Andronache, Daniel-Cosmin; Bocos, Musata; Budiu, Laura

The need to promote intercultural education in disadvantaged youth groups by active methods

The need to promote intercultural education in disadvantaged youth groups by active methods

Daniel-Cosmin Andronache [a]

Muşata Bocoş

Laura Budiu

Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

Authors note

Daniel Andronache, Musata Bocoș, Laura Budiu

THE NEED TO PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN DISADVANTAGED YOUTH GROUPS BY ACTIVE METHODS

Abstract

The article presents theoretical and practical aspects of intercultural education, applied in a project which uses methods of action. General guidelines are presented on interculturality, social frame, and features of teenage years.

Intercultural education has a unifying character going beyond the individual characteristics, and relational tensions, and action techniques build a bridge between the concrete experience of life and coexistence rules, allowing in a secure frame the necessary adjustments. This paper presents a parallel between individual and social difficulties. Work method allows an assessment of issues and also a flexible intervention adaptable to particular needs.

Keywords: interculturality, social dialogue, disadvantaged groups, social inclusion, active methods.

Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag stellt theoretische und praktische Aspekte der interkulturellen Erziehung, Methoden des Handelns, angewendet in einem Projekt. Es werden vorgestellt allgemeine Richtlinien der Interkulturalität, insbesondere gesellschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen für bestimmten Jugendalter.

Interkulturelle Erziehung ist ein verbindendes Zeichen, die über die individuellen Eigenschaften und relationalen Spannungen. Technische Handeln bauen eine Brücke zwischen der konkreten Erfahrung von Leben und Regeln des Zusammenlebens, so dass eine sichere Rahmenbedingungen erschafft für die notwendigen Anpassungen. Dieser Beitrag stellt eine Parallele zwischen individuellen und sozialen Schwierigkeiten. Die Arbeitsweise ermöglicht eine Beurteilung der Bewertungsfragen und ermöglicht auch das flexible Intervention, auf individuelle Bedürfnisse.

Schlüsselworte: Interkulturelle, soziale Dialog, benachteiligte Gruppen, soziale Integration, aktive Methoden

The need to promote intercultural education in disadvantaged youth groups by active methods

I. Introduction

This paper aims to present a theoretical and practical framework for developing and promoting intercultural education through active learning in a group of teenagers from disadvantaged background. Last decades reality imposed a differentiation between multiculturalism and interculturalism. Multiculturalism means only the presence in the same time and space groups of individuals belonging to different cultures, which emphasize their own culture characteristics, without necessarily an existing interaction. In addition, intercultural education, promotes interaction between members of different cultures making possible an exchange of attitudes and values between them. (apud. Ionescu, 2011, p. 395).

Action techniques give people an opportunity to change patterns, to reschedule what was learned in the past by creating new learning experiences. After Piaget, children up to age 12 think in concrete forms. Adolescents whom environment has not offered opportunities for discovery and exploitation of their resources can still be att his level, they also are more exposed to potentially traumatic experiences.

Largely as a child, teenager is still learnining "sensory, kinesthetic" in motion, in interaction with those of his age. Adolescence is a period of reassessment of learned behaviors in the family and learning new behaviors, the rebellion against the adult world and at the same time frame increased need of stable, but with flexible rules.

Techniques provide a secure framework for action to do and knowledge things, allowing a review of what was previously accepted as true about a situation or yourself. We often limit the idea of learning to the classroom, but in terms of storage and information processing in the brain, whole life is a classroom. What determines the impact of a particular experience of learning is less information and greater emotional content.

Social context of recent years has often been characterized by instability, frequent changes too abrupt and the lack of a coherent framework - what we might call "adolescent society". Problems at individual level / family level are the mirror structure between

individual, society and structural problems of society: conflicts, need a framework, rules, balance between confrontation and support, assuming responsabilities, the importance of negotiation and dialogue.

The transition from a social model based on parent rule at a based social model based on autonomy and individual initiative it is difficult in the absence of adequate parental model. Also, the transition from the role of the child to adult in the absence of "rites of passage" appropriate, which to allow transmission schemes enabling role, and marking the conclusion of a stage and start a new one. Like a rite of passage, it's a journey, a path strewn with obstacles, meetings, confrontations, revelations.

Traditional stories, the culture can be used as training medium for life and social skills training. M. Rey defines interculturality in a comprehensive manner considering that "Who says intercultural say necessarily, based on the meaning of the prefix inter-plenary: interaction, exchange, openness, reciprocity, solidarity objective. Says, also giving the full meaning of the term culture: recognition of values, lifestyles, symbolic representations of human beings to which the individuals or companies relate in their interaction with each other and understanding the world, recognizing their importance, identifying interactions which occur simultaneously at many levels of the same culture and between different cultures" (Rey, 1984, p. 13).

Regarding the implementation of intercultural education to disadvantaged youth groups we should discuss and analyze both individual identity and collective identity. The emergence of an identity involves meeting and reporting to the other. You can not talk about self-identity without reference to other or to temporal dynamism (Cucoş, 2002, p. 140). Therefore, intercultural education in this case is important to realize not focusing on the differences between groups, but pointing out individuality and promoting equality.

E.H. Erikson (1963) believes that personal identity is a unity, continuity and self similarity, the only concern is that this unit can ensure the existence and continuity of relations and external action. Unlike Erikson, Kasterstien sees identity problem focusing on the change and adaptation. He speaks of circumstantial identity, identity that strives to adapt to situations, contexts, new roles. Roles are seen as independent identity, not fully

developed, revolving around a center which is a result of the intersection of management and other interaction.

Given the peculiarities of adolescence age especially coming from disadvantaged adolescent characteristics, mode of expression of personal identity and social group may show some specific aspects. For example closing or opening access to their personal and cultural landmarks can vary without a default rule. Cucoş (2002) speaks of the importance of closing-opening setting by identifying three situations:

- opening as a positive relationship that can occur when one considers that interaction with members of other cultures can bring more wealth and renewal;
- closure as a means of protection occurs when a member of a group/members consider that members of another group can destroy and alter its basic value;
- not opening or closing, this situation can occur depending on the circumstances, when for some reason a culture member feels no need for openness, so does not feel that a particular interaction may bring him a plus and feels no need closure, so does not feel the need for protection and then remains neutral. Closing – opening report can occur in three planes (Cucoş, 2002, p. 143): biological plan (for protection or for reproducing biological information from predecessors to successors), mentally plan (for development and negotiation of personal identity) and social plan (for the management of current activities).

Priority focusing on minority rights is likely to cause dissociation, inequalities by positive discrimination, which are then difficult to repair. Social drama targets the general social level and works with the constructivist idea of building the society by individuals who compose it. Roots are in the semantic network, in images and symbols which symbolize of the raw material of world representations .

II. Presentation of intercultural activity project

The aim is to support individual adaptation beyond individual differences and cultural peculiarities, "living together" given the current social context and constraints.

Proposed objectives are: to create bridges, to eliminate divisions and boundaries, to promote cooperation.

Activity organization form.

We have worked with a script because adolescents coming from disadvantaged backgrounds do not have enough defined personality and the existence of a structured scenario gives them a sense of security, which then allows the freedom to change. Working style goes on a social line, with an emphasis on highlighting and resolving social conflicts, the integration of individuals and minority groups, disadvantages.

Active methods: role play, conversation, individual reflection and collective reflection. Stages of developing activity are: reading the script, sharing roles and setting scenes, building scenes and roles (independently by group members), interaction of roles, working double focus: on intercultural issues and personal experience.

Teenagers themselves decide on the distribution of roles, costumes, scene building and developing the scheme, leaders intervene only at their request or if conflicts arise that participants can not solve alone. The intention is to encourage autonomy and thus to increase the initiative, ability to make choices and decisions independence, and also assuming responsabilities of the results. Freedom so often claimed by young people at this age is thus used as an effective alternative to coercion and punishment. The only requirement is to complete the task.

Peculiarities of the group:

Group presents an ethnic diversity, consisting of young Romanian, Hungarian, gipsies. It is a semiopened group, some participants remain constant from one meeting to another, but other teens are also present, depending on interest expressed. The dynamics of such a group was very well described by Shuttleworth: "Unlike most adult groups, adolescents do not often sit happily for an hour or so and attempt to sort out their problems in a mature and civilised way. More often they will be distracting each other by irrelevant chatter or thumping one another or the therapist." (Shuttleworth, 1975, p. 163)

Curricular educational media used:

We used as a tool in our activity cultural products belonging to different cultures and historical periods:

- Japanese fairy tale - wooden bowl

- Biblical Parable - Parable of the vineyard workers

- Fable (Aesop, the processing of Tolstoy) - mouse, cat and rooster

- Greek Myth - Phaeton

We chose these tools because it has a cross-cultural character that goes beyond the features / differences of youth cultures and thereby facilitate dialogue and provide a model of communication and conflict resolution. In this way, learning occurs naturally in the course of action without directly transmitting the information as it may be possible to create resistance, or simply not understood by the participants. We followed at the same time if there is a resistance to foreign cultural content, considering that "translating" this text written in another time and another place as action stages, is also a form of intercultural dialogue

III. Practical illustration of intercultural learning sessions

Below are some examples of the work group as a vignette. Each time, working in a dramatization manner helps to reveal social problems in some cases stimulating dialogue and strengthening cooperation

Japanese fairy tale - wooden bowl

It's a classic success story based on success due to kindness, perseverance and work. A young orphan from an impoverished family which is forced to work is taken into the house of a rich man and, after a series of adventures and despite rejection and evil relatives, she becomes his daughter-in-law. Wooden bowl placed on her head by the mother before her death in order to hide her face contains a dowry of gold and gems, and reveals his contents, along with the beauty of protagonist, only when it reaches its end of dificulties.

Descriptive richness of the script was translated into creative and fun, the teenagers tried several versions of the script and lines and being extremely creative in the construction stage and outfit. Here is most obviously the need to approximate the material, making it familiar. This is done by "translating" cultural markers: the name (the girl becomes "Lucretia", a name once popular in traditional Romanian villages), the presence of a Christian priest at the wedding - while the outfit is very exotic. With a grain of humor, we see this mix as a firststep in the acceptance and integration of diverse cultural elements.

Difficult entry into the labor market is illustrated by the scene, absent from the original script, during which the protagonist starts to ask from man to man the repeated question: "Don't you have a job ... don't you have a job? ".

Related to this, other elements translate social realities resulted from migration, from "leaving the world" with the default loss of the family previously owned the house and place in the world. It's a loss of identity that best expresses the mother of the boy : "I did not want my son to marry <No one>". Most interesting character in this context is however, perhaps her mother, who at the same time protects it and exposures not giving everything from the start to her child, forcing her to leave so the secure childhood frame, and to earn a living, to mature, to know people and discover their own qualities. One of the participants bring the original idea that wealth was not at first under the bowl, but has developed there is being produced by the face, that was not a gift from the outside, but a result of the election and use of personal resources.

Biblical parable - the parable of the vineyard workers

We will not insist this time on the action because is well known. As a new element to the original story, in the adolescent participants storyboarding all the characters are passive, do not turn against injustice, but tacitly accepted the decision of the master, even if they are dissatisfied. There is no contract, working conditions are not negotiated, each being interested to know only"How much will I earn?". If in text, master refers to "as we made the initial deal", here the explanation has the role to reduce silence regarding possible complaints:

A worker: Why pay is the same?

Master: Because the last ones will be the first ones.

Social dialogue no longer takes place, the owner has discretional powers, and workers are deprived of their rights, passive and demotivated. The social contract does not work. It is, again, a situation taken from the immediate reality of the moment, adolescents are a mirror of the adult world.

Fable (Aesop, processed by Tolstoy) – The mouse, the cat and the rooster

In its original version, fable is purely descriptive and limited to the space family - a baby mouse tells his mother about two animals seen in the yard of the house. Caring mother asks her baby everyone features, resulting in the end that what had seemed nice and gentle to her baby is

dangerous, and what appears to him as fierce is actually harmless. The emphasis is on the mother's responsibility and good relationship between the two, privacy is clearly bounded by the outside world, to the last baby being a spectator.

Fable has two staging, according to the agreement made with the teenagers they can always ask her resume making desired changes in the original script.
Right from the first game, and even more visible in the second, social dimension and conflict occur: the baby mouse is attacked and eaten by hungry cat this can occur without the mother intervention.

In processing, it is clear the relationship between game dynamics and passivity, lack of decision and the lack of response to external attack. Teenager who plays baby mouse (L.) did not choose the part, but given the accepted role , another teenager, I., withdraws in the role of household objects (mass), the mother which should be protective authority (D.) is not interested in what baby mouse does, and rooster (R), representing the paternal role, warns baby at first but then is only interested in his own image, and regardless of the drama that occurs under his eyes. In this picture with a broken family, the abuser wins.

In the second game, all participants change their role. Rooster Role disappears, there are two cats (indigenous, poor and hungry and foreign, rich and protective) and a neighbor, who is outraged that the mother nailed to the TV soap opera does not assume the role. Baby mouse is saved by the rich cat, ready to receive in her house everyone, while the poor cat is justifies herself: "I was bad because I was hungry." Thus conflict is quenched and partially relations are restored. What can be observed here is the transformation of content to fit social reality. Families are dysfunctional, poverty calls for aggression and irresponsibility, social responsibility is assumed by someone other than the law. The stable frame which appears from outside allow through the rich cat allows dialogue, recognizing their own attitude, provides a model of generosity and creates order and hope to build a community in the future.

Role changes indicate greater authenticity, showing how warming and familiarity made in the first presentation group cohesion rebuilt group cohesion and gave a sense of security. For example, a participant who initially assumes the role of mother and father had recently died and

where insecurity has made her real mother to regress to the status of a teenager, was forced to assume its role as mother, role which she has been as ineffective as her character on stage.

Greek Myth – Phaeton

Classic story of a lack of parental authority and youthful recklessness that brings disaster on the world stage is most accurately translated script, proof of its timeliness, but perhaps that is why, providing little symbolic distance and calling the aesthetic capacity, creates the greater resistance of the group.

Parents do not have availability for applications son, who is driven rather than heard, the driving force that makes our world move, represented by the path of the sun is out of control, for Phaeton to set fire to the world is an adventure, and his own death an accident which makes him to be more spectator than actor.

As a mirror of the story, the group fails to dialogue, the participants are isolated, rigid and cold in their roles, and the result is chaos. The fact that in trying to get out of jams, changing roles several times among themselves without being able to collaborate and complete the task, indicates failure to invest in the role, treating only its surface, like a garment "of loan ". It is the only situation in which active intervention is needed by leaders to prevent the group to leave the working space without the completed work.

Only regret final stage before the result is played with conviction and brings back togetherthe group members, allowing them to observe "As we do in life." The only participant who takes work seriously and strive to mobilize along the other starts at one point: "Not anymore! With whom I work! "

Processing material.

During activities did not occur rejection reactions from teenagers to the content itself, but adapting it to what they are familiar, an adaptation of the material at social dialogue /intercultural present. Reading the script is met with resistance training, instead preparations of group without leaders and then the action produce pleasure, answering the age-specific needs.

The issue highlighted was:

- Disruptions in family relationships - single-parent families, neglect, lack of genuine parental authority

- Social issues - inequality, the unequal

- The need to integrate job and as a means of subsistence, but also as the basis of social status

- Influence satisfaction / non-satisfaction basic

needs upon conflict behavior and cooperation between individuals

- The social impact on family relationships

- Failure to exercise social roles determined by the educational deficiencies

- Discretionary authority and lack of social dialogue leading to an attitude of helplessness and passive acceptance

- The risk of loss of identity as a migrant

Common elements:

- Passivity

- Parental neglect

- Social indifference

- Dysfunctional communication

- Transforming the familiar unfamiliar

Elements of differentiation:

- Social action (mouse, cat and rooster)

- Reconstructive dialogue of relations (mouse, cat and rooster)

- Success through perseverance (wooden bowl)

- Hope induction (mouse, cat and rooster, bowl of wood)

Of course, some of these similarities and differences are determined by the scenario, but they are mostly the result of spontaneous or deliberate changes made by participants. If the negative elements (liabilities, negligence, etc.) transpire unintentional, positive changes are usually intentional (the transition from passivity to action, the resumption of dialogue). If two of the stage presentations indicate blockage in the present situation (Parable of Workers in the vineyard, Phaeton), the other two (mouse, cat and rooster, bowl of wood) indicates mobilization through the action and steps taken: old / known →lack of adaptation to new conditions → strength, decay and crisis → change and integration of new .

Real-life problems of the participants have a place of expression without exposure - it's rare for a teenager to say the words in the group he is a part, things like "serious" and "important", often painful, about himself, family and relationship with others.

Unfamiliar in the familiar transformation is adaptive strategy that allows communication and understanding between different subcultures.

IV. Conclusions

Intercultural education makes possible to develop or integrate minority groups and individuals, adding some elements belonging to the majority culture and their basic identity and taking over axiological and cultural elements of the majority culture, resulting in mutual enrichment.

The way how acting techniques were used in the project presented by group can be used to promote intercultural dialogue, allowing the conflict resolution, recognition and respect cultural values and features of the other.

Bibliografy

1. Cucoş, C. (2001), *Pedagogy (Pedagogie*), Ed. Polirom, Iaşi

2. Erikson, E.H (1963), *Childerwood and Society*, Norton, New-York

3. Ionescu, M. (2011), *Instruction and education (Instrucţie şi educaţie),* Ed. Eikon, Cluj-Napoca

4. Jennings, S., Gersie, A. (1987/1994), Dramatherapy with disturbed adolescents, in *Jennings, S. (ed.), Dramatherapy. Theory and practice*, Routledge: London, 162-182

5.Kyriacou, D. (1987/1994), The rainbow bridge and the divided space, in Jennings, S. (ed.), *Dramatherapy. Theory and practice*, Routledge: London, 263-268

6. Rey, M. (1994), Traps and provocations of interculturality (Pieges et defi de l'interculturalism), in *Education permanente*, 75, 11-21

7. Tolstoi, L. (1987), *Ant and dove (Furnica şi porumbiţa*), Ed Ion Creangă, Bucureşti