

BOOKLET

# MentalCoop

LEARNING STRATEGIES TO INCLUDE MENTAL  
HEALTH EMPOWERMENT AND PREVENTION IN  
COOPERATION PROJECTS



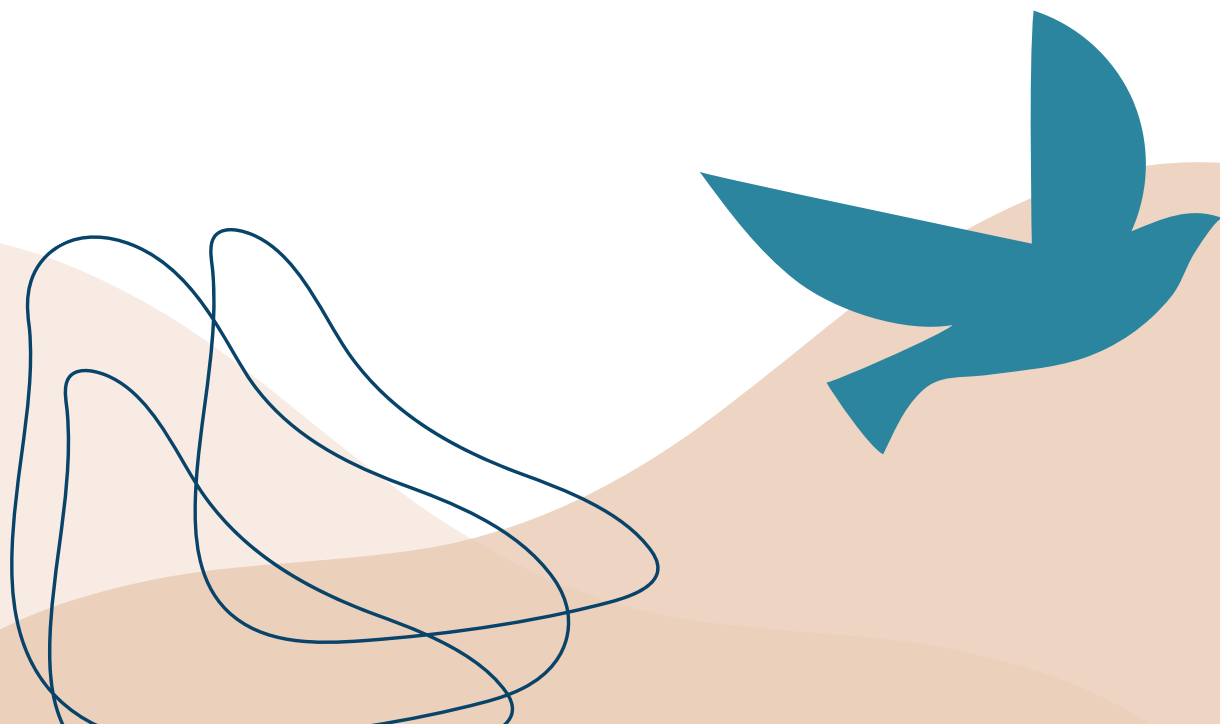
# MentalCoop

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**"TC: Mental Coop. Learning strategies to include mental health empowerment and prevention in cooperation projects"** (2023-1-ES02-KA151-YOU-000137440) is a training course for youth workers that aims at learning and sharing different strategies and projects to transversally incorporate mental health work within cooperation actions and projects.

The idea of Mental Coop rises during the development of different cooperation projects, in which the young participants and professionals expressed their about mental health and the importance of including strategies and specific actions on prevention and empowerment.

To achieve the objectives, TACC has organised the training with a dynamic methodology and working from the territory hand in hand with professionals and experts. Youth workers will get closer to the reality of cooperation and mental health actions and will have the opportunity to delve into different strategies and examples of projects through a program of activities.



# 1. Introduction



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The principal aim of this booklet is to get professionals and youth workers a compilation of tools and strategies that can be used to work and awareness youth about Mental Health, mostly through art, with different cultures, groups and situations, specially in a Cooperation projects with youth in humanitarian crisis. Every activity can be adapted to the specific collective and context where implemented.

When working about Mental Health within different cultures and groups, it is important to take into account the differences and different situations of every youth and to prepare to create a cohesion within the group in order to reach all the elements that confluence in the Mental Health and Cooperation topics. Art is a common language that facilitates the work within different cultures and promotes the cohesion and communication.

Furthermore it is important work through empathy, respect and sensibility; so every youth feel free to express and share their experiences and opinions related to the topic. When we talk about the youth we are referring to adolescents between 12 and 18 years old, even though every activity can be adapted to different ranges of ages.

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# 2. Recommendations



In order to develop the strategies and activities described in this Booklet, it is important to take into account different recommendations as a youth worker. Through the project and the cultural exchange within the participants from 6 different countries, different strategies have emerged to be considered when working with vulnerable youth about mental health and specially with those living in a humanitarian crisis. Not only for the implementation of the activities described below but for transversal work in Mental Health.

1. As a youth worker we can not decide what is ok or not ok for the youth mental health. Every group and collective changes, depending on their situation and characteristics, so as a youth worker we have to plan the activities with open mind and active listening to understand their specific needs and interests on MH.
2. It is very important to understand the real needs and interests of the target group. We have to work without judging, giving them the space to express with freedom.
3. To work on mental health with youth it is essential to plan and develop the activities through an holistic methodology, including different perspectives and contexts.
4. Take into account and demonstrate that it is ok not to be ok. Work through an acceptance perspective where expressing emotions are the bases, without labeling in a good or bad way.

# 3. Activities



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Through the TC all the youth workers have experienced different good practices to work on Mental Health with youth in vulnerable situations. Here you can find a description of those activities that reached more impact in Mental Health through art. Every activity can be adapted to the different needs, groups and topics worked on, ensuring the achievement of the principal aims.

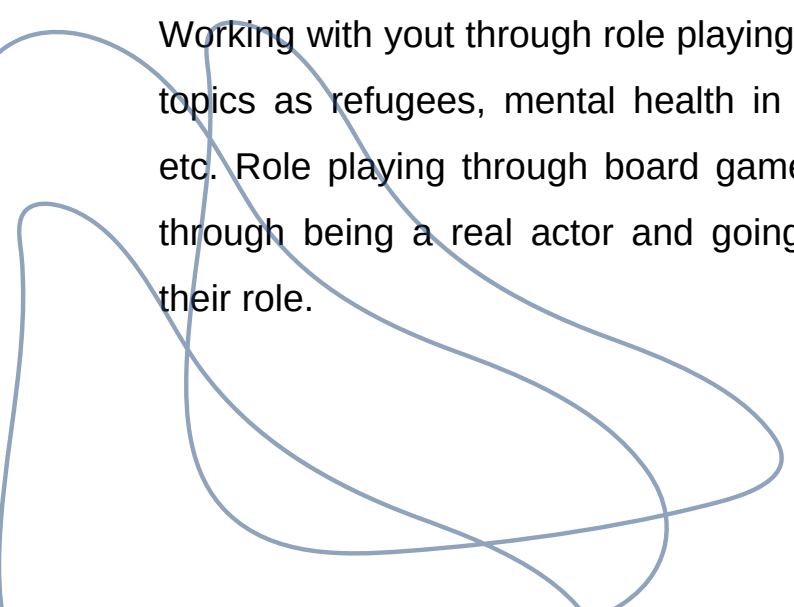
1. **Clown as empowerment:** using different clown technics and activities with youth facilitates spaces of laught. Even if the situation is difficult or the youth are facing several problems, doing activities through clown gives them moments of freedom, expression and be able to laught on difficult situations. The main target of the youth worker is to put a smile on these situations. For developing this activity, the youth worker only needs some face paint, that facilitates to separate the crisis situation from the activity and improvise a performance. The youth will be interacting with the worker and expressing themselves, creating comic situations and genearting new spaces to share with other youth, **increasing resilience** in those spaces.

2. **Theater:** physical and bodily movement, being able to express yourself and connect with others, reflect. Dynamics through which he focuses on the connection and perception of his own body, limitations, tensions and abilities. Focus on expression as a communication tool. Activity that aims to connect the group, individuals with individuals, through movement, role-playing and interpretation promotes the feeling of belonging, the expression of emotions and joint care spaces. Through theater, spaces of expression are created where young people feel free to share, without the need to express themselves verbally and by connecting with their bodies.

3. **Circus:** physical movement helps to forget everything and focus on the moment, the thing and the experience. Through circus technics youth will focus on their own capacities and habilities, and practice can help them to recognise their own acknowledge and development in artistic technics. Developing activities in circus will promote the youth to be on the present moment, **become aware about their feelings** and how they feel it. Focus on your own body and a common language–art, which can work with people from different cultures and share spaces without the need to share language.

4. **Photography:** using the photography to express the emotions, situations and imaginari concepts. Teaching simple photography technics that youth could use through their mobile phones and practise in their own context can promote the development of tools to use their own material to comunicate the situation and express their own thoughts and denounce different HHRR violations through artistic actions. The youth can connect with their mental health and photography will promote their self expression and give them a tool to raise awareness and their voice.

5. **Role game:** participate in role games being part of the actors of specific situations promotes the empathy and the awareness of different situations. Working with yout through role playing games facilitate the work on sensitibe topics as refugees, mental health in vulnerable communities, immigration, etc. Role playing through board games promote the empathy of the youth through being a real actor and going through specific situations linked to their role.



6. **Cultural exchange:** Mental Health is very influenced by each culture and context. Taking into account that in different cultures talking about mental health is a tabú, creating groups of youth from different cultures will promote the exchange of thought, beliefs and social imaginary. Within the exchange of ideas and beliefs youth expand their imaginary and promotes the awareness about taboo subjects as Mental Health or any other specific topic. The exchange has to be facilitated by a professional in order to promote the respect, equality of participating and promote the quality of the exchange, ensuring the youth growth.

7. **Community art:** art is a methodology that allows different perspectives, ideas and concepts to be approached, working from the same language. Through community art, groups of young people create and elaborate one or several joint pieces, without the need to share common basic elements. Through the group's support in the creation of the piece, promoting a common topic (Mental Health) facilitates a process of joint creation, exchange of ideas, work on stereotypes and prejudices while creating a space for expression and joint and individual self-knowledge.





# 4. Evaluation


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Each dynamic can be adapted to the needs of the group and facilitator, as their context. For this reason it is important to evaluate its impact and functionality.

After every dynamic or activity, we recommend to develop a non-formal evaluation with the participation of youth, to implement improvements and adaptations with the aim of promoting the involvement of young people and the impact of the actions.

To promote the participation of youth in the evaluation activities, we focus on non-formal methodologies, where the facilitator has to prepare questions and elements to ask while preparing the activity. We recommend not to do formal evaluation activities while developing participative dynamics, to promote the participation of the youth in every part of the dynamic.

It is important to collect all the opinions and assessments of the young people, in order to be able to draw up a comprehensive evaluation of the activity





# Participants

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Taller d'Art, Cultura i Creació (Spain)



Ars Omnis Cultural Association (Hungary)



idei și proiecte pentru tineri activi

Asociația Idei și Proiecte pentru Tineri Activi (Romania)

**Brno.  
For you.**

Brno for you, z.s. (Czech Republic)



Mano Europa (Lithuania)



New Horizons

New Horizons (Italy)

**Poliana**

Politistiki Anazitisi Lesvou AMKE (Greece)

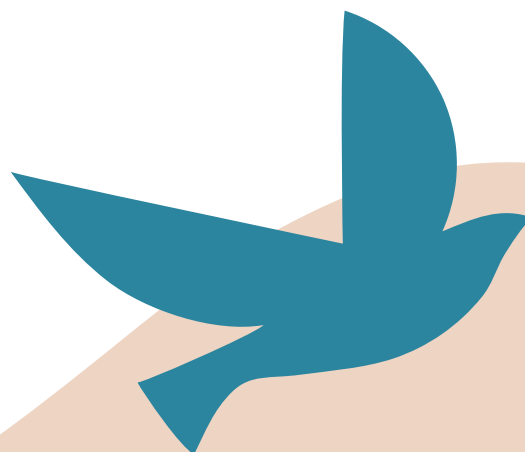
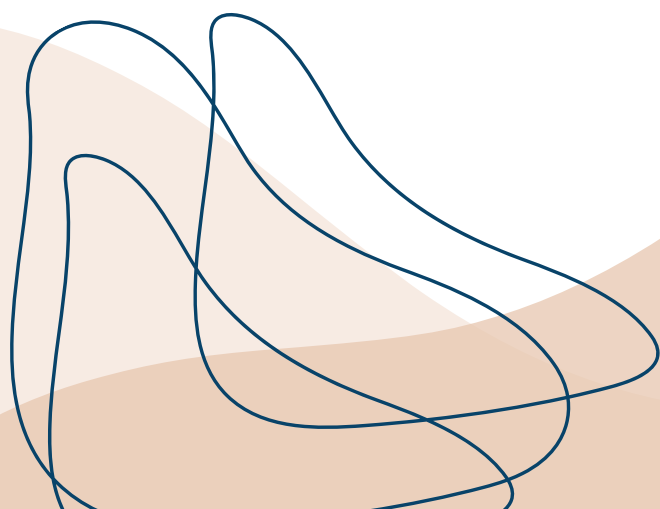


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