

Addressing Intercultural Diversity in International Youth Mobilities

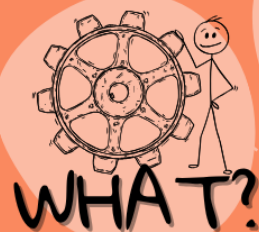


IS A STRENGTH, BUT INCLUSION TAKES WORK

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Diversity ≠ just nationality: includes gender, ability, mental health, learning styles, migration background, etc.

Inclusion = adapting spaces, activities & attitudes so everyone feels safe, respected and valued.



KEY ASPECTS OF INCLUSION

Structural

accessible spaces, schedules, funding.

Relational

participants feel seen, heard and valued.

Participatory

youth shape the process, not just attend.



COMMUNICATION & PARTICIPATION

- **Barriers beyond language** - confidence, literacy, neurodivergence.
- **Distribute power** - rotate group speakers, assign non-verbal roles (timekeeper, visual artist).
- **Multiple formats** - drawings, role-play, written prompts, peer translation.
- **Body language matters** - check understanding, not just nods or smiles.

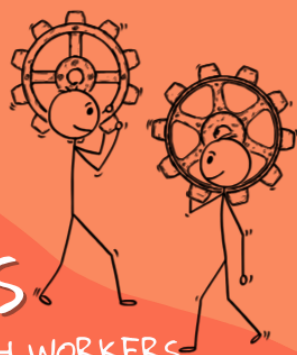
PERFORMATIVE INCLUSION is saying "everyone is welcome."

VS

TRANSFORMATIVE INCLUSION is removing real barriers so everyone can attend & thrive.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY & LEARNING

- **Culture** ≠ only nationality - also regional, generational, socioeconomic.
- **Misunderstandings** = learning opportunities (pause, reflect, explore, not blame).
- **Cultural humility** - admit you don't know everything, stay curious, ask questions.
- **Encourage sharing** - food, music, games, daily habits.



KEY ASPECTS FOR YOUTH WORKERS

- **Inclusion is designed, not assumed** – check who is missing and why.
- **Representation matters** – diverse team = diverse role models.
- **Listen to quiet voices** – silence ≠ disinterest.
- **Leave unstructured time** – real connections happen in informal moments.
- **Be ready to adapt** – ask: "What would help someone feel more included right now?"



HOW?

CREATING SAFER SPACES

- **Co-create** group agreements
- **Normalize** boundaries
- **Emotional safety**
- Create a simple system to check consent and **respect personal boundaries**

BUILDING COMMUNITY

- **Small, low-pressure roles for shy participants** (photographer, mood observer).
- **Shared activities** - cooking, music, sports, unstructured free time for bonding.
- **Normalize mistakes** - use clapping/cheering when someone tries, not just succeeds.



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IN SIMPLE TERMS, FIRST AID CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING PARTS:

1

Recognition
Quickly identify the problem and any potential hazards for others and yourself.

2

Assessment
ask and check for signs and symptoms of injury or illness

3

Provide care
take care of the patient and call emergency if needed with accurate information

4

Assist and check again
necessary interventions to stabilize the patient's condition.

SAFETY FIRST

BEFORE ANY INTERVENTION, KEEP THESE PRINCIPLES:

1

SAFETY

Ensure your own safety first. Only begin to help if the scene is safe.

2

ASSESS

Plan your intervention based on what you find. If you are in doubt what to look for, you can ask 112. Quickly assess the patient's condition and the severity of the situation. Treat the patient as a member of the helping team. Use their knowledge, ask questions and listen to them.

3

ASK FOR HELP

Involve other people. After assessment call the emergency number if needed.

4

INTERVENE

Begin the necessary first aid interventions to stabilize the patient's condition.

5

MONITOR CONTINUOUSLY

Do not leave the patient alone. Continuously monitor their condition and respond to any changes until professional help arrives.



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CONTENTS OF THE FIRST AID KIT



MEDICINES

- Antihistamine
- Antidiarrhea medication (for example: Smecta)
- Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen (Paracetamol) – against fever and pain 3 different active ingredients in order to avoid for possible allergic reactions
- Placebo (vitamin, B, C or D)
- Daedalon (anti-nausea)
- Laxative



OTHERS

- Menstrual pads and tampons
- CPR mask for cardiopulmonary resuscitation / hear
- Octanisept (wound disinfectant)
- Glucose
- Plaster
- Elastic bandage
- Tweezer forceps (for removing splinters and ticks)
- Disposable gloves for prevention of exchanging contamination and microbes



Psychological First Aid (PFA) for Youth Workers



CORE PRINCIPLES OF PFA

Create Safety

Help the young person feel safe again. Use a calm voice, avoid sudden movements, and provide a quiet space.

Create Calm

Regulate your own energy. Speak gently, offer grounding or breathing exercises.

Support Efficacy

Offer choices and involve them. Even small decisions restore a sense of control.

Create Connection

Be present. Use their name, make gentle eye contact, and reassure them they are not alone. Connect them with the people who are the most important to them. Offer a phone call, chat ect.

Create Hope

Acknowledge their struggle while gently reinforcing things can improve. Provide specific, accurate positive facts about the situation.

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is part of first aid generally. It is an evidence-based approach designed to reduce distress and support adaptive functioning after acute stress or trauma. It is not therapy or diagnosis—it provides immediate, compassionate, practical care while respecting the young person's dignity and autonomy.



HELPFUL TECHNIQUES

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Belly Breathing

Hands on chest and belly, deep breathing into the belly.

Extended Exhale

Longer exhalation to calm the nervous system.

Box Breathing

4-inhale, 4-hold, 4-exhale, 4-hold.

GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

Tactile object

Focus on holding a small object.

Movement & body scan
Tense and release muscles.

Move

Walking or stomping to reconnect with the body.

5-4-3-2-1

Name 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, etc.

5 AFTERCARE

Follow up. Offer later support, encourage self-regulation tools, and reconnect them with peers. Debrief with your team and care for yourself.

4 LINK

Offer comfort items (water, blanket), and connect them to support or home. Involve them in decisions; refer to professionals if necessary.

3 LISTEN

Listen and be with the person. Validate feelings without pushing for stories. Use age-appropriate language.

2 LOOK

Observe signs of distress (e.g., withdrawal, panic). Prioritize physical safety if needed.

1 PREPARE

Know your limits—you're not a therapist. Identify emergency contacts and services, available safe spaces ahead of time



PFA IN PRACTICE STEP-BY-STEP FOR YOUTH WORKERS



KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR YOUTH WORKERS

- **Presence matters** more than fixing the problem.
- **Reactions vary** - don't assume everyone needs the same support
- **Respect confidentiality** but prioritize safeguarding.
- Take care of your own wellbeing and **use peer support**.



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Recognizing and preventing violence in International Youth Mobilities



WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

Violence is any act — or lack of action — that harms or threatens a person's body, mind, dignity, or wellbeing.



It can be visible or hidden, intentional or not, shown through words, actions, silence, or neglect.

Why it matters in youth mobilities

- Distance from family/ familiar supports
- Mixed-age groups blur roles
- Language or cultural barriers limit disclosure
- Shared living/travel increases access and isolation
- Informal or hierarchical cultures make reporting harder

RECOGNIZE signs of harm

Sexual harassment
any unwanted sexual behavior or comment

Grooming
slow manipulation to gain trust for exploitation

Bullying
repeated, intentional harm using power

WATCH FOR:



- RED FLAGS**
- Sudden change in behaviour
 - Strong attachment to one adult or avoiding particular person or setting
 - Unexplained gifts
 - Use of sexualized language or behaviors that seem out of context

REFLECT on your own behavior and assumptions



- ? How do my cultural norms shape my view of boundaries?
- ? How do you notice when a young person feels uncomfortable?
- ? What are your own boundaries, and how do you share them?
- ? Do power dynamics make it hard for youth to speak up?
- ? Are safeguarding policies clear and in place for international work?
- ? Do young people know how to report concerns safely?

RESPOND quickly and appropriately

- Stay calm and listen
- Believe and thank them
- Reassure: ("It's not your fault")
- Listen without judgment
- Offer help and discuss options
- Keep in touch and support



Be an active bystander

- Show it's not OK
- Support the person
- Speak up

CREATE safe, respectful group cultures

- Clear safeguarding & reporting
- Stay visible – avoid 1:1 settings
- Team trained on risks & red flags
 - Guide peer leaders
 - Encourage speaking up
- Promote consent & boundaries

After disclosure:

- Don't interrogate
- Ensure safety
- Record what was said
- Report officially
- Get professional support
- Follow up on actions
- Keep it confidential
- Know your limits – seek help
- Get medical care if needed

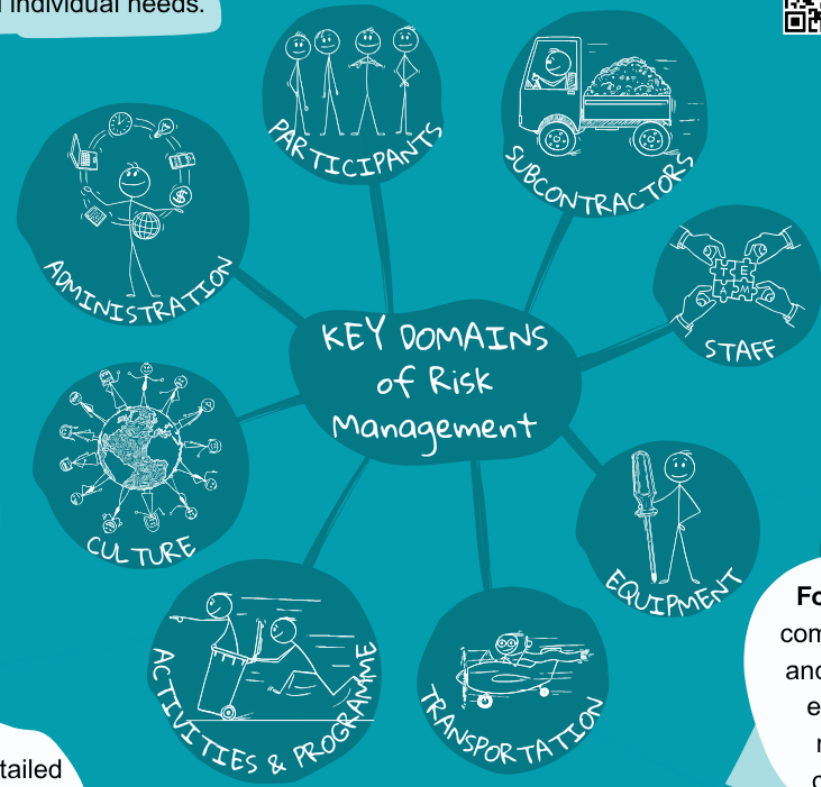


Risk Management and Creation of safer spaces



CREATING SAFER SPACES

- ➔ Continuous attention, reflection, and adaptation of policies and practices.
- ➔ Engaging participants and communities, respecting cultural contexts and individual needs.
- ➔ Promoting a culture of vigilance, inclusivity, and active responsibility.



2
Involve all stakeholders (staff, partners, participants) in identifying risks.

3
Define clear roles and responsibilities for safety monitoring and incident management

4
Develop preventive measures (supervision ratios, safety checks, briefings).

5
Prepare detailed emergency response plans and ensure all know procedures.

6
Verify adequate insurance coverage for all participants and activities.

7
Provide training on risk management, safeguarding, and cultural sensitivity.

8
Monitor and review safety continuously during the exchange.

9
Foster open communication and respect to encourage reporting concerns.

10
Keep detailed documentation for accountability and learning.

RISK MANAGEMENT
Identifies, assesses, and mitigates hazards to prevent physical, emotional, or logistical harm.

VS
SAFEGUARDING
Focuses on protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, creating respectful and inclusive environments.

STEPS TO DEVELOP A RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

- INTEGRATING SAFEGUARDING INTO RISK MANAGEMENT**
- 1 Identify safeguarding-specific risks
 - 2 Implement safeguarding measures
 - 3 Develop a safeguarding policy with Purpose & Scope, Definitions, Roles & Responsibilities, Code of Conduct



Solution-Focused Approach - SFA



WHAT IS SFA?

A strengths-based, method focusing on the future the other person wants solutions, not their problems.

Treats the person receiving support as experts of their lives.

Identify what works, envision preferred futures and build on existing strengths and ways of coping.

SFA IN ERASMUS+ YOUTH EXCHANGES

Supports inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities or vulnerabilities.

Empowers participants to take ownership of learning and development.

Facilitates conflict resolution by focusing on solutions and shared goals.

Enhances motivation through goal setting and reflection techniques.

Assists in crisis management by leveraging existing resources and coping strategies.

Encourages reflective learning to reinforce growth.



ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES



Listen and communicate respectfully

Create a safe space through active listening and a focus on strengths.



Be patient and recognize effort

Progress can be slow and non-linear. Acknowledge that coping itself may require significant skills.



Set goals together

Start from the young person's vision for change and define achievable steps.



Explore resources and exceptions

Look for strengths, interests, and moments when challenges are less present.



Use scaling questions

Help young people assess progress and identify next steps.



Incorporate creative methods

Games, stories, and playful approaches can foster engagement.



Review and celebrate progress

Reinforce motivation by recognizing even small successes.

WHY IS SFA POWERFUL?



Respects young people's agency and resilience despite challenges.



Fosters hope and motivation, shifting focus from deficits and problems to strengths and future possibilities



Enhances motivation, confidence and engagement by validating young people's voices and experiences, encouraging incremental progress.



Encourages collaborative, realistic goal-setting tailored to complex life circumstances, building on small successes and practical strategies.



Supports holistic wellbeing, including emotional and social aspects and is adaptable to diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

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Trauma Informed Approach



CORE PRINCIPLES

Safety

Physical & emotional security.

Trust

Consistent, clear communication.

Empowerment

Build on strengths, not deficits.



REFLECTION FOR YOUTH WORKERS

Interpret behavior as communication of unmet needs.

Regulate yourself to avoid escalating situations.

Offer predictability and emotional safety.

Create space for repair after conflict.

Prioritize your own emotional care (burnout is real).

TRAUMA

Lasting harm from distressing experiences, often involving helplessness or lack of support.

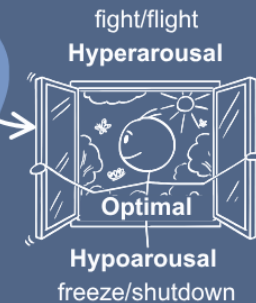


CRISIS

Short-term overwhelm that can happen to anyone.

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

The optimal emotional state where a person can think clearly and manage stress. Youth may shift into Hyperarousal or Hypoarousal.



Collaboration

Peer support & shared decisions.

Choice

Support autonomy.

Never ask youth to share trauma stories.

Use activities for emotional awareness, empathy, and group bonding—not trauma processing.



NON-FORMAL LEARNING (NFL)

Sharing must always be voluntary.

Activities should be metaphorical, strength-based, and emotionally safe.

Micro-connections

Kind tone, remembering names, offering snacks.



Rupture & Repair

Normalize conflict; focus on healing disconnection.

PRACTISE IN ACTION

Calm corners

Spaces with grounding tools.

Check-ins

Simple emotional reflections like "What's your inner weather?"



Youth mobility flow - Inclusive path for all



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FOLLOW-UP

- Debrief meetings after return, evaluation with participants
- Connect experiences to daily life
- Identify & document learning
- Share results with peers & community
- Encourage long-term engagement in new opportunities

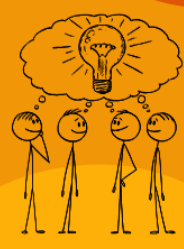


- Welcome rituals to create belonging
- Inclusive, flexible and participatory programme
- Safe and inclusive environment with safeguarding measures
- Methods adapted to abilities, languages, and needs
- Encourage active roles for all participants.
- Daily check-ins, group reflections
- Focus on personal growth and transferable skills

IMPLEMENTATION

PREPARATION

- Practical arrangements & safe logistics
- Pre-departure meetings (youth + families)
 - Build trust, reduce fears, explain rights & responsibilities
- Linguistic, cultural & task-related preparation
- Info-packs in clear and accessible language
 - Ensure safe and supported journeys and anticipate costs when needed

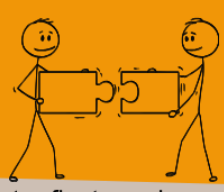


PLANNING

- Define objectives, learning outcomes & activities
- Build strong, inclusive partnerships
- Selection: use simple, accessible calls, support young people to apply and choose those who benefit most



A successful and inclusive youth mobility starts with cooperation.



Co-creation ensures that the project reflects real needs, supports participants with fewer opportunities, and maximises learning and impact.



The host organisation and the sending organisation must work together with young people from the very beginning of the idea.