Understanding Europe – Using RFCDC in peer education

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understand
europe

What is peer education?

- Pedagogical approach which enables learning from and with people who have a <u>similar experiential background and share life-worlds</u>.

- Peers often engage with the same questions and topics, they speak a similar language, and are roughly <u>close in age</u>.

- Peers profit from the educational setting in a distinct way as they are <u>educators and learners</u> at the same time.

The peer-approach works on two levels:

IN THE CLASSROOM **Peers – Students** ↓ Subject and life-world orientation	IN TRAININGS **Peer – Peer** ↓ Peer feedback and peer counselling

In which countries has *Understanding Europe* been active in the last 10 years?
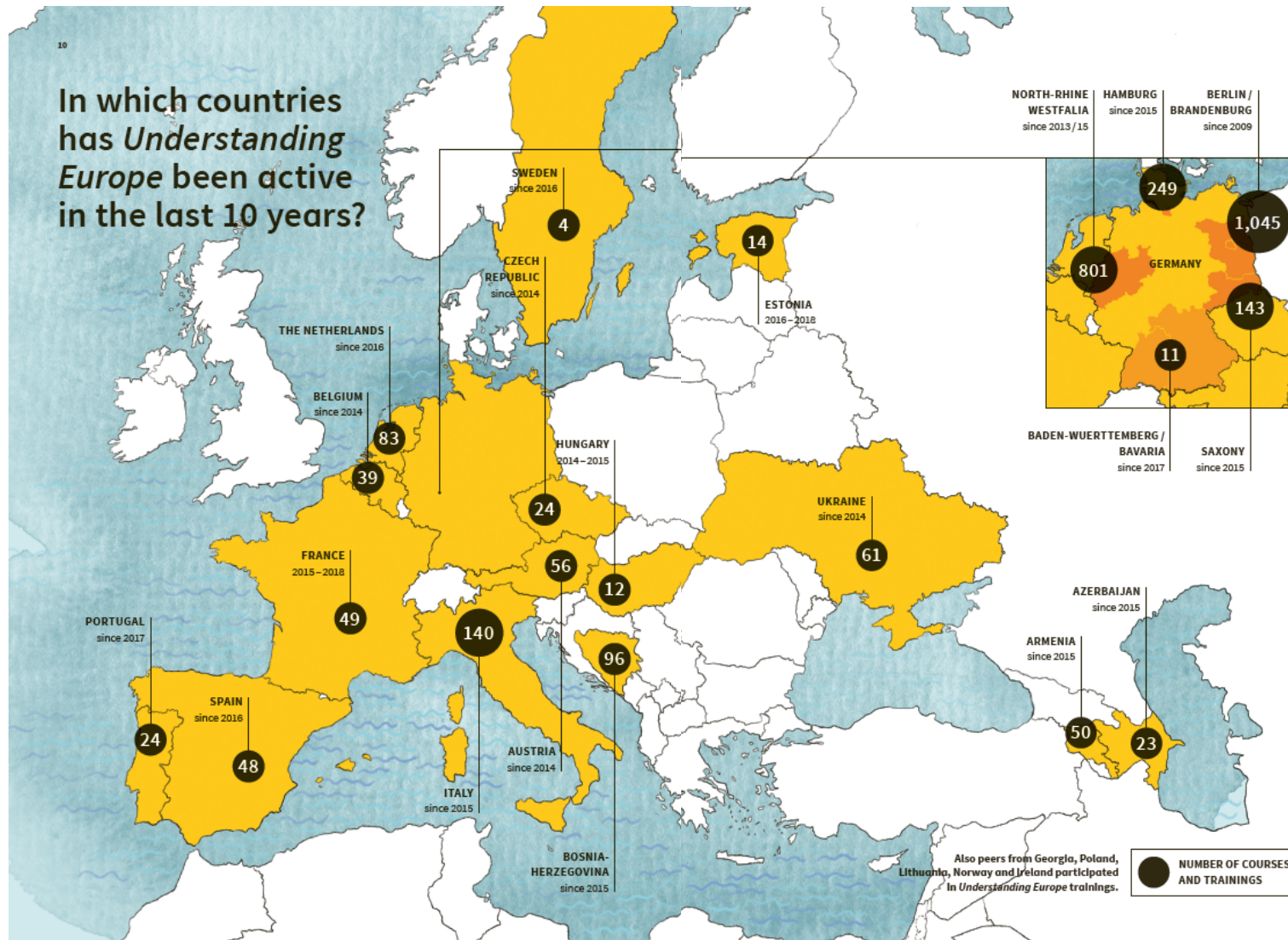
Illustration:
Friederike Schlenz

The Understanding Europe Network:

- European network for low-threshold and diversity-oriented peer education
- Implementation by youth associations at the regional level (e.g. EYP)
- Short-term educational formats at schools with students from the age of 14 about Europe, participation and media literacy

Main target group: Peers between 18 and 28 years old

1. <u>Coordinators:</u> implement the project in their youth association
2. <u>Peer Educators:</u> plan and deliver training events for other peer trainers
3. <u>Fellows:</u> develop new educational formats and material

Usefulness and limitations of the RFCDC in peer education

- focus on four CDC: valuing (cultural) diversity, tolerance of ambiguity, self-efficacy and knowledge and critical understanding of the world

- Discussions and evaluations in the project team and at training events with 15 Peer Educators from 10 European countries (2019-2020)

How was RFCDC integrated in the Understanding Europe project?

- Self-reflection tool for peer trainers and qualification module

- Tool for planning and evaluating trainings and workshops

- Project evaluation, funding applications and reporting

- Publications
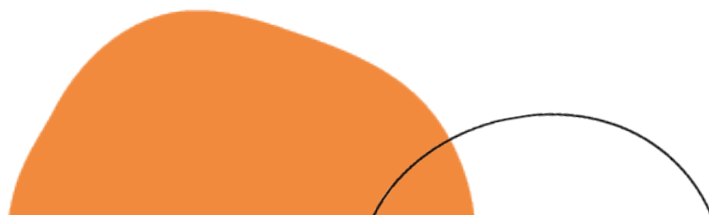
1. General guidance and self-reflection

- <u>Raising awareness</u> and stimulating discussions which impact their educational work might have on participants
- RFCDC as a tool for <u>self-reflection and self-observation</u> for the peers themselves

2. Planning and evaluation of trainings, workshops and educational formats

- Reflection <u>before a training</u> on which CDC they want to foster with the participants and matching those with the modules planned
- Evaluation <u>after a training</u> whether it actually helped participants to develop or focus on certain CDC
- Using the CDC when developing a new educational format to have more clearance about the <u>pedagogical goals</u>
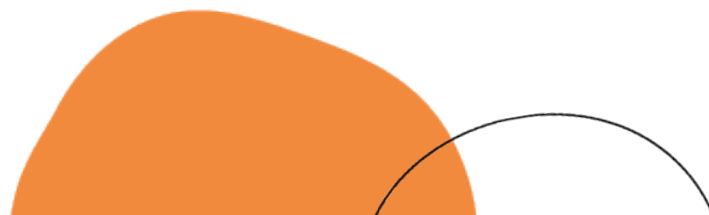
3. Project evaluation and communication with partners and schools

- Makes the <u>outcomes</u> of long-term non-formal education formats and especially the <u>personal development</u> of the peer trainers qualitatively measurable
- Provides a <u>common language with partners</u> and is therefore useful for funding applications and reporting
- CDC could possibly also be useful for communication with <u>schools and teachers</u> (not tested)

1. Short-term educational formats

- <u>Limitations</u> of RFCDC regarding short-term educational formats at schools (not enough time to evaluate personal development of pupils)
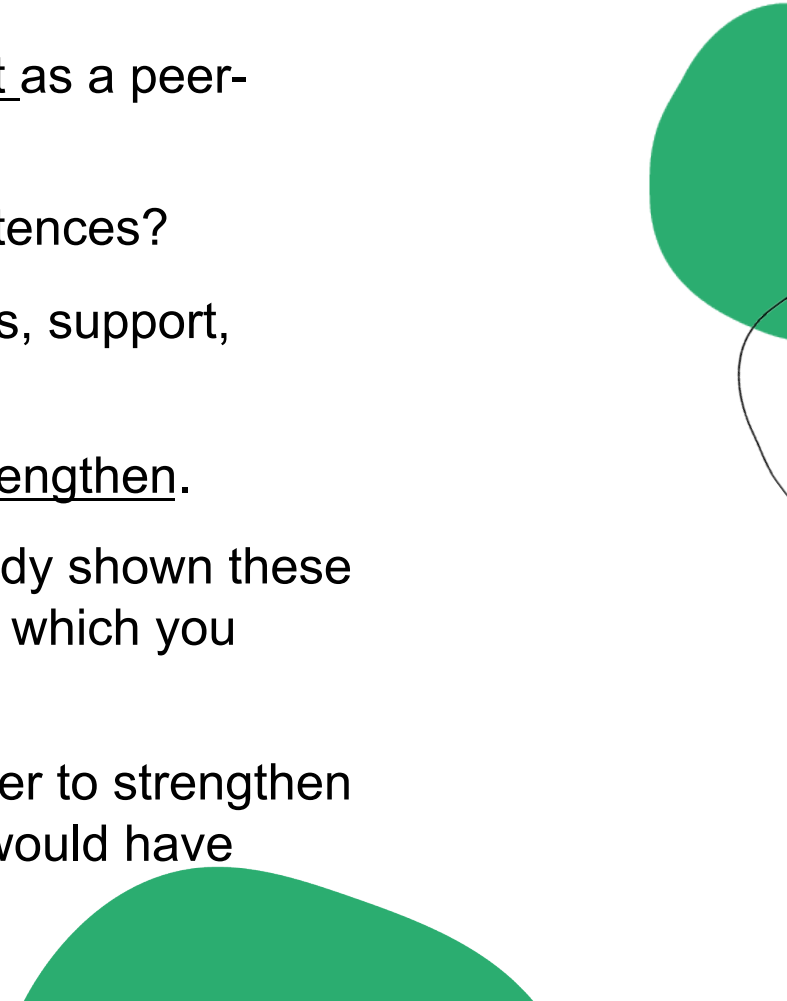
2. Low-threshold access for peers

- Peers are not professional pedagogues but usually volunteers who are not paid and therefore often <u>lack time and capacities</u>

- Therefore, provide a short introduction to the RFCDC, <u>low-threshold tools</u> and focus on the competences rather than on the descriptors

- Possibility to focus on (and adapt) a <u>certain set of competences</u> (and descriptors) that are seen as most relevant for the respective educational context

Exercice I: Identifying your strengths and potentials as a peer trainer

1. Identify up to 3 competences that you think <u>you are good at</u> as a peer-trainer.

2. In <u>which situations</u> in the past did you display these competences?

3. If you think about these situations, <u>what is needed</u> (relations, support, resources) for you to act in this way?

4. Now identify up to 3 competences that you would <u>like to strengthen</u>.

5. Are there any <u>situations in the past</u> in which you have already shown these competences in some way? And are there any situations in which you would have liked to practice them more?

6. If you think about these situations, <u>what do you need</u> in order to strengthen these competences (relations, support, resources)? What would have helped you in that situation to act differently?

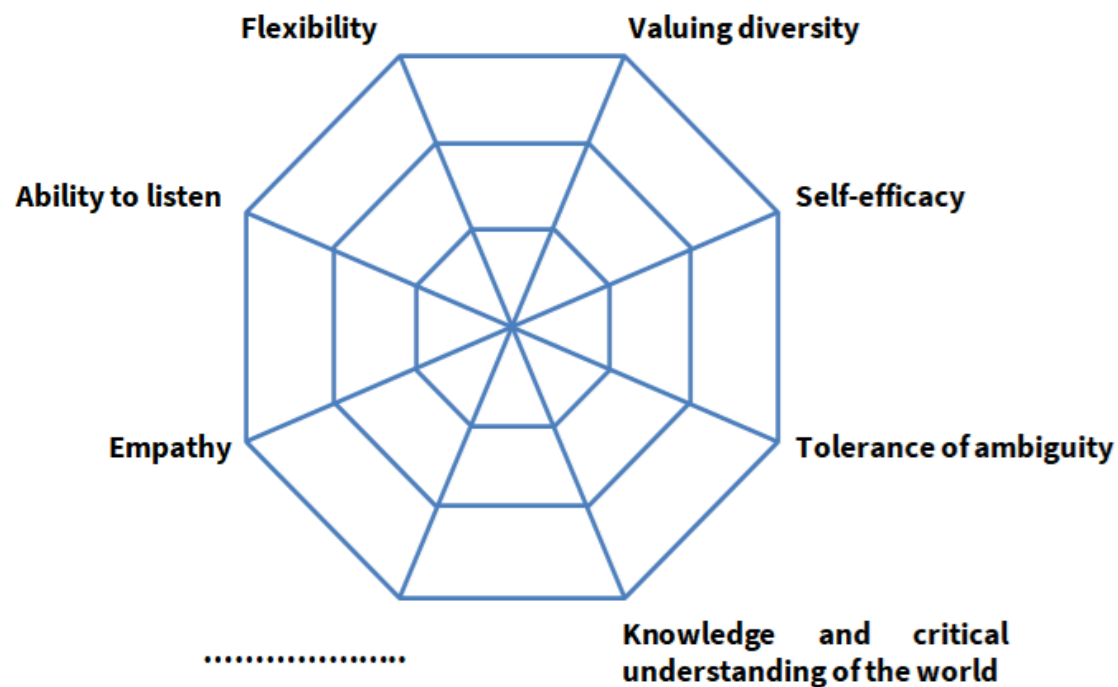Exercice II: Reflecting upon situations in the classroom

Scenarios of classroom situations are given, e.g. lack of expert knowledge, students without interest, a sexist comment, etc.

1. <u>Reflection</u> on the situation

2. Choose up to <u>3 competences</u> you think are important for the trainer in this situation. Why do you think these competences are important?

3. Describe how the <u>situation</u> could look like with these competencies.

4. Are there any points from your reflection that you would like to take for your own <u>practice as a peer-trainer</u>?

eer Self Reflection Tool*

Exercice III: Reflecting upon your own situation

1. Think about a specific educational situation which was challenging in some way for you or where you had the feeling not to act in the best way.

2. Evaluate your reaction with the "wheel of competences". Optional: Add a competence which seem especially important to you in this situation.

3. Reflection on the situation: What worked well? What could you have done differently?

Flexibility

Valuing diversity

Ability to listen

Self-efficacy

Empathy

Tolerance of ambiguity

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Knowledge and critical understanding of the world

Any questions or comments?

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*The Peer self-reflection tool has been developed by Laura Meijer and Simon Oesterle on the basis of the RFCDC Teacher self-reflection tool which you can find here.