local group as well as outside, I've gotten responses ranging from laughter regarding how bizarre it sounds in Latvia's context, to helpless shrugs, because it could never be just implemented like that.

Truth is, I used to resort to leading two different lives in a way – the conversations I had within the wider network, the things discussed, and the extent they were discussed to, was at first something I never imagined I could do, say, while leading or participating in a workshop, an event or activity in Latvia, for the process of applying intersectionality is not always seamless in all and every context, for so many different reasons.

As a post-Soviet society, albeit one that is slowly aging out of being able to remember the horrors of the regime from first-hand experience, it's difficult for so many to effortlessly integrate the new, improved, shiny 'EU values'. Technological development has been rapid, and related

institutions have been and continue to change their ways of working, and Latvia is, trying to catch up. However, society, public opinion can't catch up quickly enough, still dragging along their distaste for any form of 'big power', instinctively responding with radical nationalism at times, projecting the fear of the extensive shifts in value systems, or at least increasing exposure to them.

Under the immensely stressful conditions of the decades of oppression, Latvians have let this fear - and through it, silence - dictate their lives. It used to be necessary to survive. But now, although survival in Latvia can generally be taken for granted and is nowhere near as big of a problem as it used to be, it's incredibly hard for people to let that go. When you've been taught from childhood not to speak out, to preach and fight for a power that's breaking you, leaving you without, it's not a simple task to now not be suspicious that you're perhaps being fed something you never signed up for.

The isolation the regime dictated, and a rather homogenic society also made sure Latvia was behind on most social issues, and extreme xenophobia prevails to this day. This has left behind a 'you don't fit, you can't be here' way of thinking that is rarely publicly challenged. People hide behind nationalist ideologies, doubt of fear. We're way more comfortable watching the folk song and dance festival

on TV every four years and continuing to believe 'Latvia's the greenest country in the world', instead of facing new things, because they just might hurt us like so many have done before.

Many of the topics the manifesto talks about and which other groups implement in their daily work, are words and concepts spoken publicly about the first time in Latvia only recently, and even then – you have to go looking for it. So no, in a country where ratification of the Istanbul Convention on gender-based violence couldn't happen because 'between the bits about domestic violence evil gender ideology was secretly snuck in' (this is about the level government officials discussed this at), and the Cohabitation Law was voted against without as much as a discussion, the manifesto doesn't stand a chance. Not yet.

It is easier for a country to join in with the technological development, blinded by the prospects of a better life, economic success being that one universal goal of most, yet our value systems take a longer time to adjust, and we have a long way to go.

Where I have found my peace with not being able to jump head first into doing activities and actions that correlate with the Manifesto directly, is YFoEE's overall focus on supporting smaller local groups, and actively looking for ways to include the few of us here, in Latvia at least, in projects and opportunities we can benefit from greatly. It is important, not only within the activism realm, but really every aspect of life, to feel acknowledged, seen and supported.

We are small, we need a bit more time to catch up socially, culturally, politically, we

might need to adjust the language for the various concepts the manifesto mentions to be understood better, we might not be able to participate in the wider discussions at the same level just yet, but we do hold potential. We're still full of motivation and dedicated to finding the right words, right ways to apply intersectionality to our work in Latvia.

Only through different perspectives, a great deal of patience and eager people can we grow and develop as an inclusive and sustainable network, start meaningful and lasting discussions and make changes. Even though the historical, political, social context of Latvia might not make for the easiest starting point, I've never thought it impossible either.

**Article written by:
Ieva, YFoE Latvia**



Intersectionality in context: privilege and power in Cypriot Society

In September 2018, YFoE Cyprus held a workshop on intersectionality involving Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot, Turkish, Somali and Filipino participants. The group used the 'Power Flower' & 'Tape Game' tools (included in this toolkit) to map out the power relations within communities living in Cyprus followed by group discussions.

The discussion revealed very interesting outcomes on which is the privileged group in each context. Due to the political situation and the division in Cyprus, many of the identities that are privileged in different structures (race, religion, language) vary based on where on the island someone lives. Moreover, the Somali participant indicated a different race as the one in power as the situation in Somalia prohibits white people from having any position of power within the government. Roles are reversed and privilege shifts. One person realised that some of the behaviours they were facing from others for many years could be racially driven.


The exercise helped us to understand how privilege and power play out in our lives. Often, we also make assumptions even if we know how privilege works in our case - context matters a lot (participants were not expecting the difference in race privilege in Somalia for example). This helps in understanding how our privilege could

go away in some contexts - the feeling of losing our own privilege makes it easier to empathise with people experiencing the same in our society.

The tape game was used to support the group in looking into mainstream/margin dynamics. In this particular exercise it was very helpful to one of the female participants, who expressed that she can associate this exercise in her daily life with being woman in a patriarchal society, she is expected to do certain roles in the society just because she is a woman. This activity is also linked to the political situation in Cyprus where the vast majority is divided into two: Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, while other ethnicities are minorities.

Not all identities were discussed, people still don't feel comfortable discussing some issues, e.g. about sexuality - often due to fear of discrimination. Nevertheless, we will be repeating this exercise with more diverse groups and experiences in the future and will keep adding to our understanding of intersectionality in Cyprus.

**ARTICLE WRITTEN BY:
ERMAN, JOSEPH AND
MYRTO, YFOE CYPRUS**



Tools

Intersectionality in Practice

In 2018, several YFoEE groups organised local workshops on intersectionality in their countries, adapting the exercises to local contexts. We have collected an array of tools which address power and privilege, unpack intersectionality and help groups to work more inclusively.

Tool: Identity maps

(YFoE Scotland, Léa and Louise)

Why use this tool:

This tool allows to reveal representation of different identities within the group. And as people are mixed together, they can feel safer to share.

Time needed:

30 minutes

Description:

Hang signs around the room with aspects of social identity. You will ask the group several questions and for each question the group chooses the social identity that feels most relevant for them in that context. After each question invite some reflections on why people chose that identity or what their experience is in that identity.

The identities are: race/ethnic background, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, nationality, education, religion, immigration status, other.

Before going into conversation, remind of active listening and that each person in the group should have space to talk.

The questions are:

THE PART OF MY IDENTITY THAT I AM MOST AWARE OF ON A DAILY BASIS IS...?

THE PART OF MY IDENTITY THAT WAS MOST EMPHASIZED OR IMPORTANT IN MY FAMILY GROWING UP WAS...?

THE PART OF MY IDENTITY THAT I WISH I KNEW MORE ABOUT IS...?

THE PART OF MY IDENTITY THAT I BELIEVE IS THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD BY OTHERS IS...?

THE PART OF MY IDENTITY THAT I AM THE LEAST AWARE OF ON A DAILY BASIS IS...?

THE PART OF MY IDENTITY THAT I FEEL IS DIFFICULT TO DISCUSS WITH OTHERS WHO IDENTIFY DIFFERENTLY...?

THE PART OF MY IDENTITY THAT GIVES ME THE MOST PRIVILEGE IS...?

THE PART OF MY IDENTITY THAT MAKES ME FEEL DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IS...?

THE PART OF MY IDENTITY I HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT YET IS...?

Some things to draw out

THERE ARE PARTS OF OUR IDENTITY WE DON'T OFTEN THINK ABOUT EVEN IF OUR IDENTITIES ARE DIFFERENT, WE SHARE SIMILAR EXPERIENCES

AVOID LANGUAGE THAT SUGGESTS THAT ONE EXPERIENCE IS HARDER THAN THE OTHER

Tool: Diversity Welcome

(YFoE Finland, Julia)

Why use this tool:

The diversity welcome aims to create an inclusive, safe space for everyone in the room, whether they are strangers or friends. It gets you thinking where you are and why you are here and also draws attention to other people's experiences and how the space could feel different to them. It makes the space a lot more sensitive and it is a great thing to use in a bigger space with lots of people who don't yet know each other.

Description:

We used the text from Training for Change. We used it to welcome to a film screening during Pride week about the life of a lesbian Sámi women. The documentary discussed quite sensitive topics and the welcome speech set good grounds for later discussions.

Considerations:

It took us an hour to translate the speech into Finnish. We wrote it down and practiced a lot! you may want to add extra parts that make sense in your context or with your group. The language may need to be altered to make sense to your group as well. Be mindful of your words and expressions. Give space to the feelings of the group after - it can feel quite overwhelming for people hearing it the first time.

Excerpt from the text: I'd like to welcome... (and name different identities)

PEOPLE OF ALL GENDERS (THIS MAY INCLUDE PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFY AS WOMEN, MEN, TRANS, GENDER-QUEER, OR OTHERS)

PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT, BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN, ASIAN DESCENT, ARAB DESCENT, EUROPEAN DESCENT. THOSE WHO IDENTIFY AS HISPANIC, LATINX, PEOPLE INDIGENOUS TO THIS LAND, AND PEOPLE OF MIXED, MULTIPLE DESCENTS.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN HERE (TRY TO KNOW AS MANY AHEAD OF TIME OR ASK PEOPLE TO NAME THEM): SPANISH, ENGLISH, INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES, SIGN LANGUAGE, ETC.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE

GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, HETEROSEXUAL, PANSEXUAL, QUEER, OR OTHERS FOR WHOM NONE OF THE LABELS FIT.

YOUR BODIES AND THE DIFFERENT WAYS YOU EXPERIENCE YOURS (THIS MAY INCLUDE CHRONIC PAIN, STRENGTH, TENSION, ETC.)...

Tool: Intersectionality World Café

(YFoE Spain, María)

Why use this tool:

We always speak about the problems related to power and privilege and intersectionality (racism, capitalism, sexism, homophobia and so on...) but it's also quite important to speak about how we can fight for the real and local solutions. Through the dynamics of the world café, it is easier for people to share their personal and deep ideas in a relaxed atmosphere. Also, because of the dynamic, a live communications network can be created, in which work will be done through collaborative dialogue and different points of view will be presented in a flexible and community space.

Description:

We have prepared three flipcharts on each table:
- solutions for racism and environmental racism through intersectionality
- solutions for sexism and (...phobias) through intersectionality
- solutions for classism and (...phobias) through intersectionality

The design of the activity is to give conversational rounds between four or five people around a table, while also having a connection with the rest of the tables. People change tables roughly every 15 minutes.

It is important that those same people who have shared a table before do not form the same groups. In each of the tables the moderator will look after the dynamics of the table. This person is the only one who does not change tables.

The conversations and dialogue that emerge join and build on the previous ones as people move between the different groups. In this way, it leads to the discovery of new perspectives that can lead to new questions or topics that are important in our environment. The objective is to create knowledge and think together to take action.

After everybody has visited all the tables, a stage to share opens up - discoveries and ideas are being presented in a plenary. It is in these plenary conversations, where the collective knowledge grows, and the possibilities for action emerge.

Considerations:

It is recommended that moderators know the topic, and they can facilitate the group and guide them through the questions posed. In our workshop, the three moderators had experience about intersectionality workshops and they knew all the definitions related to intersectionality.



Tool: Power Flower

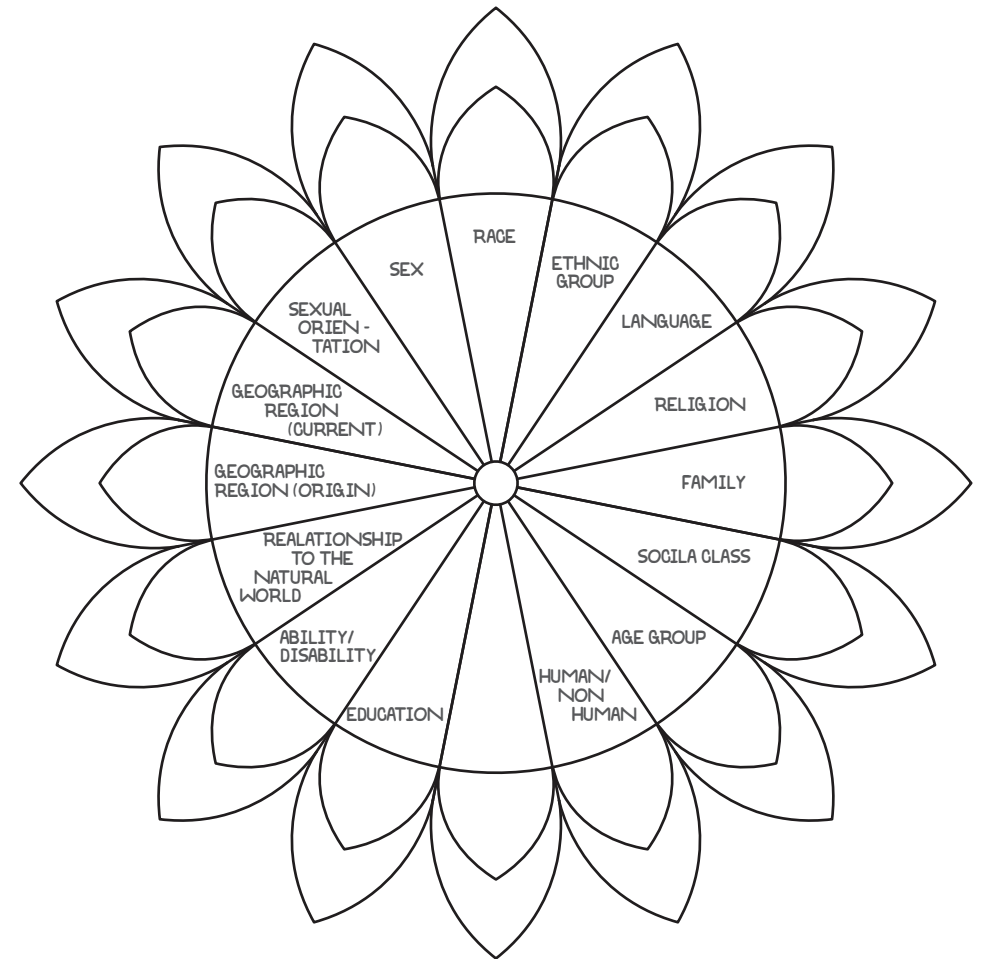
(YFoE Scotland, Léa)

Why use this tool:

The power flower is a tool that you can use to start a conversation about intersectionality, power and privilege in your group, or your own position. It is a tool for individuals or for a group to identify one's position in the power structures, as well as the dominant identities of one's societal context.

Description:

The outer petals describe the dominant or powerful identities in their society. The inner petals are filled in by participants and describe their own social identity. The segments can be adapted according to each specific national context.



Tool: Decolonise your mind

(YFoE Scotland, Léa)

Why use this tool:

Culture and arts play an important part in the way we perceive and understand the world around us. They are known to be “soft power”. It is no coincidence that the cultural output of a superpower like the USA are distributed and watched across the world, at the expense of regional productions – particularly white culture such as Hollywood and white TV shows.

It is the same for books, songs, etc. In Europe, mainstream and “normalised” culture implements and enhances a patriarchal and white supremacist way of understanding the world, also known as the white-male gaze. But culture and arts are also a powerful tool to understand, empathise with and discover the Other. We can discover and understand other identities, cultures, countries, if we read and see productions created by these very identities. For example, if you are curious about the condition of women in India, instead of going for a book written by a white European man look for a book written by an Indian Woman. Coming from a privileged background, it sounds simple, but harder to put into practice as schools and society at large do not teach people with privileged backgrounds to reach out to mediums that do not represent them.

This is an exciting process that can take us a long way on our journey to an intersectional approach.

Description:

The first step to decolonise your mind is to reflect. Look at your bookshelf, your artists in your music library, and the films and tv shows that you’ve watched in the last couple of years. And then count, how many were produced by white western men? I did it, and the result was horrifying - 90% of my bookshelf and DVDs were produced by them.

Second step: Be curious. Reach out, challenge yourself, the next book you read, the next film or tv show will not be made by a man, or by a white person, or someone from the West. For this Google can even become an ally, just type “women director comedy”, or “Nollywood” (Nigeria has an impressive film industry) or “LGBTQI+ writer + name of your country”, etc. It’s been over a year now that I have decided to prioritise non-white-men voices, and the process has been thrilling. Without travelling I have discovered so many different cultures and voices, and empathised with so many new forms of laughter, sadness and injustice.

On the other hand, marginalised identities are going through with being imposed on a mainstream white patriarchal culture, and values that are not their own. This then also becomes important for marginalised identities, if they are not doing that already, but to look for arts and productions that will represent their struggles, identity, and values, and to be able to fully identify with the characters.

Tool: Tape Game

(YFoE Macedonia, Ena, Marija, Simona and Sofija)

Why use this tool:

We used this tool to introduce the concept of the margins and the mainstream in our group and to discuss such topics in our society, with a mixed generation group.

Time needed:

20-25 minutes

Preparation needed:

Post-its in different colours, based on the number of participants. Depending on the size of the group you would make 3 kinds of the same colour 'mainstream' post-its (6-8 red post-its and 6-8 green post-its for example) and 2 or 3 unique post-its to represent the 'margins' (1-3 orange post-its and 1-3 purple post-its for example).

Description:

The tool has been adapted from the 'Training for Change' resource bank. The group was asked to sit down in a circle and close their eyes. The facilitators stuck the different-coloured post-its on the foreheads of the participants without the participants knowing which colour of paper they had on them. Afterwards we asked them to open their eyes and move around in silence. They were a bit confused at first. An interesting thing was that in the beginning they all grouped in a circle without any sub-groups based on colour. Afterwards they started grouping based on colour. After 5 minutes

the participants were asked to take their seats.

Some debrief questions used:

- What happened?
- To the larger groups (to establish the mainstream experience feeling): 'How did you come together?' 'What did it feel like?'
- To the smaller groups or individuals: 'What about you? How did you come together?' 'What was it like for you?'
- Another question for everyone: Have you experienced these dynamics in other settings?

After the exercise introduce the mainstream and margin concept and ask participants how people might be different in our groups (male/female, age difference, experience differences, etc.). Also do not forget to highlight that although people can be mainstream in one way, they can be marginalised in another.

The discussion which followed was really interesting, to understand their take on this tool. Some of the participants stated that they were not led by the idea to group based on colours, but rather to just form a group – any group. Other participants stated that their first instinct was to group based on age, thus they moved towards their friends of similar age. The "margin" group stated that they were confused at the beginning why they did not belong to some group, but later accepted the fact that they are different.

Additional elements or variations:

This tool is really simple and it allows different experiences every time it is used. The tool itself is not very predictable as the exercise is mainly led by the participants and their experiences, so it can be very different depending on the group.

Facilitator Considerations:

The facilitator should take into account the knowledge of everyone in the group about this topic and adjust the discussion based on that.

Tool: Privilege discussion

(YFoE Scotland, Léa and Louise)

Why use this tool:

It allows privileged groups to discuss how to become effective allies.

Time needed:

30 minutes

How to do it:

Start by introducing it with something like this: "We are now going to try a new exercise for [name of group] network. The discussions might be difficult, but the facilitators will try to ensure there are safe and open spaces. The point of this is to learn collectively, not to blame or point fingers."

Split into 'ally' groups, maybe in terms of privilege: white, male, straight, cis, class. People are free to choose which one they would like to be part of, however if you identify with one of the identity groups we have chosen, we would highly recommend attending that discussion group. If you don't identify with any, or there is another aspect of your identity you would rather talk about, you are welcome to create your own group (write it on a flipchart or something). We also recognise that no-one is just one of these things and the many aspects of our identities intersect to create our experience in the world. If people don't want to participate in one of these sessions, they are free to step out.

Start with the questions:

What can you/we all do to be more aware of our privilege?

What small things can you/we do in response to recognising our privilege?

How can we create a safe and inclusive space for people to speak up in our organisations?

Encourage people to continue these discussions and learn that they need to educate themselves and others.

Close the session with a quick break to relieve tension and then an energiser.

Considerations:

This workshop took place as the first session of a skill-share weekend with Young Friends of the Earth Scotland and was extremely powerful as it set the tone of inclusivity, respect for different identities and vulnerability for the rest of the weekend. At first both Louise and I (facilitators) were a bit afraid that the new group would not feel safe to share, however they all went along, listening, sharing and respecting the different life experience and opinions. It was quite empowering to shift the responsibility on intersectionality and inclusivity onto the privileged identities without the culture of blaming nor shaming the individuals.

Tool: The big wind blows

(YFoE Germany/BUNDjugend, Wiebke and Andreas)

Time needed:

From 5 up to 20 minutes, depending on the goal

Preparation needed:

Chairs, one fewer than the number of participants (you can also mark seats on the floor) flipchart and marker to collect input from group; four groups of minimum about ten participants

Why use this tool:

This method is a very simple first exercise to start talking about the topic of identities and intersectionality. You can also use it as an indicator during a longer event, to see how comfortable the group is with sharing stories about their identities. The method is also useful in the beginning of events so participants can find less obvious shared interests among each other. In this case it might be optional to leave some open time after for people to discuss and reflect, maybe as part of the evening program.

As facilitators you can also give some suggestions or try to lead with an example once you are in the middle, depending on what purpose the exercise is used for. It is helpful to prepare a couple of questions in advance that will help read the group or ask for not so strong identities, e.g. "... who has been part of YFoEE for more than a year", "... who grew up in a village", "... speaks a second language"

Start with the questions:

By asking some eliciting questions to the group you can start a conversation on identity if you want. Some questions that we used are:
What did you notice?

What does this game have to do with 'identities', our topic today?

What are identities?

If you want, you can collect participants' statements on what identities can be on a flipchart.

Answers we got during the debrief in this particular exercise were related to visibility and invisibility of the assets, identities being individual but also grouping people, members of groups with a shared identity don't necessarily know each other, etc.

Additional elements or variations:

If you want to use this game as an indicator for the trust level in the group, you could simply introduce it as an energizer. In that case you maybe don't need the debrief.

Facilitator considerations:

If you are using the method as an indicator, pay attention to which level participants are asking their questions: if parts of the group stick to superficial and obvious traits like "... who wears blue socks", it might be helpful to proceed with more trust building exercises. A debrief of a shared concept of identities won't work in this case.

Example games

Tool: Structuring a weekend intersectionality workshop

(YFoE Croatia, Ana, Marija and Dora)

YFoE Croatia has run a two-day intersectionality workshop for young people from different non-governmental organisations in the country. This agenda has been very well adapted to the Croatian context and we hope it will be useful to other groups out there who want to organise similar workshops.

DAY ONE

Summary:

Prioritize group container and trust building within the group. These discussions can be difficult, and the key to productive and effective group work is in the dynamics, meaning everyone feels safe and confident enough to actively contribute and participate. It is way more important than any other theoretical input which could be given as a handout. Take time for everyone to introduce themselves and what they are interested in.

Session one

In Croatia, we used a diversity welcome and games to break down people's barriers and build a good atmosphere. We also spent time on setting a group agreement and safer spaces.

Human bingo 15'

Participants are given a sheet of paper with different statements printed in a table. They need to find a statement that applies to each of the participants – for example, “find someone who has grown their own vegetables”. The winner is the first one to use up all the names.

Portraits 15'

The group is united in two rows. One row stays seated with a sheet of paper each, and the other one moves taking their own papers with them. A seated person and a standing person draw one of the elements of the other person's face (eye, head shape, ear, hair...). Participants have to move down the line, for new people to fill in extra details. The last person finishes the remaining details and each person is left with their own portrait drawn by different people.

Group agreement

The group is united in two rows. One row stays seated with a sheet of paper each, and the other one moves taking their own papers with them. A seated person and a standing person draw one of the elements of the other person's face (eye, head shape, ear, hair...). Participants have to move down the line, for new people to fill in extra details. The last person finishes the remaining details and each person is left with their own portrait drawn by different people.

Session two

Introduction to intersectionality. In this session we explained the concept of intersectionality and used exercises like the power flower and identity maps (see above) to get participants to explore their own identities.

Session three

Understanding privileges and oppressions within different groups

Example game

Walk of privilege 60'

Participants are lined up next to each other in the middle of the room. People are asked to close their eyes and follow the instructions. They are read statements, such as 'If you are a woman, take a step back' and are asked to react accordingly. After all the statements have been read, they open their eyes and see how are they positioned in relation to other people from the group.

1. Reflection: Reflecting with the people closest to them (which have taken a similar number of steps). How were you feeling, don't rationalize or interpret the experience. What have they learned about themselves/their upbringing/their current position?

2. Analysis: Share reflections in the wider group - what have you learned?

After the exercise, make sure that the group realises that their final position is the intersection of most of their identities and that they should not feel guilty or ashamed, because it's not their fault. We should use our privileges to be allies and use the opportunity to talk about our oppressions. Our position changes as we change and as society changes.

We ended with another energising game and an evaluation.

DAY TWO

Session four

After checking in with the group, going through the agenda for the day and playing some more group building games, we moved from an individual to a societal level by firstly playing tape on the forehead (method described above).

Understanding roots of problems and how we can solve them together.

Drawing their own intersections (in groups of ngo's) + debrief 25'

Problem tree in groups of ngos or topics (What causes poverty, oppression against women...) 10' (introduction of the exercise) + 30' (working in groups) + 20' (presentation to the entire group)

Ask participants the following questions:

Is my organisation actively welcoming everybody?

Are we creating safe spaces for everybody to take part?

15 minutes to discuss in their own NGO group, and 10' to discuss in groups of three NGOs.

What are the key problems that your NGOs try to combat? Listen to them and write examples on flipcharts. Form groups based on affinities and make a problem tree. Explain the method - use sexism as an example and give them 30' to do theirs. Mention to write in nice handwriting so that others can read. Invite all the groups to read other groups' flipchart and give possible solutions.

Session five

Session six

Understanding our connections and overcoming obstacles

Example game

World Café 80'

Some people sit around tables with pre-prepared questions and some people walk around the seated people talking to each seated person.

They discuss:

1. Where do our struggles overlap? What values do we share?
2. Is there space for collaboration?

Session seven

Steps for the future + evaluation

Example games

Planning next steps 30'

3 questions for evaluation:

- 1) What can I personally do to contribute to an intersectional approach in my organization?
- 2) What can my organisation to do amplify the intersectional approach?
- 3) Where do I see potential alliances?

Using moderation cards ask participants to anonymously answer these questions. Answers are read out loud and glued onto the flipcharts.

Activist notebook 50'

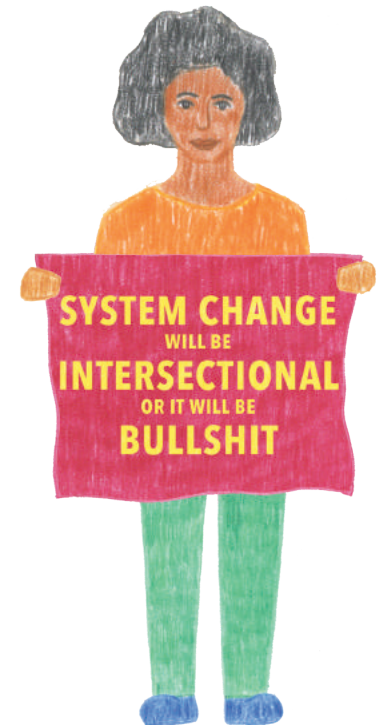
Participants are given blank notebooks in which they write:

- 1) What have I learned that changed my views?
- 2) What surprised me the most about myself?
- 3) What is the most interesting thing I've heard from others?

Evaluation in plenary 45'

Everybody gets a chance to talk and share their thoughts and feelings about the training.

Example games



Credits

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