

GEGLMOOC: GLOBAL EDUCATION GOES POP, how to educate young people on global issues using pop culture

MODULE 2: Pop culture

2020, English

Content summary:

Welcome to Module 2 of our MOOC. The module is dedicated to the topic of Pop Culture and its relevance and connection to Youth Work. The module contains two parts - the first is with information about Pop culture - elements, mechanisms, critical view. And a second part is about Pop culture in youth work - reasons for using the pop culture in youth work and exploring the reality of the youth.

Learning outcomes:

- To understand the phenomena of POP culture and its role in the life of young people, how POP culture is influencing young people as global citizens;
- To reflect how we can use POP culture in Non-formal education to better engage young people, making it easy, fun and close to young people;
- To reflect on the needs and interests of young people and get to know better the target group whom we work with and their pop culture;
- To start exploring the link between pop culture and global education and global issues.

2.1. What is a Pop Culture

Introduction to Module 2

[\[Video Introduction\]](#) link to video

[\[Video Script\]](#)

“Dear Participants!

Welcome to the second module! Here, we will build a common understanding about Pop Culture and how to approach young people in your field of work regarding this topic.

Pop Culture is neither „good” nor “bad” itself. It is used in many different contexts and for many different reasons and can have many different forms.

Every generation of youth has its own pop culture.

For young people, it is important to express their own identity.

Pop Culture can bring up important questions and make us think.

Because of globalization it could have the function as a common - maybe sometimes even cosmopolitical - identity.

So, it can create global common identities and a feeling of belonging.

Seeing this, we also don't want to turn a blind eye on the mainly westernized, male gazed, nowadays mostly consumerist content of pop culture.

Still pop culture has some great aspects and can be used in a big variety of ways!

Pop Culture today is using different types of media. Most importantly, it is spread online via social media. This can have a very powerful effect.

The recent climate strike movement, for instance, couldn't have grown as big without social media, experts agree.

In this first part of the module we look at Pop Culture generally. We will discover how it works, what mechanisms and concepts there are and how young people are affected by it.

We wish you a good time with the offers we have prepared for you and are curious to hear from you in the forum!”

our private Goth Video from the Fridays f Future Demonstration

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TaBiXNJFz4> video

This generation doesn't cry, but shouts. This generation doesn't have luxury problems. It fears the end of the world. This wakes up, stirs creativity, is fun. This kind of fear feels incredibly good.

(Roberto Simanowski, a scholar of media on the climate movement)

https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/klimaprotest-als-lebenssinn-das-ende-der-geschichte-ist.1005.de.html?dram:article_id=460053

What is Pop Culture?

[Reading]

Young people today consider popular culture to be 'cool'. We define pop culture as a relationship associated with young people's everyday interests of music, art, media, internet, TV, radio, fashion, sports, games, food, language, lifestyle and even feeling of life – it offers creativity, challenges, participation and engagement. The expression 'Pop Culture' is best known from the music industry: the music that is played on popular mainstream radio stations.

Pop Culture is also simply understood as the current culture of youth. Every generation of youth creates its own pop identity. This culture is under constant change and subject to many different influences. Something that is popular today can be outdated by tomorrow.

Pop Culture is all around us in our everyday life. Also, it is neither good, nor bad itself. What we can do is to encourage young people to reflect on it critically.

Because of the internet and the easy access to information and media, Pop Culture becomes wider and more mixed. This also changed Pop Culture itself.

It is easy to access Pop Culture and it is expressed and used through various media online: Music, Film, Adverts, Videos, Vloggers, Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Whatsapp, Snapchat) and offline for example on concerts or demonstrations.

In its beginnings, Pop Culture used to be very political. Nowadays, it seems to be mainstream. In many aspects, it is about selling and consuming. Artists try to sell, not to shock.

Even if young people don't engage the primary outlets themselves, they live and move

in a peer society influenced by Pop Culture. In today's world, the Internet

has facilitated the effective exportation mainly of western youth culture around the globe. While there are unique aspects from place to place, Pop Culture is everywhere. As a result, it has facilitated the growth of a globalized youth culture. It has touched and shaped virtually all social institutions including school, church, home and community. <https://cpyu.org/resource/5-truths-about-pop-culture/>

According to Bodo Mrozek, an expert on culture and media, Pop Culture came up with mass society and industrialization. It can be seen as global phenomenon, even though every group and every individual can interpret it differently. It can also be seen as something non-elitist, globally connected

and easy to access. From the beginning on, it was cosmopolitical but at the same time proletarian. This offers a lot of great possibilities to use it.

https://www.amnesty.at/media/6494/amnesty-magazin_03-2019_webpdf.pdf

2.2. Pop Culture and young people.

[Reading]

Political participation and interests of young people

Nowadays, young people are considered to be politically active and participating in society by raising their voice, like the many students and young people who join the climate strike movement. The movement couldn't have grown as big as it is today without social media.

https://www.amnesty.at/media/6494/amnesty-magazin_03-2019_webpdf.pdf

According to the recent study "Young Europe 2019[1]", 8.220 people aged 16 to 26 were interviewed in 11 European countries ****. The key finding of the study, among others, was that **migration and asylum, environmental policy and economic and fiscal policies** were considered to be the main challenges to be addressed within the EU.

One in five young Europeans participated in demonstrations within the last twelve months. The proportion of young people who refrain from using products for political or ethical reasons, or who just consumed them for that reason, is just about as high. Young people became politically active, especially in terms of **environmental protection, equal pay and gender equality**.

Political participation takes place offline, more often online through "likes" and sharing of political contributions in social media, participation in online petitions. While climate protection and environmental policy are more of an opportunity rather than a threat to young people, the topic of migration is clearly seen either as an opportunity for one's own life or as a threat. Increasing digitization is seen above all as an opportunity. Only few see this development problematic. In terms of "Europe", there is a clear desire for stronger convergence of the European countries on the one hand. On the other hand, young people's voter turnout, especially in the European elections, continues to decrease. Voting as a whole is generally less understood as a duty.

A further insight to what young people are interested in today is provided by the "Youth Goals" developed as part of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027. The Youth Goals also highlight the areas where change still needs to happen so that young people in Europe can realize their potential. Around 50.000 young people from all EU countries participated in a Europe-wide survey in 2018, based on which the following 11 Youth Goals were formulated[2]:

1. Connecting EU with Youth

2. Equality of all Genders
3. Inclusive Societies
4. Information and constructive dialogue
5. Mental health and well being
6. Moving rural youth forward
7. Quality Employment for all
8. Quality Learning
9. Space and participation for all
10. Sustainable green Europe
11. Youth organisations and European programmes

When looking at how young people's interests could be turned into reality, a representative survey of 818 German-speaking 12 to 19-year-olds gives answers on how young people like to learn and absorb new content.

The **audio-visual learning in the form of web videos** is of great importance for the respondents and represents a common part of their everyday life. YouTube is the leading digital medium for young people, and almost half of them also use it for school learning.

For many teenagers, videos are a stimulus to become artistically active themselves - they feel inspired to imitate and participate in areas such as dance, film, music, gaming or drawing.

The attractive thing about tutorials and explanatory videos is that they can be viewed as often as desired and at any time, which seems to meet the expectations of young people in terms of their learning rhythms and times.

In addition, young people have the impression that much of what is shown online is feasible and easy for them to do. It is important for the majority of respondents that videos are entertaining, funny and new.

When choosing videos, they rely on recommendations from friends, influencers, family and teachers. The majority of the interviewed young people also want a stronger reception, a critical analysis and help with production of web videos at school.³

***** Germany, Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway

[1] <https://www.tui-stiftung.de/unsere-projekte/junges-europa-die-jugendstudie-der-tui-stiftung/junges-europa-2019-die-jugendstudie-der-tui-stiftung/> (accessed August 2019)

[2] <http://www.youthconf.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/YouthGoalsHandout.pdf> (accessed August 2019)

[3] https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/2019-06/Studie_Jugend%20Youtube%20Kulturelle%20Bildung%202019.pdf

Markus Interview

We have interviewed the youth worker Markus Plasencia on how he is relating on what young people are interested in today and how to carefully engage in the topic of identity with them.

[Video] [link to video](#)

[Script of the video]

the short video:

When I want an open communication to happen, I need to enter the space truly interested and curious. If I want to go into the space with the attitude of “I just want to convince, I actually only want to present the information I have”, then it leads to another direction. So I don’t want to say, that this is better or worse. I just need to be clear about my intention.

When I want to work with young people on these issues and I say: “Okay, my attitude is, I want to start from the perspective of the participants”, I need to provide this attitude. And I think it is important to be authentic on this point. Not just to say “Okay, today I am open and curious - aha?”, but even if this might sound a bit ridiculous, I really need to feel this. And also the issues which might arise - I need to be able to endure them somehow if they don’t fit my opinion. And not fall into the mode of: “I want to say what is right and why it is wrong.” and also not praise, like: “Super!” or: “Great - you are so smart, especially for your age”, but just endure the process and engage with participants in a research-oriented attitude.

I think then the participants feel safe and gain a basis of trust, at this point they can open up with their opinions and we can work with it much better.

the long video

Hm criticizing... If young people are not going to the Fridays for Future demonstrations and I would criticize it - do you think I could change something with this? Would they then feel guilty and go there the week after?

I think maybe it makes sense to see that I can create a positive feeling towards it. "Why are people doing this?" "Why are people going to demonstrations on Friday?" "Why were people doing this for other issues 30 years ago?" "What did people achieve with this?" "Is it okay, that my mother is driving me with an SUV to the demonstration, and I am demonstrating anyways?" "Can I go to McDonalds after a demonstration, or does everything have to be always 100 percent pure?"

"Can I go with a Primark T-Shirt to a demonstration, or am I then forbidden to do this?" These are already topics, young people have an opinion about and it's important that this either-or doesn't have to exist: I don't have to go there every Friday and I can also wear a T-Shirt from H&M, while going there.

Maybe not 100 percent perfect, but I don't know, I think, these are things, that young people are interested in. But to criticize that they are not going there - I don't know if this is helping us to achieve the goal.

The same applies to the relational engagement with young people. To perceive and - in principle - to take them very seriously. Also, when somebody is saying "I am not going there, because I don't think this is of no use." Well - then he is thinking this - okay! And if she says "This makes no sense", then we can try to look, why other things are more important. What can be more important? Why is this of greater importance? And then to work around this topic. Maybe then there is a point where it is not said "you are right" but where we can say: "I have never seen it this way."

Out of talking with young people I know, that they are not going to a demonstration, because they are feeling guilty, because their, well ... ecological footprint... is quite massive. And then we can also talk about this, no? And say "Well, but I can go with a big ecological footprint to a demonstration as well. I don't have to exclude myself from demonstrating because of this.

I think this kind of talking is needed, this form of dialogue. This bothsidedness. And not only the attitude of "I know how this is and I will tell you how it works" from us as workshop facilitators.

I don't know - maybe in the family at home everybody is thinking more or less in the same direction. Then in school, I don't know if this has so much space - if one is really asked to share

one's thoughts. And with your friends you are maybe more in a kind of bubble, where all the members are thinking pretty similar. Maybe what I say is too general, but when I look to myself, I am pretty much in these bubbles where everything is thought more in the direction I appreciate. Controversiality happens very rarely there.

This means we should try to establish more non-judgemental spaces. And if these spaces exist, to use them also. And to look how we can create and use the space in school or in the youth center to discuss. To discuss not only the topics I'm interested in, but to start with the young people. "What are you interested in?" "What could the SDGs and Global Citizenship have to do with you?"

And then yes you can use these media as impulses. To say: "Let's see what happens in Brasilia. I will show you some videos. And then we see how you feel about these issues." Then I know, that young people might consider a bit more to buy palm oil free products. Because we have addressed these issues. Not to say "palm oil products are bad", but to say "we have to be aware, that if we do certain things, if we buy products in certain stores, there is a longer chain of production behind." Only to know this is often enough. And I don't have to judge it necessarily.

How does Pop culture affect the life of young people

Pop Culture plays an important role in the identity of young people. It is vital for their creation of own culture, self-expression, possibility of pretending to *be* somebody, expression of emotions, self exploration and the desire of being noticed.

Their self-definition, meaning the way you see yourself, is a very important characteristic of every persons' maturity. Pop culture can provide benchmarks to which young people attach their self-definition.

Young People have a desire to create different identities and learn about - or rather to experiment with - their identity. In an online environment, they have the possibility to behave in an anonymously and without a supervision of their parents. Besides it all, they also want to have learning opportunities.

Regarding this, it is important to point out that there is not one Pop culture. There are many things young people and their peers can identify with, that are popular. They might just pick some aspects of pop culture to their identity.

It is beneficial for young people, when elements of lifestyle/identities can be combined very self-determined so young people can choose who and how they want to be. To find one's own, self-

determined identity is an important step of emancipation. By finding their identity, young people search for their place and position in society and their peer group.

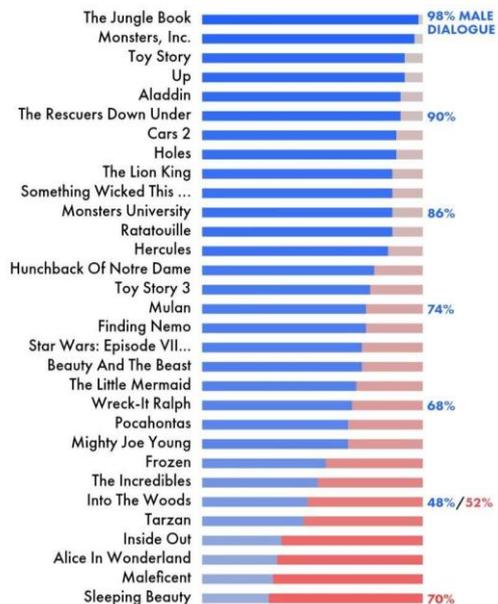
(Source: Kechaja, Maria (2019): Was ist Empowerment. In: Andreas Foitzik; Lukas Hezel (Hg.): Diskriminierungskritische Schule. Einführung in theoretische Grundlagen. Beltz: Weinheim, Basel, S. 78.)

Many young people want to replicate stars

Many young people enjoy dressing up like their favourite stars or following their lives. Some of them also model their behaviour after music moguls, movie stars and reality television cast members. Young people under this amount of influence may change the way they talk to and treat other people.

So, what is shown in Pop Culture has a big impact on the behavior of young people. Female dialogue, for example, is underrepresented in many Disney movies, according to the “Bechdel Test”. This has a negative impact on the image of women in society and the development of self-esteem of young girls in special.

Disney Screenplay Dialogue, Broken-down by Gender



Pop Culture has a role model function for young people, and with this, it plays an important role for them to find their own identity.

2.3. Pop Culture specifics

[Reading]

Mechanisms of Pop Culture

Pop Culture in general follows different mechanisms. It fulfills needs and desires for a (common) identity, fun, expression and intense experiences. It underlies fast and constant change. Historically, Pop Culture was connected and evolved around progressive movements, which led to a subcultural and revolutionary image. Today, the heritage of Pop Culture is mostly in the hands of major brands. They use its still kind of progressive, marketable image for their profit.

Pop Culture is unifying. In a world marked by relational breakdown, young people long for connection. Pop culture serves as a common thread that runs through the lives of children and teens, giving them a common experience, shared allegiances, and a place to belong. Pop culture binds children and teens together.

<https://cpyu.org/resource/5-truths-about-pop-culture/>

Pop culture is Fluid. It thus follows the “fashion principle” - of being up-to-date and the pursuit of the new. In order to grab and maintain the attention of young people, pop culture constantly reinvents itself. What is new, edgy and exciting today will probably be obsolete tomorrow. Because young people are conditioned to look for and embrace whatever is fresh, the creators of Pop Culture stay busy to shape and develop the next big “thing.”

Pop Culture is Entertaining. Because it is market driven, pop culture must grab the attention of children and teens in order to survive and develop. It enters into their lives through a plethora of outlets, grabbing and holding their attention and allegiance by design. In the increased absence of stability and influence from the traditional institutions of home, church, and school, young people seek out pop culture to fill their time and, in some cases, help them forget their pain. Because it must be constantly developed and updated, pop culture’s “newness” increases its effectiveness to entertain. <https://cpyu.org/resource/5-truths-about-pop-culture/>

Pop Culture Offline and Online

Pop Culture Online

The influence of online media on our lifestyles and on Pop Culture keeps increasing. The most important channel for Pop Culture among young people is the internet – especially the video channel YouTube. Here they find inputs of bloggers, vloggers (video bloggers) and influencers dealing with

different topics. Further popular channels are the social media apps Instagram (a free, online photo-sharing application and social network platform, which allows users to edit and upload photos and short videos) as well as Snapchat (a free instant messaging service for use on smartphones and tablets) and TikTok (a platform to share short videos).

Online Games are video games played over some form of computer network. They can range from simple text based environments to incorporating complex graphics and virtual worlds populated by many players simultaneously.

Media tempts us to constantly consume more. Influencers on YouTube, due to their strong presence and their high reputation in social networks, are primarily carriers for advertising and marketing.

The US-based company Netflix deals with paid streaming and the production of films and series and allows young people to watch the films they want at the time when they want. Amazon instant video sells streaming offers for movies and TV series as well.

Generally speaking, today's young people are interested in different elements of Pop Culture if those are catchy, attractive, visual, viral, accessible, addictive and easy to digest (e.g. video of 30 seconds). They want to get immediate feedback. Getting "likes" is a substitute of social acceptance.

Young people like to express themselves through pictures, emoticons, *memes*, stickers and *GIFs*. They like to communicate easily and fast.

Another trend of Pop Culture are internet phenomena such as the "salmon challenge", the "10 years challenge" or the "ice bucket challenge", where ordinary people record "crazy" tasks on video and publish them on the web.

As **climate protection** is one of the topics many young people are really concerned about, blogs, posts, photos and videos on social media dealing with a sustainable way of life have become increasingly trendy and are already part of Pop Culture of young people (e.g. blog and influencer videos of dariadaria).

Pop Culture Offline

Offline channels where young people get in touch with Pop Culture are multifaceted. Comics, video games, movies, talk shows, realities, stand ups, poetry slams, Pub quiz, ads/campaigns, brands, music and art are examples.

Popular Movements among Young People

As means of finding and expressing identity, connecting to peers as well as entertainment, political movements can on one level be seen as Pop Culture. As we aim to work with Pop Culture to address SDGs in this course, the powerful global youth-led movement to fight climate change *Fridays for Future* is a very interesting case to research and learn from.

The current worldwide **Fridays for Future Movement** shows that about 2 million young people worldwide are interested in being part of a great change, experiencing self-efficacy and getting active for their own future. What this movement also shows is that there is a huge number of young people who are interested in meetings in real life (offline), in getting in touch with real persons, in fighting and engaging together for something real, in creating posters and banners and in organizing themselves for meetings, protests, actions and workshops.

The movement uses both online channels and offline channels to make a sustainable way of life trendy, to connect young people and to drive a change towards a more sustainable world. Furthermore, this movement can also be seen as an attempt by young people to separate from the parent generation on the one hand and from the stage of childhood on the other hand. So, it is not just about protesting for a healthier environment but also about standing up against their parents' generation, the so-called "boomers".

Critical view on Pop culture :

- Celebrity influence is not always beneficial for people as many struggle to meet an impossible standard. Many young people want to imitate their favourite celebrities. An increasing number of teens are even turning to plastic surgery to look like their favourite stars. The influence of popular celebrities does not stop at the appearance. Celebrities are famous not because of what they are doing, but because of their personality and lifestyle. <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/should-you-let-your-teenager-get-plastic-surgery-2018-08-29>
- Pop Culture is market driven. Children and young people represent an important target group to marketers because in addition to their own purchasing power (which is considerable) they influence their parents' buying decisions and are the adult consumers of the future. <https://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/media-issues/marketing-consumerism/how-marketers-target-kids?fbclid=IwAR1fC-nhneWIo47rkCa93O20P41tY7Z6gX5mJi4ZuBsVUU643wPAgmXjxl>
- Pop Culture and Celebrities can offer an image transfer of brands, which gain a progressive new image, with which they can distract us from the shadows of their way of production. Specific phenomena of this image white washing strategies are, for instance: greenwashing - which makes brands look more environmentally friendly as they are), pinkwashing (which builds an association to the LGBTIQ movement and takes advantage of the progressive image) and similarly phenomena for diversity and feminist claims on products which are not represented in the working conditions in the production chain.

[Task - Padlet] Influencers from your area.

Find 3 influencers from your area. To your opinion, what made them so popular? It can be that they are sponsored, the way they talk... What needs of your area do they fulfill? Which channels do they use? YouTube? Instagram? What groups of people do they target?

Please, share your findings on Padlet. You also can attach a picture of the top influencer of your area. Look at sharings of other participants if you find it suitable also for your area give them “like <3”

```
<div class="padlet-embed" style="border:1px solid rgba(0,0,0,0.1);border-radius:2px;box-sizing:border-box;overflow:hidden;position:relative;width:100%;background:#F4F4F4"><p style="padding:0;margin:0"><iframe src="https://padlet.com/embed/4l1eqh684njx89yv" frameborder="0" allow="camera;microphone;geolocation" style="width:100%;height:608px;display:block;padding:0;margin:0"></iframe></p><div style="padding:8px;text-align:right;margin:0;"><a href="https://padlet.com?ref=embed" style="padding:0;margin:0;border:none;display:block;line-height:1;height:16px" target="_blank"></a></div></div>
```

2.4. Using pop culture in youth work - why and how should we use pop culture in the youth work

[Video] link to video

[Script]

Welcome! In this part of the module we will give you concrete tips, as well as examples and dos and don'ts on how to approach young people through pop culture.

As we already mentioned pop culture has traditionally been thought of as the collective ideas, attitudes, trends, and interests of the population as a whole.

At the same time we sometimes forget the importance of pop culture for the youth.

Pop culture is a “connecting tunnel” between our reality and the reality of the young people we work with. It can help us to build stronger relationship with them. Pop culture is also a tool to engage more young people and make the topics we want to work on with them more attractive, understandable and relatable. For example - speaking about gender equality by using mostly data, quotes, presentations or role games could be very relevant and interesting for many young people who are already socially engaged and willing to deepen their knowledge. On the other hand incorporating

elements of the pop culture into the exercises and discussions often times could lead to even higher engagement and better results as well as attract and engage young people who are new to the non-formal or out of school activities and the global and SDG topics.

There could be many popular things among the young people that are already out there and could be used by any youth worker.

When you see a Beyonce music video, do you think of it as a teachable material? Probably not. But pop culture is a useful tool that can help get youths interested and engaged in learning, and even offer resources for better understanding global issues.

Oftentimes pop culture can make youths act. The Harry Potter Alliance for example has drawn parallels between pop culture and real problems in order to engage otherwise disengaged fans. After learning that not all Harry Potter chocolate is fair trade, and discussing the effects of child slavery on chocolate's ability to protect from dementors, hundreds of thousands of fans petitioned Warner Brothers to change. After four years of campaigning they won.

There are also other examples of relation between pop culture figures and stories and real life problems that can be addressed through them. While immigrants and refugees are systematically discriminated against in different countries around the world, there is an immigrant called Superman and a refugee called Paddington. In the Hunger Games, the Capitol keeps the District under control by keeping them systematically impoverished and that of course happens in our world too.

These are just few examples of how we can turn entertainment into engagement.

There are many popular movies and animations addressing issues like environmental crisis, racism and poverty. That gives us a lot of opportunities to discuss global and local problems, rethink values and develop critical thinking and other important social skills.

Pop culture often includes epic stories. Stories of heroes and heroines going through challenges. It sends messages connected with their values and it makes us identify with them. And it is faster to consume it than reading a book.

One study shows that it's more likely for young people to remember an ethical or societal issue in a film rather than a text.

We also used pop culture for designing the toolkit and we will share with you more about that in the next Module. But first things first. Let's continue step by step starting with the POP quiz we prepared for you.

[Assignment - Quiz]

Popular people and characters

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RIAD_i11GtMB_SFAlRs7jBcTvTgHw9Oo2ZbBA5CQzjc/edit

2.5. Pop culture in our own context - exploring and reflecting on what pop culture is for you and for the young people you work with

[Video] link to video

[Script]

Welcome to the next part of the module about pop culture in youth work.

Youths today can find a pop culture that best fits or appeals to them through a variety of channels. Pop culture is globalized, but also can now be 'custom tailored' by each youth and it's also specific to place and time.

That is why following news and general information about the global trends related to pop culture is useful and at the same time won't provide enough information to us about what's up to date, interesting and important for the young people we work with in our specific context.

And our tasks would be to explore and learn more about what is popular among the groups we work with.

Using pop culture in youth work could also be challenging because of the fact that at the core of helping youth is our ability to drop our biases and understand youth for who they are. Their experiences, including pop culture, are not always our life experiences and they shaped them into who they are today and will continue to shape them. It is working the same way as the pop culture of each generation shaped it more or less depending on the level of exposure and consumption of it. Remember the way you dressed and act because of the bands you were listening to and the movies or series you were watching?

It's important to understand how we were influenced by the pop culture because it helps us to remember the intensity and the impact that pop culture has throughout our lives.

It's our aim to understand how to work within the life circumstances of the youths whether individually or in a group without judging their choices.

When we speak about exploring and learning more about the pop culture of the young people it would be helpful to keep several things in mind:

When we talk about pop culture we don't have to know young people's pop culture better than they do. We can and should let them be the experts.

We shouldn't and can't take away from the young people their pop culture by criticizing it, we can only add perspectives. At the same time we can show that self-reflection and critical thinking can be interesting and beneficial for them.

We should also keep in mind that youth culture is usually synonymous with mass produced popular culture. If an youth culture is represented by a fourteen years old watching Ariana Grande's video, wearing certain brand of clothing and posting in Instagram, we might be limiting ourselves to the idea that youth culture equals popular culture. And mass produced popular culture is often seen as the opposite of high culture. And in fact youth culture has also flourished in the contested space between so-called high culture and so-called popular culture. It's important to realize that because aiming to only use pop culture if that is what we see the young people are interested in would only limit us. We aim to organize activities where we combine and use elements of popular culture that is the result of the cultural industries in a business and consumption way and alternative cultures that is in general created by some civil society actors - most of them youngsters or young adults. Examples of alternative culture are sticker art, graffiti groups, alternative music groups and others.

Before starting using pop culture we as youth workers must ask ourselves questions about factors that can be influenced by pop culture such as: What is a youth's pop culture saying about being respectful to girls and women? It is cool to protect the environment? Is the youth's pop culture reference point consistent with their life goals? Does a young person's dress and look reflect the pop culture they seek out?

These and other questions will help us in our everyday work.

We now invite you to do the assignment and share your thoughts and observations in the forum.

[Task - Forum Discussion] Diving in the pop culture of the youths

Researching young people's popular culture requires little effort. However, you must become 'conscious researchers', looking for various influences, styles and characteristics which could be used when exploring issues/subjects with young people.

Knowing your youths also means knowing their pop culture . Building a relationship with them can happen through what they are interested in. This doesn't mean that we have to watch, listen to and use all movies, songs and apps they do.

And yet, knowing the newest trends makes a difference when they start speaking about the series, music and games that take a big part of their time to follow.

And once again - knowing their reality and what's popular could also help us in planning trainings, sessions or meetings with young people much more interesting and relatable.

So, your task will be to explore what is popular among the young people around you - make short interviews with 2-3 people asking them: Do they have a favourite band or singer? What is their

favourite song and what do they like about it? Where do they watch it? How do they learn about a new song?

What do they use the internet for? Which youtube channels do they follow? Which apps do they use and what do they like about them? (Questions connected with music, movies, apps, youtube videos).

Please, share your findings with us on Forum discussion (link to forum).

We encourage you to share the interviews online in your social networks and if you want also in our facebook group (don't forget to get the needed permissions and follow the regulations of your country related to publishing interviews with youngsters. And remember to use the hashtags **#GEGl** and **#GlobalEducationGoesPop**)

2.6. Tips and Traps for youth workers when using pop culture we don't want to fall in

[Reading]

Incorporating elements of pop culture in our activities and work styles is an interesting process of planning, exploration, reflection and failure. Which is ok, we were all there - trying to be up to date, trying new things because we want to get closer to the youths and make the activities we (co)design and implement more relevant.

Here are some tips and traps (or dos and don'ts):

- Many young people are already interested in topics such as migration and asylum, environmental policy, sustainable development and gender equality - in this case, it might be better to use pop culture not to only introduce them to the topics but get deeper in them and explain more complex ideas while using pop culture as well as let them find new connections between the pop culture and the SDGs.

- Misunderstanding the concept of pop culture and its connection to “youth culture” -

It is important to understand our concept of youth cultures. How young people use popular culture should be studied in local and particular ways. A careful examination of the relationship between youth cultures, adult cultures and popular cultures can point to ways where educators might learn from youth about how and why they use various cultural texts, allowing educators to support young people as they learn new cultures, knowledge, literacies and ways of knowing.

- Speaking about something popular amongst the youths in a disrespectful way (some of them might be liking it and identifying with it at the moment) - sometimes there might be

confronting elements, trends and parts of pop culture that seem to be too alien to us and even making us feel confused, frustrated and uncomfortable.

- Trying to “play it cool” by just mentioning names of pop figures randomly and out of the context

The youth culture is connected not only to the mass production, but to home, school, community, peers. Our aim is to understand the role of the popular culture within this system and network of siblings, friends, parents, teachers and other youngsters and adults the young people are living in.

- Using pop culture for activities that don't necessarily need this approach (using it at all costs) - by showing a video that has a lot of views you might still not achieve your goal if the video is not part of carefully made plan
- Besides using pop culture for the main activities, it could be also used for the non-formal time - movie nights, musical breaks, etc. that create an engaging environment and will support the overall implementation of the activities
- Trying to impose something youths in Europe or another country like because it's pop (but maybe not for the people you work with)
- The use of popular culture to introduce social and political critique can help lower emotional barriers that often arise when assumptions and learned beliefs are challenged.
- Promoting pop figures who might be also doing something that harms the environment or people - it's important to check for more information before giving examples or roles connected to celebrities
- Using pop culture which gives an appearance of providing liberty and freedom but in fact reinforces inequalities
- Youths are actually used to learn through “edutainment” - they live in time when they have an access to the internet and have watched many videos that already combine studies and entertainment - being aware of that could help in planning activities
- Assuming that a group of friends share the same popular culture
- Remembering to make parallel between the pop culture and the real life
- Not criticizing the pop culture when it seems to be destructive (racist, disrespectful towards women, violent, etc) - some rap songs, for example, could be full of misogynistic messages
- Not managing to encourage youths to see beyond the sheer novelty and entertainment value of using popular culture sources in the learning environment and connect with the actual content that you are attempting to deliver
- Using tools that are not interesting for young people while incorporating pop culture elements. It would be good and more engaging if you use websites and applications which are already favourite/familiar to the people you work with
- Being relevant to their reality enables you to gain the status of being “cool”

- Planning product-oriented activities (for example, making a meme on a certain topic and evaluating the learning outcomes) should go together with process-oriented activities (reflecting on the things learned when presenting the meme)

And remembering how pop culture could create a community, combat stigma, increase empathy with stories, challenge stereotypes - is a wonderful way to approach it and use elements of it in the work with the young people.

[Extra task - forum]

Extra task if you finish faster with the previous ones: Choose three apps (that are becoming or are already popular amongst the youths you work with) which could be used for educational purposes and explore how they could be used for that - please share your idea/s in the forum.

Additional materials that can be useful for your work with young people

Collection of SDG- promoting Pop Culture

Statements of Celebrities

- Fridays for Future: Greta's Video addressing young people: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POB6AxeVNY8>
- Billie Eilish on climate change video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvliZc6uAXA>
- SOKO on being vegan <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CunepQ2Zuu0>
- Emma Watson on feminism <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIwU-9ZTTJc>
- Billie Eilish on climate change text: <https://www.dazeddigital.com/music/article/46245/1/billie-eilish-woody-harrelson-makes-a-statement-on-climate-change-greta-thunberg>,

- Billie Eilish climate change text 2:
<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/on-climate-change-billie-eilish-and-greta-thunberg-do-gen-z-no-favors>
- Arnold Schwarzenegger supporting Climate Change Activists like Greta
<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/arnold-schwarzenegger-greta-thunberg-cycling-leonardo-dicaprio-climate-change-a9185511.html>
- Cast of the Series “Sex Education” on being black, mental health, showing diversity etc. until min. 3:46: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jb8HQqgM1JM>

Music

- Rap about climate change: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRLJscAlk1M>
- MIA - Borders (Song, that brings up questions)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-Nw7HbaeWY>
- M.I.A. documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsb1dgsFvpM>
- Macklemore on white privilege: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_rl4ZGdy34
- SDG Spotify Playlist:
https://open.spotify.com/playlist/40g8hAmjsijtH0hpaUetZp?si=k8qtdoCOQt-O_a8eGLcG0w
- Primary School Kids Rap https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuR7VN_Q06g

Vloggers

- Vlogger about their morning routine in 2050, when the earth is already more destroyed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UG1I3MOXm90>
- another version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr29nN-ac68>
- and another version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKhcdVOsY5U>
- creative short movie about a vloggers life behind the camera:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW1bIC4rEL0>

Movies

- Many documentaries on climate change, inequality, environment etc
- How to train your dragon (animated movie) - racism
- Smallfoot (animated movie) - racism and peace
- Hunger Games - colonialism
- Princess Mononoke - nature vs humans (a bit binary)

Explicitly SDGs Pop culture

- Pop Girls day Video SDG <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BMgV8jj9IU>
- SDG Rap <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDhP41MGVCM&feature=youtu.be>
- Soccer Challenge: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hg4u8zFUUrUw>
- SDG Youtube Channel
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRfuAYy7MesZmgOi1EzyOng>

Pictures

- The best pictures of climate change protests <https://elmundo.com.do/the-best-photos-from-the-climate-strikes-taking-over-black-friday-around-the-world/>
- The best pictures of climate change protests 2 <https://news.yahoo.com/sign-of-the-times-the-best-climate-strike-placards-as-millions-take-to-the-streets-140032716/photo-climate-change-march-best-protest-155119894.html>
- Loving public transport so much - Simpsons Meme



Possible further engagement



- The “Bechdel Test” - Gender in Disney Movies:
<https://www.hercampus.com/school/ucsb/so-how-many-disney-movies-pass-bechdel-test>
 - Pop culture is teaching the wrong "lessons" about gender & sexuality | Kristin Lieb | TEDxSomerville <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUN019leZUA&feature=youtu.be>
 - As the popular Slovenian post-structuralist philosopher Slavoj Žižek says, art can be used in many different ways. He takes the “Ode to joy” as an example to show, that the same piece of music can be used for many different - even contrary - ideologies. Žižek about Ode to Joy:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM9erS90gTE>
- Explanation of Žižek on Ideology: <https://bigthink.com/culture-religion/slavoj-zizek-ideology?rebellitem=3#rebellitem3>
- Steam of an open lecture at Central European University by Deva Gerit on Walter Benjamin and the societal effects of tweets:
<https://ceu.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=ff0c0cac-dec7-4e43-954a-ab040108e8b8&start=457.639901>
 - About Instagram: [https://www.viberate.com/article/word-of-mouth-is-dead-long-live-instagram/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Launch_oct_2019_WT_FB_\(MKT\)\(Editorial\)&utm_content=Ling%20live%20Instagram&utm_term=Editorial%2315%3A%20Long%20live%20Instagram&fbclid=IwAR069dexLAJo7jk3xxOV6wx0GUAVSbrcw0PdG7EqvAPGMgxEFIKxxyCB7o0](https://www.viberate.com/article/word-of-mouth-is-dead-long-live-instagram/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Launch_oct_2019_WT_FB_(MKT)(Editorial)&utm_content=Ling%20live%20Instagram&utm_term=Editorial%2315%3A%20Long%20live%20Instagram&fbclid=IwAR069dexLAJo7jk3xxOV6wx0GUAVSbrcw0PdG7EqvAPGMgxEFIKxxyCB7o0)
 - Mapsfacts: The countries/regions with the most Instagram users (in millions) as of January 2019 are: USA 120M India 75M Brazil 69M Indonesia 62M Turkey 38M Russia 37M Japan 27M United Kingdom 24M Mexico 22M Germany 20M



MOST INSTAGRAM USERS



Publications and books:

- “Pop culture works for social change” http://andaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Pop-Culture-Works-for-Social-Change_FINAL.pdf
- “Popular culture as pedagogy” - https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282749254_Popular_Culture_as_Pedagogy_Research_in_the_Field_of_Adult_Education
- “Access of young people to culture” - <http://www.interarts.net/descargas/interarts1834.pdf>
- “How Pop Culture Can Help Roma See Themselves as Survivors” https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/how-pop-culture-can-help-roma-see-themselves-survivors?fbclid=IwAR0t9Z6NjPrYoY5xzUxfHQDQINy-G5wm4E_bhMKFGrPstJ04JDopj3kO8KM

